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## Hakim Bey

Hakim Bey is the pseudonym of Peter Lamborn Wilson (b.1945), a spiritual anarchist whose work emerged at the fore of the cultural underground that fermented in the US in the last decades of the twentieth century. Raised in Baltimore, Maryland, Wilson dropped out of Columbia University in order to dedicate himself to the Moorish Orthodox Church of America, a fellowship of psychedelic hipsters whose heterodox interpretation of →Sufism is perhaps best likened to "Beat Islam". Branching off from the larger Moorish Science movement, the first Islamic sect founded in the U.S., Wilson's troupe of "goofy Sufis" published its own newsletter (*The Moorish Science Monitor*), broadcast radio programs (*The Moorish Orthodox Radio Crusade*), and circulated through New York City's bohemian enclaves distributing cubes of LSD, which they regarded as a sacrament.

Their reputation as evangelists led to an informal alliance with the psychedelic churches that had taken up residence at the palatial Millbrook estate. Here, they fraternized with the co-called "Army of the Hudson Valley," led by Dr. Timothy Leary's League of Spiritual Discovery, Arthur Kleps' Neo American Church, and the Sri Ram Ashram of Swami William Haines. In 1968, Wilson expatriated to the East in search of authentic sources of Sufism. After years of sojourning through Turkey, India, Indonesia, and Afghanistan, he took a position at the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, the world center for →Traditionalism, where he was initiated into Frithjof Schuon's Maryami Order. Wilson edited the academy's journal, *Sophia Perennis*, until the Iranian Revolution forced him to flee the country. He returned to the U.S. in the early 1980s, whereupon he made his debut, now as Hakim Bey, with *Crowstone* (1983), a paean to man-boy love in the form of a fantasy novel.

Hakim Bey broke into the world of →fanzine publications, or "zine scene", with

*Chaos: The Broadsheets of Ontological Anarchism* (1983), an episodic prose-poem that sketched a cosmological theory of utopianism. The zine was followed by a torrent of incendiary "communiqués" issued by the Association for Ontological Anarchism (later the Association for Ontological Anarchy), a secret society made all the more intriguing on account of the mystery surrounding the true identity of Hakim Bey. Fanning the flames of notoriety, Wilson linked his alter ego to the heretical Sufi Order of the Assassins (or "Hashashins"), revolutionary anarchism, as well as rumors of a failed bombing plot. His popularity climaxed with the publication of *The Temporary Autonomous Zone* (1991), a mass-market anthology of his underground writings published by Autonomedia. His doctrine of spiritual anarchism (conventionally shortened to *TAZ*) has become a touchstone for a range of subcultures, though it was first seized upon by the cyberpunk vanguard of hacker culture. Decades later, Wilson became the father of the Taqwacore movement, a distinctly punk school of American Islam, which arose after the publication *Taqwacore* (2003), a novel by Wilson's then-disciple, Michael Muhammad Knight.

Alongside the work of his *nom de guerre*, Wilson published (under his own name) over a dozen scholarly monographs focusing on Persian culture, heterodox Islam, and pirates. He revisited many of these topics on his radio show, *The Moorish Orthodox Radio Crusade*, which he revived in the late 1980s. His tenure on the show lasted from 1987 to 1995, at which point he passed the host position to Bill Weinberg, an anarchist journalist. Before briefly relocating to Dublin, Wilson accepted a lectureship position, alongside his friends Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs, at the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University. A life-long poet, Wilson continues to publish verse compositions, as well as scholarly monographs up until the present day.

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## Literature

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