THE EXCLUDED MIDDLE;
OR, THE SCEPTIC REFUTED

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A BRITISH MAN OF SCIENCE
AND A CONVERTED HINDU

[This absurdity is a parody upon the serious essay which follows. It is an exceedingly characteristic trait that Crowley himself should have insisted upon this order, and a severe strain upon the devoted band who try to force themselves to study him. The notes are, of course, Crowley's throughout. To elucidate the allusions would require a note to nearly every phrase. The fact seems to be that any one with universal knowlede at the tips of his fingers can read and enjoy Crowley; but few others.]

THE EXCLUDED (OR DIVIDED) MIDDLE

M. Well,[1] Scepticus,[2] are[3] you[4] restored[5] to[6] health[7]? Our[8] conflict[9] of[11] yesterday[12] was[13] severe.[14]

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[1] Plato, *Critias*, 214; Schopenhauer, *Dei Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, xxxii. 76; Haeckel, *Antropogenie*, II. viii. 24; Aeschylus, *Prom. Vinct.*, 873-6; Hegel, *Logik*, lvi. 3; Robertson, *Pagan Christs*, cvii. 29l Mark ii. 8, iv. 16, x. 21; Tertullian, *Contra Marcionem*, cxv. 33; Cicero, *Pro Varrone*, iv.; *De Amicitia*, xii.; Goethe, *Faust*, I. iv. 18; Crowley, *Opera*, i. 216; R. Ischak ben Loria, *De Revolutionibus Animarum*, cci. 14 (see under קליפות, *et seq.*, *q.v.* p. iii); O. Wilde, *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, ed. princ., p. 4; Lev. xvii. Further historical authority may be found in Gibbon and others.

[2] *Punch*, vols. viii., lxvi. *Cf.* Art. "Burnand" in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, *scil.* Viz. *a-u-c*, xlviii., S. P.Q.R.

[3] From *Encyc. Brit.*, Art. "Existence," and "Buddha," Mahaparinibbana Sutta, to whom the author wishes to express his acknowledgements.

[4] This joke is the old one. Jones asks Smith, "Why are you so late?" Smith wittily answers: "Absurd! I must always come before tea; you can never come till after tea." Here "you" only comes after the "tea" in Scepticus, which shows that Scepticus was a tea-totaller. Mysticus is therefore the drinker; which proves (what Burton and all Eastern scholars affirm) that Omar Khayyam means spiritual wine and not common alcoholic beverages. *Cf.* Burton, *Kasidah: Love and Safety*, ed. princ., p. 45, &c., &c.

[5] This word needs little or no explanation.

[6] Ontogeny can only be misunderstood by thorough study of phylogeny. Crepitation of the bivalves is a concurrent phenomenon. Take away the number you first thouht of, and we see that the exosteses of the melanotic pyemata by the river's brim are exosteses and nothing more.

[7] An unpleasant subject—a great comfort to think of—*vide* Wilde, *op. cit.*, and *A Woman of no Importance*. Also Kraft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, xx.; *The Family Doctor*; Quain, *Anatomy of Grey Matter*, cxlv. 24.

[8] The 24th part of a (solar) day.

[9] From French *con*; and Ang. Sax. *flican*, to tickle: hence, a friendly conflict.[10]

[10] See 9, above.

[11] *Vies imaginaires* (Cratès); also *Eaux-de-Vie réeles* (Martel). There is a fine model at the Louvre (Room Z, west wall), and any number of the most agreeable disposition at Julien's or Delacluze's.

[12] Distinguish from to-day and to-morrow, except in the case of Egyptian gods; from to-day and for ever, except in the case of Jesus Christ; from to-day, but not from to-morrow, in the case of the Hindustani word "kal," which may mean either—not either itself, but "to-morrow" or "yesterday," according to the context. Note the comma.

[13] From to be, verb instrans. auxil. mood indic. tense imperf. pers. 3rd.

S. Cogitavi,[15] ergo fui. To my breezy nature such a controvery as this of ours on "Tessaracts" was as the ozone-laden discharge from a Brush machine.

M. I was not aware that the termination -ozoon was connected with the allotropic form of oxygen.

S. Little boys should be seen, but not obscene.

M. Seen, no doubt for the Arabic form of Samech; in Yetzirah Sagittarius, or Temperence in the Tarot of your ridiculous Rosicrucians.

S. No more so than your Semitic Romeike.

M. Semetic?

S. Ike for Isaac, non est dubium—

M. Quin—

S. God save His Majesty![16] but is this Midsummer Night, and are we dreaming?

M. "There are wetter dreams!"[17] Let us discuss the Divided Middle!

S. Beware of the Water Jump!

M. Hurrah for Taliganj! I can improve on John Peel's Map of Asia and that ere dawn. I will map you the lucubrations of the (converted) Hindu intellect upon this vital part of the Hegelian logic. Aum Shivaya vashi![18]

S. Dulce ridentum Mysticum amabo,
Dulce loquentum.

M. Will you not elide the 'um'?

S. Then I were left with a bee in my breeches—worse than Plato's in his bonnet.

M. A Scottish sceptic!

S. A Wee Free, Mysticus. A gaelic-speaking Calvinist with three thousand million bawbees in my sporran and a brace of bed-ridden cattle-thieves in my kirk. So I withdraw breeks.

M. And you rely not on Plato?

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[14] From French sévère; from Lat. severus-a-um; from Greek σαυρος, a crocodile; from Sanskrit Sar, a king. *Cf.* Persian, Sar, a king; also W. African and Kentucky, "sar," master; Lat. Caeser, Germ. Kaiser, Russ. Tsar. *Cf.* Sanskrit Siva, the destroyer, or severe one.

[15] See Descartes, *Discours de la Mèthode*, i. 1; Huxley, *Des Cartes*; and Mucksley, *Night Carts*, published San. Auth., Bombay, 1902. (At this point the damned don who was writing these notes was mercifully struck by lightning. He had intended to annotate every word in this manner in order (as he supposed) to attain a reputation like that of Max Müller *et hoc genus omne*.)

[16] Auberon Quin, King of England, in a novelette called "The Napoleon of Notting Hill."

[17] Wells, "There are better dreams"; but it turns out to mean that the young man is drowned, and at Folkstone too.

[18] *Cf.* Prof. Rice. "The waters of the Hoang-Ho rushing by intoned the Kung."

S. Verily and Amen. As the French lady explained, O mon Plate!—she would not say Platon, having already got one rhyme in 'mon'—and the Italian took her up that omoplat was indeed good to support the head, wherein are ideas. But to our divided middle!

M. As I should have said before I became a Christian:[1] "O Bhavani! be pleased graciously to bow down to thy servants: be pleased to construe our prattlings as Japas, our prayers as Tapas, our mantras as Rudradarshana, our bead-tellings as Devas! be pleased moreover to accept our Badli for Sach-bat, our Yupi for Lalitasarira, our subject—O bless our divided middle!—for thine own venerable Yoni. Aum!"

S. I am touched by your eloquence; but Science has not said its last word on Sabapaty Swami and his application of Pranayama to the aberrations of evolutionary retrocessions—flexomotor in type, yet sensorial in function—of the Sahasrara-Chakra, as you urged yesterday.

M. I will not press it. But in the so-affected ambulatory vibrations (as I must insist, and you practically agreed) of the lower chakras may yet be found to lie the solution of our primordial dilemma. What is the divided middle? lest enthymeme ruin our exegesis ere it be fairly started.

S. I will answer you without further circumlocution. The laws of Thought are reducible to three; that of identity, *A* is *A*; that of contradiction, *A* is not *not-A*; and that of Excluded Middle,[2] *A* and *not-A* taken together constitute the Universe.

M. That is a proposition easy to criticise. What of the line of demarcation between *A* and *not-A*? To *A* it is *not-A*, I suppose; to *not-A* it is *A*.

S. As in defining the bounderies of nations—Gallia est divisa in partes tres—we may suppose that half the line is of *A*, and half of *not-A*.

M. No; for a line cannot be longitudinally split, or bifurcated in a sense parallel with itself. As Patanjali hints in his Kama Linga Sharira—that most delicate of Eastern psychologico-physiologico-philosophical satires —"Bare Sahib ne khansamahko bahut rupaiya diya hai."

S. The Ethic Dative! But your contention is true, unless we argue with Aristotle ὠκεες στρουθοι περι γας μελαιναϛ and so on.

M. I was sure you would not seriously defend so untenable a position.

S. The eleemosynary functions of the—Jigar, I fancy the Vedas have it—

M. Yes—

S. Forbid.

M. Then do you accept the conclusions of the Hegelian logic?

S. My logic beins with the Stagyrite and ends with a manual kunt. I shall not surrender without a struggle. I am not an Achilles to be wounded in the heel.

M. Then the wound is healed? Forgive me if I trespass on the preserves of Max Beerbohm,[a] and your other ripping cosmopolitan wits!

S. No, for I say that the line is, like the Equator, imaginary.

M. But is not imagination to be classed as either *A* or *not-A*?

S. Vae victis! as Livy says. I admit it.

M. And its products?

S. Me miserum! I cannot deny it.

M. Such as lines? Namo Shivaya namba Aum—to quote our holiest philospher.

S. I am done. But no! I can still argue:
   (a)   There is no line of demarcation.
   (b)   There is a line, but it does not exist.

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[a] A distinguished author on philosophical and kindred subjects. See his "works." John Lane,[b] 1894.

[b] Lane—a long one, with neither variableness nor shadow of turning. Christian name John.[c]

[c] Not to be confused with John, the beloved disciple, who wrote "Caliban[d] on Patmos."[h]

[d] A dwarfish miscreate, celebrated in the works of Browning and Shakespeare (W.).[e]

[e] Dramatic author, flourished A.D. 1600 *circa*; wrote *The Tempest*[f], *Susannah; or, The Two Gentlemen of Veronica's Garden*, *The Manxman*, and other plays.

[f] A garbled version of this was misbegotten in A.D. 1904 on a London stage; the worst actor of a dreadful crew, in spite of his natural aptitude for the part of Caliban (*q.v. supra*, *note d*) being one Beerbohm Tree.[g]

[g] Tree, because such a stick. Beerbohm—*vide supra*, *note a*. I take this opportunity to introduce my system of continuous footnotes, on the analogy of continuous fractions. In this case they are recurring—a great art in itself, though an error in so far as they fail to subserve the great object of all footnotes, viz., to distract the attention of the reader.

[h] Text appended:—

CALIBAN ON PATMOS
Being the Last Adventure of the Beloved Disciple.

[COME, kids, lambs, doves, cubs, cuddle! Hear ye John
Pronounce on the primordial protoplast
Palingenetic, palæontologic,
And beat that beggar's bleeding בראשית
With truth veracious, aletheiac, true!
John ye hear. Cuddle, cubs, doves, lambs, kids, come!]

First God made heav'n, earth: Earth gauche, void; deep, dark.
God's Ghost stirred sea. God said 'Light!' 'Twas. 'Saw light,
Good, split off dark, call'd light 'day,' dark 'night.' Eve,
Morn, day I. 'Said "'Twixt wets be air, split wets!"
'Made air, split wets 'neath air, wets top air; so.
Call'd air 'heav'n.' Eve, morn, day II. 'Said, "Low wets,
Cling close, show earth." So. Call'd dry 'earth,' wet 'sea.'
   [Here John was seized
By order of Augustus. He maintained,
In spite of the imperial holograph,
"My seizer must be Caeser," with a smile:
And for persisting in his paradox
Was disembowelled: so Genesis got square.]

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[1] This is the invariable invocation used by the pious Hindu before any meditation or holy conference.

[2] Sir W. Hamilton's proposed quantification of the predicate would serve in this instance.

We have to combine the propositions:

All *A* is all *A*.

All *A* is not all *not-A*.

No *A* is not no *not-A*.

Fantastic as it seems, this is the simplist of the eighty-four primary ways of expressing these three laws in a single proposition.

No *not-A* is not no some not *not-A*.

(c) There is more than one line—since it is not straight and so cannot enclose a space—and *more than one thing* cannot form part of a universe, since unus implies a whole.

M. I should reply.

(a) It is true that there is no line of demarcation, but that that non-existing line is after all just as much a part of the (non-existing) universe as any other non-existing thing.

We divide the universe into

(1) Existing things.
(2) Non-existing things.

If *A* exists, the line must be *not-A*: and vice versa.

Which we know to be false.

(b) It is true that there is a line, and that it does not exist, but—

S. Let us settle (a) first, and return at leisure. You fail utterly to make the important distinction between mere absence of line and presence of a non-existing line, which is as gross a fallacy as to argue that a man who has gone out to lunch has been annihilated.

M. But he *has* been annihilated, from the point of view of the emptiness of his bungalow.

S. No! for the traces of his presence remain and will do so for ever.

M. Then a mehta's broom may be as mortal as a femme-de-ménage!

S. A trois: πατηρ—ὑιος, the λογος—and πνευμα ἁγιον.

M. Then you surrender? The tripartite anatomy of Tat Sat is granted me? Hegel is God, and Zoroaster his prophet? "The mind of the Father said 'Into 3!' and immediately all things were so divided!"?

S. Arrahmanu arrahima al maliku al qadusu as salamu—Vete cabron! Chinga su madre! I give in on that issue.

M. Alhamdolillah! For there are four letters in Allah الله. A for Ab—Father, L for Logos—double, for he is both God and man, and H for Holy Ghost.

S. The language of your Notariqon is tripartite too! On point (1) though, 'twas but by a slip. I fell: I was not pushed. Can you controvert my second defence?

M. It is not a defence at all. It is a trick to lure me away from the question. I admit that there is such a line, and that it does not exist—but might it not *negatively subsist*, in the Ain, as it were? Further, whether it is or is not a concept, a noumenon, a psychosis, an idea—anything! does not matter. For since it is a subject with or without predicates and the possibility of predicates, they are themselves predicates[1] which copulate with it even the impossibility of assigning predicates to it, with the exception—you are bound to urge—of itself. But this would violate your law of identity, that a predicate should exclude itself from its own cateory, even were it non-existent, inconceivable, bum. Consequently, thinkable or un-thinkable, our creation of it subjectively has fixed it eternally in the immeasurable void.

S. Your argumet is convincing as it is lucid. But to my third fortress!

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[1] *Litera scripta manet*. Do not steal it, or *tertia poena manet*.

M. Dorje Vajra Samvritti! As to your third line of defence, I must admit that my difficulties are considerable. Yet, Bhavani my aid, I will essay them. You said, I think—

S. There is more than one line, since the line is not straight (otherwise it could not enclose a space).

M. I do not see this!

S. A curved line is not truly a line, since a line must have length without breadth, and a curved line may certainly have breadth, for it need not lie in one plane.[2]

M. True.

S. Hence we may conclude that the line of demarcation between *A* and *not-A* is many and not one. Now a universe is that which turns to one,[3] when truly considered. Our line does the reverse of this, for it appeared one at first, and split up on examination.

M. Exactly; but that is where I have you in a corner.

S. Dollar wheat! Dollar wheat! Dollar wheat!

M. It is the 'reverse' which does you.[4] If you turn a man fourth-dimensionally round, his hemispherical ganglia will prove interchangeable?

S. No doubt, for they are symmetrical.

M. His polygonal fissures are identical with themselves?

S. I admit it, for they are ambidextrous.

M. His hypertrophied constrictor Cunni will feel nothing?

S. No; it is medial.

M. Then how is he changed?

S. Fourth-dimensionally; no more.

M. Yet his right optic nerve will see through his left eye?

S. Of course.

M. Then of an event, an argument, a dialectic euhemerism, protoplasmic or blastodermic?

S. I see what you mean. You would say that duality irresolvable into unity has no parallel in the regions of pure intelligence, seeks no corollary from the intuitive organic reactions of the hyperbolic cells?[5]

M. I would.

S. The devil you would!

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[2] The mathematical proof of this is simple. A surface is composed of an infinite number of parallel straight lines touching each other. Now for parallel straight lines place a single convoluted chortoid with a parabolic direction of $\pi^{n-\theta} + n^{\theta-\pi}$. At all the foci will be ellipses of the form

$$\frac{(n-1)(n+m+1)\sqrt{-1}}{(p+v)\pm\sin q^{-1}\cos a}.$$

Now since $p+v$ is in this case unity and $m=n$, we have—

$$\left\{\frac{c\left[\tan q - O\cos(p+a)\sqrt{-p}\right]c\sin q\,e^{iq} - eq^{p} + K}{\left[c\cos q + u\sin q\right]\left[u\tan q + t\sec q\right]}\right\}^{-1}$$

If the chortoid lie in one plane this expression$=O$; but if not, it $= \sin q^{-1}\cos q^{-2}$, q being the anggle subtended by the common arc of the original curve, by Halley's theorem, or $\sin\frac{q}{p}$, in which case the expression is unreal, and may be neglected.

[3] Two or more things cannot form part of any one thing, in so far as they remain two. Considered in relation to that of which they form part, they become fractions.

[4] *Cf.* A. B. Douglas, *Reminiscences*.

[5] Both colloid, caudate, and epicycloid, of course.

M. I would. Our line becomes single?

S. In the higher sense.

M. So that the Mind of the Father riding on the subtle guiders got it right after all?

S. Pretty right.

M. And all things are divisible into Three, not into Two?

S. Into *A*, *not-A*, and the dividing line.

M. Though the Reason of Man has boggled often enough at this, the intuition of Woman has always perceived it.

S. But she has gone too far, placing the importance of that dividing middle above all other things in earth or heaven. We hold the balance fair and firm.

M. (*glad*). How blessed is this day, Scepticus!

S. (*Conceding the point, and catching the glow*). Let us make a night of it!

M. (*Enjoying his triumph*). We will. Do not forget twilight!

S. (*In holy rapture*). Into Three, Mysticus, into Three!

M. (*Ditto, only more so*). Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

S. (*In the trance called Nerodha-Samapatti*). As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

M. (*Ditto, after an exhilerating switch-back ride through the Eight High Trances*). AMEN.