



Paschal Beverly Randolph: A Nineteenth-Century Black American Spiritualist, Rosicrucian, and Sex Magician (Suny Series, Western Esoteric Traditions)

John Patrick Deveney

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This first scholarly work on Randolph includes the full text of his two most important manuscripts on sexual magic.

This is a superb piece of work. It is the only book that I know of about Randolph, who is generally considered a notable curiosity of nineteenth-century esotericism, but whom the author establishes as an absolutely central and pivotal historical character. This historiography is masterful--meticulously detailed and coherently presented. This is an important book, filling a gap that wasn't previously known to have been so substantial. It's well written, a tour de force at amassing the data. It is a must read." -- Dan Merkur, author of *Gnosis: An Esoteric Tradition of Mystical Visions and Unions*

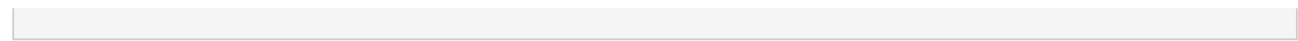
This is the fascinating story of Paschal Beverly Randolph, an African American who carved his own eccentric path in the mid-nineteenth century from the slums of New York's Five Points to the courts of Europe, where he performed as a spiritualist trance medium. Although self-educated, he became one of the first Black American novelists and took a leading part in raising Black soldiers for the Union army and in educating Freedmen in Louisiana during the Civil War. His enduring claim to fame, however, is the crucial role he played in the transformation of spiritualism, a medium's passive reception of messages from the spirits of the dead, into occultism, the active search for personal spiritual realization and inner vision.

From his experiences in his solitary travels in England, France, Egypt and the Turkish Empire in the 1850s and 1860s, he brought back to America a system of occult beliefs and practices (the magic mirror, hashish use and sexual magic) that worked a revolution. The systems of magic he taught left their traces on many subsequent occultists, including Madame Blavatsky and her Theosophical Society, and are still practiced today by several occult organizations in Europe and American that carry on his work. This is the first scholarly work on Randolph and includes the full text of his two most important manuscript works on sexual magic.

"It is fascinating, because the subject's life was filled with dramatic adventure and hardship, and touched upon so many issues of the day. Deveney's work is important in itself as a ground-breaking study of an intriguing character. I can think of no figure in nineteenth-century Western esotericism who has been more unjustly ignored than Randolph. Deveney rescues him from obscurity in this biography, which will be regarded as authoritative for many years to come." -- K. Paul Johnson, author of *Initiates of Theosophical Masters* and *The Masters Revealed: Madame Blavatsky and the Myth of the Great White Lodge*.

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