She is the Void, she is the All, she is

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I am a chaote. If you are reading this, you may be too. What it means to be a chaote varies, according to the day and the situation and in that it is many things and nothing at all. For the sake of exposition, I will unpack that a little more by saying, personally for me, part of being a chaote means that I have an overwhelming interest in nothingness, the concept of the void, and the history of the concept of emptiness. I won't go into an exploration of why and how something that is empty is not, in fact, contentless except to say that this is indeed my observation and the observation of others in this field of study. If you haven't experienced something as ineffable at this point, I doubt I could convince you anyway, nor is that my desire. I will, however, touch on a few things that originally stoked my interest in the void and the concept of nothingness in hopes that it will help you on your journey to know-where.

I have always had an attraction to large, empty, dark spaces for as long as I can remember. This was either started by or manifested as a recurring a dream I had as a child. The dream found me floating in the middle of a vast, dark sea and instead of being terrified I felt cradled, for lack of a better term. The void felt natural, inviting and even familiar. Besides this childhood obsession with nothing(ness), I have, in adulthood, come into contact with some vital ideas that have helped to feed this infatuation. The Kyoto School of philosophy is one. The Kyoto School blends some of the ideas from Zen schools of thought, regarding the void, with some of the better elements of continental, western nihilism (i.e. Heidegger, et al) but this is a subject for another time, possibly in the form of a book. The study of Zen, especially some of the "darker" schools, Taoism, Jung, Existentialism, Nihilism, Illegalism, Surrealism, Dada, Ernst Junger, Pataphysics, meditation and the cosmic college of hard knocks, are among a few but incomplete list of other influences that led me to my current position. I'm sure this road keeps going and I will keep traveling, so nothing I write here should be construed as a final position. Since I am a model agnostic, things can and most likely, will change based on new data. You should, rather, view this as a report from the field regarding the current position of my specific journey to date. Undoubtedly, I will be calling in new reports from future landscapes. Stay tuned.

A major instigator of my current insights lies in my pursuit of the history of zero (read *Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea*for a taste of this history) and the cultural effects that the acceptance of zero as a concept had. My interest in zero was, of course, an outgrowth of my interest in "nothing". In studying zero and its rocky road to acceptance in western thought, I took note of how hard some people in positions of power pushed back on the acceptance of this

idea. People, specifically people in positions of power, feared the idea of "nothing". I found this baffling since I already viewed "nothing" as the most primordial state of existence and in fact, I viewed it as a necessary predecessor of existence. Without the void, there is no emergence of a thing or one might even say the original thing. One may also call this original "thing" The Primal Monad, if one were so inclined. Regardless of what you call it, when you look at who were the most vocal opponents of the idea of zero's acceptance, it becomes abundantly clear that the fear and consternation was based on concerns of control. Whether this was wholly conscious on their part is debatable, but the pushback was still very real. Would it surprise you to know that the xtain church fathers were among the most vociferous and vocal opponents of the recognition of the concept of nothingness or absence of a thing and its representation via the symbol known as zero? Probably not. But when you read it written out like that, doesn't the fear and loathing seem patently absurd?

Mythologically and culturally, this struggle is best illustrated by the story of Tiamat and Marduk. Another book that I will recommend here is chaos mathematician Ralph Abraham's underappreciated masterpiece, *Chaos, Gaia, Eros,*which is an examination of world cultural history as viewed from the perspective of chaos theory. If this is beginning to read more like an expanded book catalog than an essay, I will concede that I am not a fan of the holy trinity of thesis, antithesis, synthesis, so sorry, not sorry. But I digress.

Tiamat is a goddess figure who was worshiped, some speculate, pre-civilization in the middle east. Tiamat is pictorially represented as a dragon but is referred to in writing as a great abyss, a dark void, and a vast dark ocean. Her name indicates her identification as a "primordial sea". In the post-civilization era, Tiamat's exact functions as a goddess become more unclear. Our best source of information for Tiamat is the myth Enūma Eliš, and in fact, there are only a handful of references to her outside of it. Her obviously once great influence seems to have been somewhat wiped out and Tiamat herself became demoted in the pantheon. Eventually, Tiamat became the antagonist of the creation myth in ancient middle eastern creation stories. Tiamat the great abyss, is killed and dismembered by a law and order sky god named Marduk. How exactly one goes about dismembering a void is something we'll leave to the side for now. Culturally, Marduk, previously a B-lister among the gods becomes one of the early monotheistic "sky gods". As Alan Watts once pointed out, this type of god was modeled on a middle eastern tyrant king. This shift of values, symbolized by the shift of reverence from a primordial sea goddess who was also known as The Void or The Abyss to a rule bearing, law imposing sky god is an allegory for the decline of a more nature-based form of existence towards a civilized form of society.

It doesn't take a genius to see how this story mirrors the rise of the Neolithic and the resultant vilification of the Paleolithic by the new citadel dwellers. This disdain carries over to present day, with urban dwellers expressing a low opinion of "bumpkins" and of course in Roman times, this disdain was expressed as "paganus", the root of the term "pagan" which literally means, "country dweller". What the retooling of the Tiamat/Marduk epic symbolizes is a shift in the nature of consciousness from a nomadic lifestyle, where the values of dynamism, gradients, and changes are viewed positively, and chaos is seen as a natural state. Flux, and change are viewed as the necessary precursors to life and vitality in this worldview. This outlook also puts a much less negative accent on the death and decay part of the life cycle. Breakdown is viewed not so much as entropy but rather a part of an eternal cycle. Law and order, civilized, calendric, stationary, citadel existence, which is viewed as a preferential state by the status quo, on the other hand, would be viewed as a form of bondage or prison by someone immersed in the chaotic worldview. Therein,

we have the natural conflict which arose between these two worldviews and of course the natural human expression through storytelling and myth. I won't go so far as to point my finger at things like language (although I admit, it is suspect in my view these days) or art, but I will include agriculture, clocks, calendars, slavery and banking systems among targets of suspicion.

How does this help us in the here and now? Well, to be very honest, it doesn't. At least not in the "how do we save the world?" sense. That's a fool's errand anyway. What it does do is help us understand how we got to this place, what this place is and maybe how to regain an appreciation for the sacred chaos that is a forgotten part of creation. In a sense, chaos is a natural defense from the virus called civilization, which we all know is just another word for slavery.

Uncertainty is your friend. Chaos is the lack of order which in fact is the true primordial state of being. When opposing or at the very least, not participating in a system of order, the best defense and offense is unpredictability. Anyone who has lived an illegalist style life knows that when the heat is on your tail, change up your routine and make it as random as possible to shake your tail.

If the idea of a goddess chafes you it may help to think of it as a symbol for a principle or an outlook or even an archetype that embodies a worldview. Remember what Jung said about archetypes having at least a pseudo-sentience (methinks he was hedging his bet). If you doubt this or have not experienced this first hand, then maybe you have not loped through the same liminal alleyways as me and some of my friends or maybe we're just insane. That's ok too. Think about it. Could there be a freer state in the straitjacket of civilization than what is commonly known as insanity? Never, ever forget. You are a frog and you are ever so slowly being boiled to death. You can choose to hop out of the pot, if only figuratively. If you have never allowed yourself to go completely and totally insane, even if for a period of time, you are missing out on a truly liberating experience. I highly recommend it.

Going toe to toe with the egregore known as civilization, or to use a more mythopoetic labels if that suits you, Marduk or Technos, is a suicide mission. The proper posture is more along the lines of 4th Generational or Asymmetrical Warfare. Think guerrillas in the jungle versus big, lumbering armies better equipped to fight in the European theater. Be nimble, be unpredictable, be chaotic. While we do this, we should adopt the proper archetypes to help us and inspire us in our hit and run escapades. Trickster archetypes seem the most natural choice. They are playful, mischievous, liminal, non-linear and unpredictable. Sounds like a match made in heaven. Regardless of your personal opinion regarding the subjectivity, objectivity, or usefulness of archetypes in everyday life, you can benefit from studying the strategies and methodologies of the universal archetype, known as the trickster. Luckily, because this figure is indeed universal, you have a multitude of flavors to choose from. Pick one or several that have qualities or pedigrees that resonate with you. To get you started, there's a handy list of tricksters here on this page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trickster

What, exactly are we fighting for? Nothing, in the truest sense of the word. No Thing. What are we fighting against? Structure, constraint, boredom, serfdom, control, the complete and total lack of wonder and joy that seems to grow, like kudzu vines, around everything and everyone in this simulation of life that has crept up swallowed us all. How do we break this strange spell? Here are some ideas: Perform strangely, channeled rituals in front of commercial venues. Use industrial adhesives to mount "non-commissioned" works of art in various places in the urban landscape, spray paint QR codes and slogans in very obvious public places, fill out official forms using the method of automatic writing and then submit them and vigorously defend their va-

lidity. Monkeywrench, monkeywrench, monkeywrench and then monkeywrench again. Devise disruptive strategies to thwart the spread of civilization, even if it's just a little piece, your little piece of ontological landscape. Be an agent of chaos. Leave little shrines to Tiamat in front of mosques, churches, and synagogues. Stage book burnings and use computer manuals, government tax codes, fashion and gossip magazines as the fuel. Use your imagination.

You may say that this is all in vain and in fact, you are most likely correct. Is this just rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic? Will this change anything? Could it? Should it? Aren't these all irrelevant questions? Shouldn't you be out dancing in the streets, celebrating life and randomicity, flashing a homemade identification card that reads, "Agent of Chaos" at anyone who dares to waggle a finger in the direction of your antics? Get busy, froggy!

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