



Beyond the narratives

Essays on Occultism and the Future

John Michael Greer

BEYOND THE NARRATIVES

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and the Future 2004–2017

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AEON

First published in 2020 by
Aeon Books Ltd
PO Box 76401
London W5 9RG

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A C.I.P. for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 978-1-91280-759-8

Typeset by Medlar Publishing Solutions Pvt Ltd, India
Printed in Great Britain

www.aeonbooks.co.uk

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INTRODUCTION

The second decade of my career as a writer began with a seismic shift that still has me struggling to catch my balance. At the winter solstice of 2003, as a result of a cascade of absurd events that no novelist could get away with, I became the seventh Grand Archdruid of the Ancient Order of Druids in America (AODA), an initiatory organization teaching Celtic nature spirituality which was founded in 1912. When I joined it, it had fewer than a dozen members left and was teetering on the edge of extinction, and I still suspect now and then that the other members elected me to the Northern Chair because it was less work than going to the trouble of shutting the order down.

Be that as it may, I threw myself into the work of reviving a nearly moribund Druid order, getting a website and an email list up and running, revising its long-neglected study program, and writing a book to introduce its teachings to a wider audience. After the frustrations and failures of the previous decade, I had no great ambitions; I hoped at most to attract enough members to the order to give it a new lease on life, and took it for granted that my new title would do no more for my writing career than previous involvements had done.

I was wrong on all counts. The book I wrote to present AODA's teachings to the general alternative-spirituality scene, *The Druidry Handbook*,

became one of my bestselling titles, and the order attracted a steady stream of new members. Even more unexpectedly, when I launched a blog—*The Archdruid Report*—and started weekly posts discussing the environment and the future of industrial civilization, it took off beyond all expectation, rising to a peak readership of a third of a million readers a month. I started getting speaking gigs, first in the Neopagan community and then, to my astonishment, at conferences called to discuss peak oil and the environmental crisis of our age.

The outcome was that my writings began to stray into territory very far from the Hermetic occult philosophy that was the focus of my first decade. The essays included in this volume chronicle some of the themes I explored as a result: Druidry, Jungian psychology, politics, history, and the shape of the future in a society in decline. I hope they will provide inspiration as well as instruction to my readers.

—John Michael Greer