

# Cajoling The Void

A Study in Endogenous Post-Modern  
Absurdism

The Collected Works of C.K. Rowan and R.  
Allen

A Compilation and Commentary

by Eris Coeus

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Witch-Doctor of Philosophy





*“He [sic] who fights with monsters should look to it that he [sic] himself [sic] does not become a monster. And if you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you”*

*-Friedrich “Freddy” Nietzsche*

*“Quantitas super qualitas”*

*-Narcissus*



To past generations,  
whose “education” taught them  
to be functioning members of society.



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## 1 Early writings

### **Assault and Flattery: How I Learned to Stop Nagging and Love the Atomic Dong**

Through the overtones of young Allen's sexual frustration emerges a coherent narrative, which is as much an in-the-trenches exhortation on the perils of adolescent sexuality as a witty application of Kubrick's satirical pessimism to everyday American life.

### **Jean-Paul Sartre: Mall Cop**

This short but insightful essay discusses the reverberations of Sartre's "Anguish of Freedom" in the realm of consumerism and self-censorship. Rowan takes the dictum: "Man [sic] is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he [sic] is responsible for everything he [sic] does" and applies it to the phenomenological psychology of compulsive-spending/remorse cycles facilitated by shopping malls.

### **Jingus or Genius: A Russell Allen Story**

A portentous indication of the nascent absurdist self-reflectivity which will come to characterize Allen's later works. "Jingus" appears to be an immediately post-millennial neologism meaning "bad," but with a hint of fondness or humor.

## **Lentils and Corn or Tentacle Porn: Japanese Pornography and Industrial Mono-cropping**

A brief self-study in Statistical Research Methods, and the subsequent acquisition of open-source data on the habits of the urban Japanese led Rowan to propose an apocryphal relationship between the Adult industry and commercial food. The correlation was later deemed “spurious.”

## **Linguistic Placebo Synesthesia: My Wine Tasting Adventure in Marin County**

Allen writes about his family vacation with the spiritual solemnity of an Ayahuasca devotee, and the raw culinary enthusiasm of *Ratatouille*'s Remy, Disney's famed epicurean rodent.

## **Amnesiacs Anonymous: If Only I Knew Now What I Knew Then...**

No justice can be done in summarizing this masterpiece of an essay—Allen's prescient prose not only epitomizes the *Early Work* period, but also demonstrates a maturity which launches us into his next intellectual phase.

## **2 Reflections on Modernity**

### **Post-modern or Post-mortem: The Necropolitics of the Metropolis, and How a Militia of Private Investigators Will Save the American Dream**

An allegorical true-crime noir which swings wildly between macabre depravity and scatological surrealism, a hallmark of Allen's modern period. Taking the trope of the grizzled-veteran-acquiescently-summoned-from-retirement-for-one-last-mission to its logical extreme, a group of PI's consult a medium to communicate with an adored, but long-dead police captain looking for assistance in a high profile case. Energized by the captain's seemingly unlimited insight, the group makes a breakthrough in the case. But after receiving a suspicious butt-dial from beyond the veil, one investigator is left wondering if the captain is not as innocent and well-meaning as he seems...

### **Lamination or Lamentation: Ennui in the Modern Workplace**

The bureaucracy of a twenty-first century corporation functions in much the same way as the scripture of archaic religious institutions, and many scholars argue that lamination is the modern analogue of inscribing in stone. In what ways does this current practice fail to satisfactorily represent the principle of permanence?

## **Elon Musk or Elon Husk: The Unfortunate Psychological Side-effects of AI Managerial Regimes**

A response to the widely circulated internet meme showing the now-famous technocrat's face photo-shopped onto a cornhusk doll, Allen attempts to use Google's "humanIT," an opensource deep-learning platform geared towards the humanities, to write this paper for him.

## **Healing Yoga Through Trauma: Militarization of Marxist Principles in the New Age of Spiritual Capital**

The historical definition and evolution of capital is traced through a fictional conversation between Karl Marx, the Hindu god Krishna, and a troupe of Instagram influencers.

## **Alien vs Creditor: On the Feasibility of Extraterrestrial Life and the Financialization of the Space Industry**

What began as a conversation about a favorite science-fiction film launched into a comprehensive literature review investigating the likelihood of life in our galaxy, and an incisive critique of the space industry's fiscal fixation.

## **Sublimation Substation: Neuro-Electrical Pathways of the Modern City**

Incorporating knowledge gleaned from disparate fields such as computational neuro-biology and Freudian city planning, Allen argues that the American city is a physical

projection of the collective psyche and diagnoses it with an Oedipal complex.

**Post-modern or Poster-child for Modernity:  
The Impossibility of Linear Progress in Neoliberal Regimes à la Marx and European Expatriotism**

A dense and inscrutable piece which makes Jacques Ranciere look like a children's author. To abridge this essay would require more words than the original work.



### **3 Criminality, Surveillance and State Control**

#### **The Panoptometrist: State-implanted Nanotechnology in Prescription Eye Glasses**

Rowan and Allen team up in this prodigious work of Patriot Act era investigative journalism which exposes a historic cover-up in the growing field of political optometry.

#### **The Pan-Optimist's Dilemma: MDMA Therapy for Death Row Prisoners and the Existential Implication of Capital Punishment in the Age of Narco-pharmacology**

Inspired by Allen's time as an undercover death row inmate, this is a must read for anyone interested in the intersection of psychedelic psychiatry and contemporary jurisprudence.

#### **The Hunchback of Notre Dame or the Dunce Cap of the Criminally Insane: Postural Taboos of the Hopelessly Disturbed**

Though aspects of this essay had been individually brought to fruition throughout the years, their synthesis was not achieved until an epiphanic realization at a physical therapy session where a famous Disney film was overheard from the waiting room.

## **Little Red Hood Ridin': Fairy Tale Symbolism and the Role of Fashion in Urban Gang Self-identification**

A conversation overheard on the streets of Newark<sup>1</sup> between two suspected gang members<sup>2</sup> leads to a fruitful interrogation of the mythological and folkloric origins of urban gangs.

## **Feudalism or Futility: Anarchy, Common Property Regimes and Existential Disrepair**

Allen takes a notably political-economic standpoint on the question of the most “fulfilling” form of governance.

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<sup>1</sup>Rowan listened in on an exchange for nearly five minutes. In this syndicate, the leader is referred to as “Grandmother,” and new members are inaugurated via the “What big . . . you have” ritual, in which the initiate symbolically prostrates themselves via flattery of the leader, a tradition with striking parallels to this essay’s eponymous myth.

<sup>2</sup>These allegations turned out to be false.



## 4 Ethnographies and Journalism

### **Ideal Hands Are the Devil's Workshop: Murder and Mayhem in the Glove Modeling Industry**

Rowan takes on an ambitious solo project, diving into the criminal underbelly of hand models to find the root of the notorious violence. This piece's inspiration is rumored to be the graveyard scene of the first *Zoolander* movie, but Rowan has denied this claim saying, "I have been interested in the connection between gloves and violence since the OJ trial." Familiar anecdotes, such as the "phalangeal phalanx,"<sup>3</sup> arise from this famous work.

### **Mahogany Monogamy: Brand Loyalty and Mormon Monopolies on Bedroom Furniture Production and Sales**

The original title of this manuscript was *Polyester Polygamy*; which was unknown until Allen's chest of incomplete and/or discarded works was exhumed from the backyard of his childhood home. Based on his notes, research proceeded at a normal pace until a "sinister" dream provoked an irreversible disdain for synthetic fabrics, at which point Allen decided to pivot to anthropological inquiries of a more natural substrate.

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<sup>3</sup>An annual ceremony in the world of elite glove models emulating the Roman battle formation

## **Quasi-Mod(ulation): The Hunchback of Shoe-gaze, or Why Chiropractors Are the Best Groupies**

Serendipity conspired to have Allen bemoaning the tragic failure of a Valentine's day surprise at his regular back adjustment, which his chiropractor mistook as a reference to a popular shoe-gaze group who happened to be his clients. The rest is history.

## **Belly of the Yeast: Chthonic Archetypes and Heroism in Baking**

Rowan describes the oven as the "innermost cave, the central crisis of the bread's transformation, an obvious parallel to the mythological underworld." An essay both etymological and historiographic, this work traces the meaning of the word "Christ" to its Coptic, pre-Christian origin *khabaz*, meaning "dough-y." His findings cast the modern Eucharist and Bible verses such as "Christ has risen" in a new and exciting light.

## **Beauty and the Crease: Unfolding Origami's Darkest Secrets**

From paper-cuts to paper-trails, Allen works himself into the fold of an origami gang in hopes of taking down the infamous kingpin "Le Papier." But up against the paper tiger of his own fears, will he have what it takes to infiltrate and expose this brutal criminal?

## **Cane and the Ableists: How a Punk Trio Settled an Age-old Rivalry on the Use of Assistive Walking Devices in the Parish**

In this rough and tumble, Hunter S. Thompson-esque escapade, Rowan and Allen immerse themselves among Cleveland's disaffected, leather-bound youth searching for an alleged anarchist agitator named "Axe-L." Instead, they find solidarity and the hope of redemption in one punk group's religious devotion and commitment to inclusivity.

## **Dead-pan Octomom: Ethnographic Insights into the Psycho-pathology of Mass Child Rearing**

Ever since his own "unsatisfactory" childhood, Rowan has been interested in the business of effective parenting. Traveling to Iran to be an assistant maternity ward nurse,<sup>4</sup> he studied post-partum psychology and parental instincts. With a slew of disparate and inconclusive findings, he returns home, realizing that only in the union of normal and pathological upbringings did the key to his youthful unhappiness lie. Thus, a study was born.

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<sup>4</sup>Unlike the US, 23% of Iranian nurses are male, a fact which Rowan claims made his investigations "less embarrassing"



## **5 Psychology, Spirituality and Occultism**

### **Immaculate Contraception: Fundamental-ist Christian Condoms**

Allen proposes a compromise with the institution of Christianity on the question of pre-marital sex: in exchange for the Church's blessing, protection will be used, and it will be blessed by a priest. Written around the time of Allen's first high-school relationship.

### **The Black Son: The Psychological Interplay of Modern Adoption Practices and Alchemical Solar Deities**

An authoritative text in the field of Jungian family planning, Rowan sees the shadow archetype operative in the adopted child, and, relying on alchemical writings around the symbol of *sol niger*, outlines a practical process by which the child can be psychically integrated.

### **Oculus and the Occult: Accessing Trans-Dimensional Realms via Audio-Visual Interfaces**

Increasingly frustrated by the failures of rabbits' feet, oil from reptiles, and sundry herbs, many occultists are turning to the virtual world for a more "engaging" experience of the supernatural.

## **Bullying as a Form of Self-help: On the Introduction of a Genetically-Engineered Sacrificial Nerd Underclass<sup>5</sup>**

The title speaks for itself—Rowan adopts a “get tough, real tough” policy on bullying and establishes himself as the black sheep of both developmental psychology and educational biotechnology.

## **The Freudian Slip: Unconscious Suicidality and the Importance of Shoveling Your Home’s Walkways**

Rowan predicts that, along with El Niño, Freud’s *thanatos* will be very active in 2015; the combination of the two can be perilous at high latitudes.

## **Singing in the Brain: Auditory Disillusionment Therapy in Musical Theatre for Schizophrenic Disorders**

Though Allen’s 10 hour debut venture into experimental musical theatre was not successful from a therapeutic standpoint, the audience found many of the actors<sup>6</sup> portrayal of insanity rather convincing.

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<sup>5</sup>On numerous occasions, Rowan has expressed his disbelief that this idea had not been proposed previously.

<sup>6</sup>Patients

## **6 Instructional Manuals**

### **A Series of Unfortunate Vents: Common Mistakes To Avoid in Central Air Installations**

Allen's summer internship at a local HVAC company quickly morphed into a standard-setting, user-focused anthology outlining the pitfalls of amateur installations. It did not take long for this work to be recognized as the authoritative text on the subject of DIY home climate control.

### **Inspecto-petroleum: The Role of Witchcraft and Wizardry in Maintaining Offshore Oil Rigs**

As both a technical manual and an exploration of the often-ignored role of the occult in industry, this is a difficult piece to classify. Of interest to industrialists and mystics alike.

### **Dionysian Revelry or Einsteinian Telemetry: Prioritizing Your Undergraduate Engineering Workload**

Advice on time management, perseverance and available resources for the aspiring STEM major, with precautionary tales from Greek Mythology.

### **Machine Un-learning: Deprogramming Your Computer's Intergenerational Trauma**

A practical, down-to-earth guide to remedy minor software malfunctions which accumulate over the course of multi-

ple update cycles. A collaboration, written by popular demand.

## **Low Fidelity and High Credibility: A Beginner's Guide to the Stock Market from a Bedroom Dreampop Producer**

Intermediate level computer skills and quaint self-importance are exactly what prospective investors need to make their start. And it turns out, the next generation of musicians can help.

## **Shock and Awww: Using Electro-convulsive Therapy to Artificially Stimulate the “Cute” Response**

A fictional guide satirizing the brutal anachronisms of mid-nineteenth century psychiatry.



## 7 Miscellaneous Works

### **Vessels and Vassals: Property Relations and the Origins of Human Biology**

Verging on conspiratorial nonsense, Allen cites multifarious fringe intellectuals in support of his claim that human biology and political institutions developed symbiotically, and hypothesizes an as-yet undiscovered ancient civilization in which the hierarchical lines of trade and communication between vassals and feudal lords hadn't crystallized into their biological analogue, the blood vessel. He calls this unstable transitional bio-political state the "post-vassal, pre-vessel" stage and estimates that anthropological evidence of its existence will surface within the next 50 years. Written while hospitalized in a state of semi-psychosis after being rescued from *Todesnadel*,<sup>7</sup> the most treacherous peak in the Alps. See *Divine Couloirs* below.

### **Evolution: The Original Ableist**

An almost desperate rant on the injustice of natural selection, Allen makes an impassioned call for the immediate institution of "natural safe spaces," which he hopes will lay the groundwork for reforming the status quo of animal behavior.

### **The Pan-Octopus: Adult Swim's Monopoly on Millennial Comedy and The Chaotic Aquatic**

What begins as an acerbic polemic on the danger of bad incentives in animated comedies slowly transitions to spit-balling ideas for a waterpark franchise.

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<sup>7</sup>Roughly translates to "The Death Needle"

## **Fighting Fire with Lizzy McGuire: California's Alternative Regimes of Pre-pubescent Pop Culture as a Response to Climate Change's Increasing Destabilization of the Promethean Realm**

After a brief investigation by the Department of Fish and Wildlife into Allen's role in a recent cycle of devastating California wildfires,<sup>8</sup> he launches an imaginative and unprecedented initiative to involve the youth in the fight to save their state.

## **Dead-wood Scissor Hands: On the Possibility of Ambulatory Robotic Cutting Technology in the Fight Against Wildfires**

Tim Burton and MIT's robotics department come together to create vanguard solutions in wildfire mitigation and prevention. Rowan is on scene to cover their progress.

## **Divine Couloirs and Wine Coolers: Winter Alpine Excursions of '97**

A drunken, gonzo-journalistic examination of the razor-thin line dividing life and death on Switzerland's alpine ridges. This coming-of-age drama reads like an extended, hyper-masculine, and confusedly spiritual suicide note, and culminates in both authors swearing off alpine climbing and alcohol for good.

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<sup>8</sup>The evidence was considered inconclusive

## **Ban-anagrams: A Call to Outlaw Lascivious Subtext in Children's Word Games**

Violently triggered by the possibility of spelling erotic words in an otherwise innocent night of word games, Rowan's initial indignation slowly fizzles to a dull recognition of his own sexual repression.

## **Becoming a P.E.T.A.-phile: Promoting Public Interest in the Ethical Treatment of Animals**

Incensed by a mediocre commercial farming documentary, Rowan and Allen deem themselves "closeted vegetarians" and embark on a joint crusade to raise awareness, while struggling with their own hunger for the forbidden fruit.



## 8 About the Authors



Conor K. Rowan first became interested in the supernatural after his portrayal of “crying baby #3” in the original *Exorcist*. The lingering psycho-spiritual effects of his time on set, in addition to his tumultuous career as a child-actor, precipitated a complete dissolution of personality,<sup>9</sup> a prolonged psychotic episode,<sup>10</sup> and subsequently, years of intensive Jungian analysis. The gap between spirit and intellect was only bridged in the creation and release of his debut alchemy-themed solo hip-hop EP “The Philosopher’s Stoned,” which was featured on an episode of MTV’s

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<sup>9</sup>Later recognized as the spontaneous invasion of unconscious compensatory forces, in response to a floundering and infantile ego-consciousness. See C.G. Jung, “The Collected Works”, pp. 2-1,500. *Solve et Coagula*.

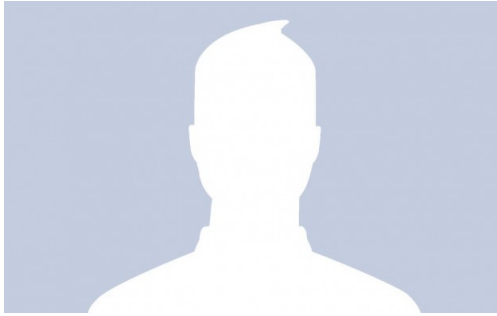
<sup>10</sup>See *Divine Couloirs* above.

*Suburban Beats.* His writing career properly began after accepting a temporary position as adjunct Professor of Psychology at the University of Delaware, becoming interested in diverse topics such as politics, journalism and philanthropy. Rowan is the founder of *Grey Space*, a non-profit aimed at helping suburban kids with limited access to the inner-city expand their horizons.



Russell Allen initially gained recognition as the “Virtual Vigilante,” a then-anonymous individual committed to enforcing enlightened thinking in comment sections all over the internet. His talent for diplomacy, his commitment to justice, and his passion truth blossomed into a full-blown literary career after he abandoned the virtual cape and its incumbent anonymity for academia. Though never employed by any university per se, his work has been circulated widely through his online blog and a brief publishing deal his dad arranged. Authoring more than 20 essays, anthologies and short stories, Allen has shaken the foun-

dations of the humanities with groundbreaking questions such as *Who?*, *Where?*, *When?*, *Why?* and *What?...* Allen has disappeared into obscurity since his 2008 imprisonment in Kyrgyzstan on unsubstantiated charges of sedition. You can donate to his GoFundMe to cover legal fees and aid in locating him.



Eris Coeus is a fictional graduate student of Philosophy whose name is an amalgamation of intentionally-selected figures in Greek Mythology. He was invented as an excuse to talk about Rowan and Allen in the third person, and also to sound smart.