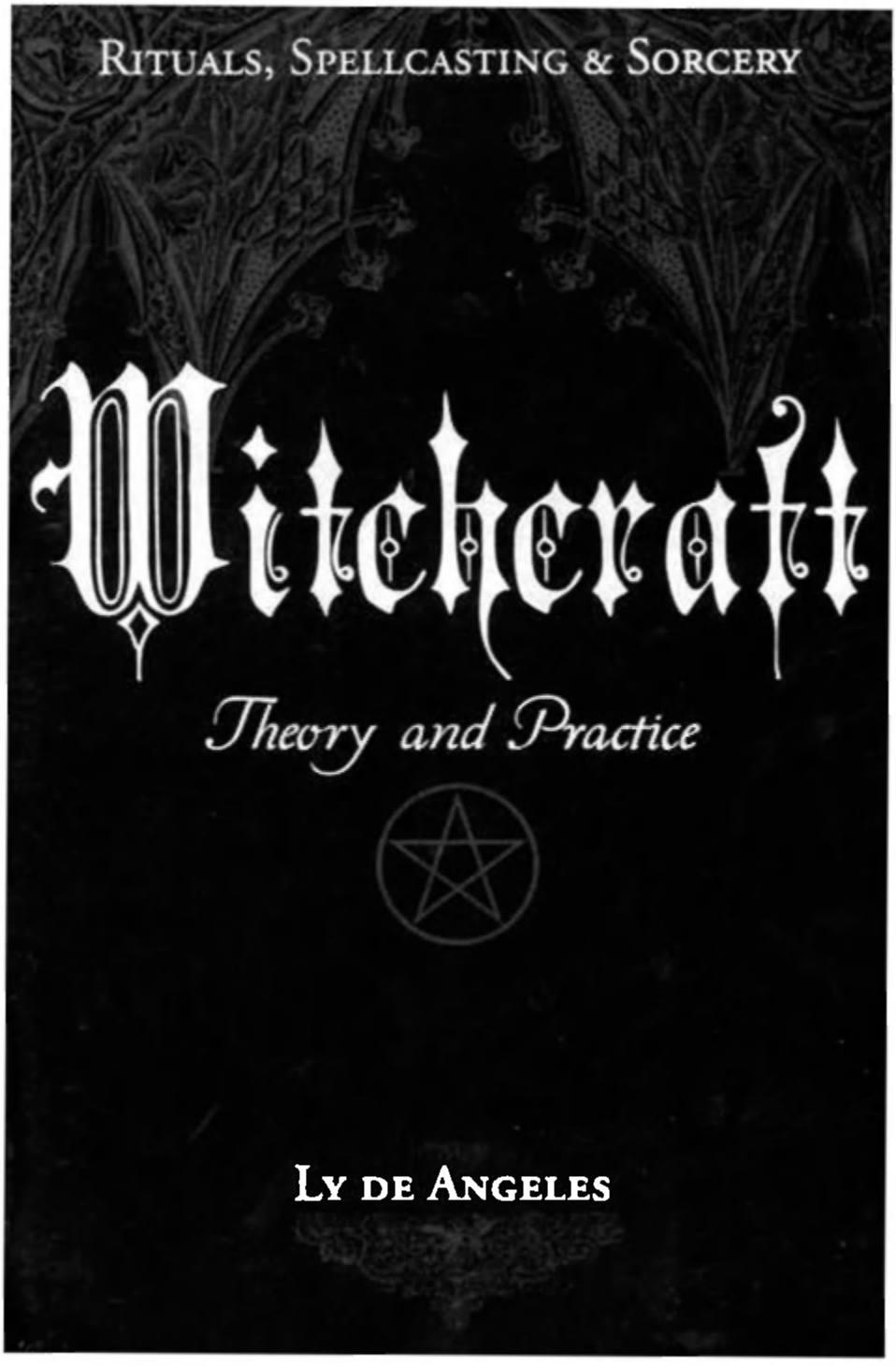
RITUALS, SPELLCASTING & SORCERY

Witchcraft

Theory and Practice

LY DE ANGELES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No Turning Back

Once you have chosen to take upon yourself the obligations of the practice of Witchcraft, then the effects, or the immanence, of this way of life will be bestowed on you from aligned intelligences, and so will the tests that accompany them.

Anyone who willingly opens themselves to powers beyond the veil of manifestation (as we understand it) opens themselves to the possibility of inner initiation. Witches know that they are witches, but initiation is what seals that knowledge through the power of ritual and the intent inherent within the process itself, to a deeper strata of recognition and response both within oneself and from the powers to which we are oathed.

Once initiation has occurred, there is no turning back you will quest all your life; it is not a thing to do thoughtlessly.

-Lv de Angeles

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LY DE ANGELES

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"... and when you know the magic believes in you, how can you not?"

-Ly de Angeles

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PROLOGUE

ithin the corner of a darkened room a woman sits on a chair and hums a repetitive tune. Her eyes are closed and she rocks back and forth, back and forth, back and forth-seeming to sway in some invisible wind like the rushes on a lake shore. Her hands are moving between threads as she weaves and plaits them, every now and then stopping to tie a knot; the silence more permeable for the lack of song.

She sits, thus, for hours until the room lightens with the glow of the rising Moon, the shafts of which pierce the window to land at her feet. The monotonous humming stops, the rocking stops, the dancing fingers stop-her eyes are open.

She stands and walks to the center of the little room where her table is set with the instruments of her birthright: cup, picking up the glow of moonlight and dripping it onto the cloth beneath; knife with the hilt as black as jet that glints with streaks of silver that have been set into the ancient runes that surround the base, and with a double-edged blade that flares and tapers finely to its point of power; pentacle that glows with burnished light, the symbols on its face deep and meaningless to any save its owner; wand of willow wood, finely carved with her own hand into an intricate set of spirals and swirls, worn in places where it has been lovingly worked; unlit candles of purest white to compliment the Moon's glow, and a heavy silver medallion on a cord, older than even she knows, that has been passed down, along with her knowledge and her sword, the Initiator, from one to the other, in secret nights and ancient tongue, from one to another, by right of succession and ancient oath, until to her it was bequeathed with all that belongs to the passage; a bowl of burning coals that glow and shed warmth round about, upon which she drops juniper twigs and wood from the dead bough of an apple tree. From the coals she lights a taper, then the candles,

one by one-all in silence and certainty of what is to follow.

Her shapeless dress is unbuttoned and dropped to the floor; her hair, bound about her head in a tight braid, is unraveled and spreads around her in a wild, burnished copper haze. The medallion she takes lovingly in her hands to greet with a soft kiss before raising it to the Moon's glow for approval; she then drops its cord over her head onto her breast, drawing comfort from its familiar coldness on her skin.

She kneels, raises her arms above her head, breathes deeply, and waits. Very soon the Moon is fully risen and the shafts of silver cover her body and radiate around her. She cries out, in the ancient tongue of the Lands of Lirian, that she is ready to greet her Goddess, whose name she summons by the name she knows, and it rings around her thrice, like the secret chiming of bells.

The air is still and expectant.

She slowly stands and takes the cup, this sacred chalice, now filled with water, later wine, and walks around the little room sprinkling as she goes. A soft, melodious chant is rising, rising from her as she quickens her pace, deosil, deosil, leaving trails of moonlight glowing in a circle all around her. She feels the force field, an almost imperceptible swishing that grows to a hum. When it is constant she stops, moves back to her table, proclaiming it altar. Now she dips her wand into the cup and uses the sacred water to seal her body from all things impure or mundane, thinking, "Be ye far from us, oh ye profane ..." She kisses the wand's tip and lays it back on the altar. She refuels the brazier and inhales the sweet-smelling smoke-a tribute to her Goddess. She takes the pentacle between her two hands and raises it above her head, calling forth the force of the Four Winds to act as sentinels to her rite. She takes the dagger, the power of her birthright, and presses it to her breast to fill it with her own essence, and then she stands. The dagger is now athame. She raises it slowly; her whole being is poured from its magnetized tip in shafts of blue fire as it pierces the night for the acknowledgement she knows will come.

Her breath is still. The night is still. The forces of life wait expectantly, and suddenly the light returns to flood the roomthe priestess of the Moon cries out to the primordial mother, to whom she was bequeathed before the dawn of time.

The mother answers with the heartbeat of a thousand million lives and acknowledges her daughter, sister, self. They fuse and are one-was it ever any other way?

The cycle is complete, and the priestess of the Moon is assured. The magic of her fingers will soothe where they lay, and the magic of her voice will heal where it is heard, the magic of her eyes will light the Earth, and all things will grow where're she looks upon them.

The Way of the Goddess will continue, though to most her name is unknown. As long as even one remembers will the knowledge proceed and the Earth be sustained.

Though the foolish fear what they don't understand, the magic goes on and the secret survives, for the priestess of the Moon is witch, and what she represents is at one with what's living, and all that she is will continue-for without her the Earth would weep and the night would never understand and so would cease to be. She is the spiral of life-the oceans, the rivers, the falling of the dew, the changing of the seasons. She is the corn at harvest and the birth of birds. She is the wind on the mountain and the spider's web at dawn.

All things of beauty are the name that she summons, for she is the mirror of the Goddess that is life, and the mother of all living things. If she could not continue, or was the last of all, then all hope would cease to be.

Introduction to the Revised Edition

en years have elapsed since The Way of the Goddess was originally published, and I am as aware of what I didn't write as I am of what I did. I was only a few years out of the closet, you see, and the confusion and lack of awareness of a biased public kept me cautious.

Not so now. Now I no longer care to tolerate those opinions. I am what I am, and I am in honorable company relative to the many witches I have initiated since I took high priesthood in 1980.

Two things I would like you to be aware of regarding this work: it was intimated to me over the years by many of my readers that the work displayed a bias toward women. "Not so," say I. It was necessary for me to recount the practices in as personal a genre as possible to forestall it being viewed as a work of dusty authority, and I am, incidentally, a woman. I have amended much of the ritual accordingly, without losing the intent of the content. Secondly, the original work was, as far as I'm concerned, a light work; very much a primer. I have taken this material much further (without dishonoring my sacred oaths), as though I communicate with the students and initiates whom I train.

I do not intend to whitewash the way I know Witchcraft. There is no such thing as a good witch or a bad witch in the common vernacular-one is either very good or training to be so (as opposed to inept). Witchcraft is sorcery, and I understand the term conscience by way of its etymological root2 rather than as it is considered in the current religious sense.

I have included material to familiarize you with the progressive training of the witch in as broad a context as possible without personal contact. I stress that although this manual leans toward the workings of a solitary witch, connection with an established, checked-'em-out-and-they-feel-like-family-

ought-to-feel coven is preferable, as the passing-on of initiation, and the one-to-one training that is inherent in a good coven is the surest way of deeply knowing that initiation has taken.

The Way of the Goddess was primarily directed to witches of the Southern Hemisphere because, at the time, nothing else did. While sales in the south lands were predictable, those in the Northern Hemisphere were quite vast. I will, therefore, include you more directly in the cross-associations, seasonally, for ease of training.

INTRODUCTION

11 of the techniques described in Part One, Section One are basic requirements for most self-development training yin occult traditions. Parts Two and Three are devoted to the rituals and workings of Witchcraft. Whatever you learn is automatically projected into your personal and environmental energy field, and that, in itself, denotes changes not only to your own basic lifestyle, but to the lives of those with whom you associate. You may find yourself with little or nothing in common with people with whom you have consorted for years. You may find yourself in conflict and turmoil, misunderstood,' and daunted at every turn, unwilling to accept confines to which you may have previously (often unwittingly) acquiesced.

So your challenge is going to be whether or not to break away from your current lifestyle or to somehow incorporate it (and to experiment with the ways to do either). I once knew a woman who had begun training with my coven. She lived with her three children and a husband who had been a part of her life for many years. The children were very understanding but her husband continually harangued her for her newly acquired associates and her involvement in occult practices. There was all kinds of trouble-arguments and walkouts and slammed doors-he would say she had changed and this wasn't the way he expected her to be, and she would refuse to discuss the matter, saying that he didn't want to understand and was jealous of her new-found feelings and teachings.

There were a few of us at my home one night, including this woman, and we talked about her problem (she hadn't invited her husband, he stayed home with the kids). We discussed what he believed and what she was learning; she also stated that she didn't want to leave her husband. We asked her how certain she was of the ways of magic that she was learning and, because she was determined to continue her training, why she engaged in argument with him at all. She said, "He doesn't want me to follow my path, and I'll be damned if I'll let him interfere!" We asked her how he was interfering and she replied, "He rubbishes me." We asked how, if she was

caring about her family and still following the path, his rubbishing could have an effect; that if she really wanted to do it, then he couldn't stop her, and that only through being who she professed to be could she find peace. Sooner or later, if she were loving and laughing and still doing what she knew was right for her, then he would come to accept and appreciate her. This is universally true, for only by living who you really are and what you learn (and not just talking about it) do you ever really grow.

Sometimes, of course, there are real problems associated with being a witch and letting it be known. It would be foolish of me (and untrue) if I denied that you run the risk of losing a whole lot more than just your current thought processes. That is why many of us are publicly silent about our path. The point is that all people have the right to choose how they will live their lives and why not, when we live in a society that does not physically imprison us for attempting to exercise that right? The hardest lesson in your life could be letting go.

Sometimes we take risks that cannot be avoided. The point is to decide for yourself. We do not allow others to assume that they can dictate how we seek and perpetuate truth; start by looking inside yourself for the answers. Whatever your choices, you are ultimately going to affect many people, some of whom you will never meet. The work you do (developmentally and ritually) will change your own life-always it will change your own life.

Be aware of whether you are using your trained will to effect these changes4 or are just playing at training (that will mean trouble!). Many events will occur outside of your conscious control; they occur for good reasons. It is not the incidents themselves that matter, but how you deal with them. Once you have chosen to take upon yourself the obligations of the practice of Witchcraft, then the effects, or the immanence, of this way of life, will be bestowed on you from aligned intelligences, and so will the tests that accompany them.

Anyone who willingly opens themselves to powers beyond the veil of manifestation (as we understand it) opens themselves to the possibility of inner initiation. Witches know that they are witches, but initiation is what sets and seals that knowledge through the power of ritual and the intent inherent in the process itself, to a deeper strata of recognition and response both within oneself and from the powers to which we are oathed.

Once initiation has occurred, there is no turning back-you will quest all

your life; it is not a thing to do thoughtlessly. Most people's belief I structures are conditioned from a very early age by the environmental and socio-cultural norms within which we live. In response to the religious dogma condoned as acceptable by both our parents and peers, we grow up accepting, albeit apathetically, some degree of that dogma, and relate to manifest reality, considerations of deity, and all things termed sacred by the decrees set down by those dogmas. Many people remain consistent with these norms and do not question or pursue them to any depth (I am generalizing).

What is it then that causes some to reject these structures? I guess there are as many reasons as there are people who question, but some reasons stand out more than others. One is anger. Anger has its roots in fear. People who have been taught to fear the wrath of God may become angered at the intensity of this form of manipulation and threat. They will question the fool who would placate them with, "It's the will of God" when a brutal murder by a crazed shooter takes out the life of their schoolmate; they may question the priest who tells the destitute mother of several children that it is wrong to use contraception; they'll question the might of the few to suppress, annihilate, or imprison the many, by whatever justification, for the viewpoint of the many; they'll question the logic of genocide and/or bio-cide6 for economic or governmental supremacist ideology; they may question wars fueled by religious divisionist regimes; they may question the right of the cruel and arrogant to prosper above and beyond the loving followers of a pacifist faith. On the one hand, they are being told that "God is love," and on the other they are being told that this same God will cast them into the depths of an eternal fiery hell for any transgressions. If that isn't cause for fear, then I don't know what is. What causes the anger is that the questioner was conditioned into acceptance in the first place.

Then there is that age-old syndrome-curiosity (always with a passion). Curiosity about how other people worship. Curiosity that demands answers that just don't seem to be there in mainstream religions; and when they are given, they often don't make sense. To ask, "Why?" and to be told, "Because it is so" is not what I would call satisfying.

Then there's that other thing! A feeling, a gnawing within the very depths of self that says, "I know Truth, I just haven't found it in my life." Yes! I've heard that one before! There's the breakaway who will not settle for the standards set by others. Not all of them are witches, but all witches know

what I mean. It's a notof-this-life geas - that shadows the individual through every existence. These people seek their knowledge in unacceptable places. They want to know enough to risk going against the opinions of others, and if they cannot find established groups with whom to share their knowing, then they are quite likely to form their own. They are the illumined individuals who are guided from other realms in their pursuit of Truth, and who are driven to pass on the knowledge gained.

All of these breakaway reasons are valid, and seekers can be found everywhere. The only groups to be wary of, in my experience, are those whose attitudes are hypocritical in practice, or uninformedly critical of others' ways.

Another thing I find unjustified is the need for people to consider God to be in man's image. Why not woman's? Or a bird's? Or even everything all together for that matter? Why is it necessary to give form to something that is supposedly eternal, omnipotent, and vast enough to be capable of creating entire universes? To say that God is like man is to endow God with the qualities of man and to therefore assume that man is supreme (as opposed to what?). This is preposterous, and also too limited! I do consider that the tool, or the vessel, of the imagination is the gateway for the forces that we term divine to express themselves to the individual-that these forces can, and do, mantle themselves in recognizable images to effect communication in recognizable ways. We call these forces, in their divine aspects, Goddess and God; we name them, synergize with them, dance with them in the way of the sacred, are both at one with them and individual to them, represent them, and revere them, and, in understanding this, weave magic as a matter of course.

Well then, there you are. There are two definite aspects to the work and training of a witch; the first is the discipline of training the magical will through tried and true methods, as shown in Part One. The second, and as important, is the religious training, ritual observances, and spellcrafting techniques that you will find in Parts Two and Three.

As the first section deals wholly with many of the training techniques and understandings that ensure, both magically and analytically, that weakness and ineptitude do not hamper the work side of your chosen path, so the second section deals with the practices of the priest/ess witch. To those of you who can find an authentic coven through which to train, I recommend

the process of succession rather than self-initiation. There is nothing that compares with the communion of like souls, welltrained, working the rites of Earth and Sun and Moon and Stars.

The Disciplines

Hallowed Be Thy Name

Halled, and walled, with garnet and with topaz
The Temples of my Family!
Deep in scarlet velvet and in black
Come lay with me . . .
Entwine and sweat and softly moan before the Fire;
Beneath the Veil of candles
Lit to show the Way
But slightly, darkly . . .

Unto the music of ghosts;
Unto the ringing of bells within the Shrine . . .

All-hallowed in the rapture
Of the Legend of the Vine
Saved from bleak mortality
By drinking from the Chalice
Of the twice-born; blood turned wine.

... and so the Light and Dark were joined for a while; just long enough for each of Them to remember that their purpose was not to hate each other, nor disdain each the other ... but to love each of the other simply because they were not each other.

Somehow it all got so messed up, so complicated, so confusing; they were never meant to be enemies ... whatever gave us that idea?

-from The Feast of Flesh 6' Spirit by Ly de Angeles

Section One

First Stage Technique Requirements

The Center

The center has been called spirit, essence, soul, consciousness. It is the deep you that seeks to know and understand not only who you are, but why you are here. It is the whole of you as opposed to the sum of your parts, it is the gateway to all knowledge, and it is why this book has called to you-like attracts like!

You are aware that you have five senses: taste, touch, smell, hearing, and sight. The aspect of you that is termed the center is the sixth (seventh, eighth, ninth, etc.) sense, or inner sight/sensation. It can best be accessed by considering the other five senses as the perimeter of a circle and all things perceived there flow inward, literally, to the center. The center is also a doorway through which influences not instigated by the conscious mind or from some other source can enter, be assessed, and assimilated into the understanding.

To activate your center consciously (most are already aware of it, but this awareness may not be conscious) it is necessary to consider the center as a watcher. It will use all your five senses to assess not only how you react to others, but how others react to you. It is actively telepathic when you are clear of undisciplined attitudes and "Pavlov's dog" mentality.' It will take note of what you are spending your time thinking about and will pass, consciously, just exactly what is valid in terms of what you say, think, and do. It will assess and reassess your reactions to circumstances.

Exercise

Be aware, before commencing the following, that disciplines are ineffective unless a routine is established because the unconscious is attuned to patterns and will respond easily once the pattern of a conscious routine is rhythmic. Therefore, until each technique is mastered, you will continue

with the routine; proficiency is achieved when the pattern is integrated deeply and the technique transforms itself from practice to second nature (at which time the awareness will have become assimilated into who you are and will become an addition to your sixth sense).

Set aside one hour each day and consciously recognize everything you think, do, say, and feel. Imagine that you have an extra set of senses that acts as a camera and recorder, and work at storing all input received during this hour.

Later in the day, claim some quiet time to yourself, recall all the things that you recorded during your designated time, and write them down in an order such as:

- what I saw;
- what I heard;
- what I smelled;
- what I touched;
- what I tasted;
- what I thought about;
- how I was feeling.

This nonjudgmental, external consciousness is called the Nemet and is like a beastie that sits on your shoulder. When you have continued with this exercise for several days, you will find that you are automatically doing it all or most of the time. You will be triggering the power of awareness,' which will, as a matter of progression, actively trigger latent telepathic and intuitive faculties.

Remember that the center (and its ally, the Nemet) is totally nonjudgmental. It is an observer and a conscious purveyor of how you react and respond within a manifest environment. It will be your task, through your innate understanding of whether you can refine yourself, to act accordingly to whatever the watcher has relayed to you. You may then eliminate or add as you see fit. Take it slowly, as I have seen too many

idealists, perfectionists, and impatient people turned into tortured souls, downright bigots, or self-righteous bores through lack of leeway and scope and the ability, like the willow, to bend not only to circumstances, but to ideas and principles that may have been set for you and not by you!

MEDITATION

Meditation is a very ancient technique that has been used worldwide by sages, magi, magicians, witches, wizards, and monks who have taught people who have in turn taught others. The actual word "meditation" is a modern Westernized term for the taming of what could be considered a wild beast-the foreground of one's mind.

There are degrees, or depths, of meditation that you will become aware of the more you practice this technique. If you work on the premise of the circle again (see The Center), then meditation is going within, first to keep within the bounds of that circle, and secondly, to reach the center.

Stop reading for a moment and close your eyes. You will be aware of myriad thoughts and impressions passing through your mindscape. Try this at intervals during the day and behold! it is always the same-constant mental activity. One of the most difficult but necessary means of not only understanding your true nature, but also of using the mindscape in practical magic, is through this technique or its variation, contemplation, in a field of either active or passive silence."' Otherwise, all you are doing on your quest is accruing more and more external data for your mind to sift, sort, and categorize. This is an addiction inherent in the current collective of the Western seeker-eclecticism ending up being a diffusion of personal power, as the individual who doesn't stay with a Way can never master the tools inherent in the deepening of that Way.

In the day-to-day round of most people's lives, there are constant assaults on the emotions, body, creativity, and intellect. Meditation is the art of halting and transforming these assaults through a positive act of will. The result is not only coping with these assaults, but riding them (as opposed to having them ride you) toward a desired outcome with a tranquil mind.

Meditation and Ritual

It is necessary, within ritual, to be completely clear and centered in order to enable the work to proceed with profundity and intensity. The center is like a doorway to things not currently recognized by the conscious mind. It is your power pack and acts as a lever to not only affect your interactions with the mundane world, but to actualize reception and transmission of information and perceptions from other realms of reality. The process of meditation is like a stimulant that helps your center open and close freely and intentionally and more obviously than before.

Thought, Telepathy, and the Matrix— The Key to Manifestation

It is advantageous that you realize just what is accessible through this technique. I have spent many years charting and understanding the concept of thought and the body of the mindscape as a way of understanding and tapping into what I was sure was there as a latent or uncontrolled power. I have always been subject to random flashes of telepathy and have traveled the timescape through the use of Tarot to predict future events that have occurred exactly, explicitly, and, in many, many cases, word for word. It is not in my nature to leave things that are open to misrepresentation alone until I have an understanding of their pattern, so I experimented with the concept of consciousness to gain a handle on the function.

What I uncovered is the pattern of thought-it moves as light moves and is, therefore, instantly there and instantly not. It is both particle and wave, as is light, which, incidentally, is why spells are told to no one. To speak a thing is to collapse the wave, sending the spell into a form of manifestation that may not be material in the observable sense, but is vibratory, therefore having presence in material reality. Please think about this! There is both foreground thought and background thought dancing through the mindscape at differing rates of recognizable frequency, and they both exist within a medium; this medium is like space through which both energy and matter realize themselves, but which is a vessel in its own right. Space, both within the mindscape and within recognizable manifest reality, is a matrix-and the matrix is the medium through which all things travel. It is a thing of profound silence. It is the spaces between thought, and it is through consciously accessing this medium that telepathy and all forms of spellcrafting find their expression. There are no dividing lines here between that which is within and that which is without. Fully realizing this removes the illusion of separateness that is the stumbling block to the activation of spellcrafting.

Exercise

1. Do not do the following exercises in bed until you are used to the technique, as it is likely that you will fall asleep.

2. Have a soft, dim lamp or a lighted candle behind you somewhere, as direct

or overhead lighting can be very disconcerting.

3. Seat yourself comfortably, either in a straight-backed chair or against a wall, with your hands, legs, and feet uncrossed.

4. Begin (with eyes closed) by taking several deep breaths, filling your lungs to capacity and then exhaling totally. Be aware of breathing by counting your breaths. Take no fewer than ten to begin.

5. Allow your breathing to become natural again.

6. The aim now is to allow yourself to drift into the velvetyblackness of nonthought. You will initially find that your mind will want to function in overtime; it will trick you into thoughts that seemingly enter your mind of their own volition. Gently, but firmly, push them out again, always aiming for that state of velvety-blackness and nonthought. You can utilize either active or passive silence, understanding that if the active silence tool is music, it should be almost inconsequential, like baroque music played in largo. A similar tool is a metronome set at sixty beats per minute (active silence is of enormous benefit if you have distant sounds of traffic that disrupt you).

7. Allow just a few minutes the first time, and remember not to apply force against your unwanted thoughts, just gentle pressure. The aim is to still your foreground. Your center is somewhere within that velvety-blackness. When you have reached a state of nonthought, you will have reached your center, which is a state of tranquillity.

8. Allow yourself to drift there as long as you like or as long as nothing interferes. When you have done this, repeat the deep breathing to rejuvenate yourself, stretch fully, like a cat, and focus on maintaining your sense of tranquillity beyond the exercise.

Continue this process daily, even if only for a few minutes. Give yourself the gift of making time. You are doing three things:

- disciplining your will;

- discovering the sublime silence at the center of your being and activating that center;

• preparing the ground for active and intentional magic.

You will find this technique invaluable when you get down to more specific magical workings, so it is truly desirable to continue practicing and to begin all future exercises with the meditative process.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplation is a very natural way of focusing and inspiring the mindscape. It is best accessed through an activity (sometimes repetitive) that doesn't require the mental concentration of reading or learning (e.g., rocking, watching a fire, simple weaving, unhurried gardening, unhurried cleaning, unhurried, purposeless walking). Contemplation is a time-to-spare active meditation that also gives surcease to foreground mental activity. Out of all of the above, I recommend rocking (preferably in a rocking chair) where no interruption will occur. Issues will arise that require resolution, and in the state of contemplation, they will be resolved. Restraints of consciousness will be recognized in this state; doubts in relation to one's integrity can be addressed here; lies that we perpetuate, or that are perpetuated against us, will come into the full light of awareness. In a state of true contemplation, revelation can also occur, and the space to create change in accordance with these realizations is available.

SILENCE

With both of the above techniques, I reiterate, silence is your greatest ally. It is akin to space, and it is the mutuality of these two that keeps the gate-between-the-worlds open. It is the bridge between that which is seen and unseen, that which is known and unknown, that which is, and that which is, as yet, unrealized. It is the medium for contact with forces that are drowned out by excess noise and babble. It is aligned with secrecy that is not an elitist function, but a tool of nonadulteration of intent.

VISUALIZATION

Proficiency at visualization is most important to all occult training. I have encountered only one or two people in all the years that I have been teaching who were unable to visualize. However, they had the ability to conceptualize with similarly accurate results.

The receptacle of the imagination is integral to the processes of creation. Change through intent begins with inspiration, passes through the realm of the imagination, is manipulated by the emotions of enthusiasm, desire, empathy, and compatibility and is transformed into a manifest outcome according to the proficiency of the process (Air, Fire, Water, Earth respectively).

Without the ability to visualize, projection into the astral realms is almost impossible (at least consciously; it is done automatically in the sleep state)." The ability to visualize is integral to spellcrafting and can lead to dramatic changes and accomplishments, especially if you are freefalling.'Z

The term "visualize" has been described in various ways in many books and by many people. Still, there are some who do not think they can visualize because of how it has been described. The problem is one of communication. The word that best articulates the function within the mind that can visualize is imagination. To enable me to do justice to this chapter, I would first like to shed light on a common misconception concerning this remarkable power.

Remember the expression used during childhood that related to the bridge between the seen and the unseen? Mum or Dad or some other well-intentioned person would say to you, "Don't be silly, it's just your imagination playing tricks on you," or "You don't see anything there, it was just your imagination." If you were little and the shadow in the corner of the darkened room scared you, it really wasn't much consolation to be told to go back to bed and stop imagining things, was it? What if there actually had been something there? Many a natural-born witch, a gifted writer, artist, musician, or inventor may have been deterred from their true path by that demeaning, belittling expression "just your imagination."

Another common distortion of communication that I have heard from teachers of occult, mystical, and metaphysical schools when describing how to visualize is "close your eyes and form the picture behind your closed eyes," and because all there is behind your closed eyes is your closed eyes, you throw up your hands in despair saying, "I can't see anything!"

So visualization is the imagination, but not just the imagination. Daydreaming without conscious control is probably the closest you could come to the "just ..." function. The mind is not simply a mechanism that has only one level to its being. There are degrees, or depths, to the imagination that need as much concentrated training as any other technique. When the required depth is plumbed, it is possible to stand with the eyes open and see clearly that which you have created with the power of the mind.13

As meditation is the process of stilling the mind while relaxing the body, so visualization utilizes that peaceful, relaxed state for the creation of altered states, increased awareness through controlled and conscious intent, contact, manifestation, and summoning. What begins with the exercise of controlled creation of a one-dimensional image, becomes the creation of a three-dimensional image, then the transmutation of a concept or idea into an image or a series of images, then in turn to the activation of things and people, and the creation of situations that eventually transpire in the realm we understand as material. From there you will seek through the aid of (1) the center, (2) meditation or contemplation, and (3) visualization to transcend the realm of the physical in search of truths that can only be obtained elsewhere.

There are several exercises presented here. You are to train systematically, starting with the first exercise and continuing until you are competent before proceeding to the next. Some of you may find the exercises extremely difficult, while others just sail through. If you are working these techniques in a group venue, please do not get competitive. The initial harnessing of the controlled image is the important thing to keep in mind, so do not hurry!

Exercise 1

1. Relax and go into your meditation.

2. Visualize blackness as far as your eyes can see.

3. Onto that black screen, visualize a white circle. Start at twelve o'clock on the circle and visualize eliminating the circle by circumnavigating, clockwise, to where you began. Then recreate the circle the same way.

4. Hold the image of the circle exactly as it is for the count of ten, then eliminate it as before.

If you lose control of the image for even a moment, do some deep breathing and begin again. You might not achieve this much in your first few attempts, but continue working at your own pace until you are competent.

Exercise 2

1. Begin with Exercise 1 until you have the blackness.

2. Visualize the circle.

3. Turn the circle into a sphere and move it around in an attempt to see all of it. Note its texture, size, and color. If it has no color, give it some. Play with it a little. Increase its size, change its substance, etc.

4. Hold your sphere for as long as you like, and then choose consciously to discontinue. Do not allow stray thoughts to interfere. If they do, begin again or come back to the exercise later.

Exercise 3

1. Begin with Exercise 1 until you have the blackness.

2. Visualize the circle.

3. Turn the circle into a sphere.

4. Turn the sphere into a round piece of fruit.

5. See your own hands holding the fruit. Peel it. Taste it. Chew it. Swallow it, and watch it go all the way down to your stomach (if you do not know your anatomy, look it up; it must be an accurate visualization). Eat the entire fruit following the same procedure. Again, if you have any stray thoughts enter your controlled visualization, stop and either begin again or come back to the exercise later.

Explore an assortment of these image creations when you have mastered the fruit. When you have control of your conscious visualizations, it is time to proceed to the next stage: that of creating a moveable image from an idea or a concept.

Exercise 4

1. Begin with meditation in the usual manner.

2. Choose a concept (e.g., freedom, experimentation, questing).

3. Contemplate the word to evaluate its meaning for you, both personally and collectively (these concepts need not necessarily be generally accepted).

4. Visualize the concept by imagining situations or events that justify your evaluation of the concept. Do not lose control of the idea of the exercise and wander into fantasy.

It is advisable not to discuss these later exercises with others. From here you will probably have control of your conscious visualizations, so the next step should be easy. It involves the creation in your imagination of an event that will occur within a set timeframe in your material reality. At this stage, keep things simple and avoid manipulation and egoistical desire-fulfillment events.

Exercise 5

Create, by use of the technique of controlled visualization, an event, featuring people with whom you are in fairly regular contact, in which certain key phenomenon are brought to bear. Keep it concise, but ascertain that what you summon into actuality is not a common occurrence, such as saying hello to George down the street on your way to work as you always do. Keep it snappy and distinct, and keep a written record. Place your event within limited time coordinates (e.g., within one week from the day it was visualized.)

As you may have gleaned by now, not only does this technique require control and have, inherently, limitless possibilities, it also demands a certain ethic. Be aware that even though you can utilize this technique within the

realms of manifestation, you will ultimately bear the consequences. The Law of Congruity," of cause and effect, should be contemplated.

Never to Walk in Anyone's Shadow

Self-Analysis Techniques

The biological animal and the soul that infuses it has an innate ability to handle its own life and transcend both the internal and the external problems that arise through merely being alive (in this time, within certain conditions). I will begin this section by throwing into the ring a particular word that is crucial in the category of detriment: conditioning. The majority of dysfunctions that arise and entrench themselves in our lives are caused because of preconditioned expectations and assumptions."

Have a good honest look at your life as it is right now: the people, things, and events around you, the way they affect you, how you react or respond to them, what you think about when thinking about the individuals who are close and not so close to you, and about those who pepper your life. How much time do you spend dwelling on past events? How much time is spent speculating on the future? There! Hours of time!

People relinquish ownership of their lives to others so quickly (especially where love is concerned) that the responsibility for what happens to us relative to knowing those people automatically falls on them as if we had no control. Take, for example, the commonly used expressions, "Look what you are doing to me!" or "It's all your fault!"

Why? When did it transpire that another ordinary person was given the power over your life to such a degree? Whatever happened to freedom of choice? Everyone has the power to change their living arrangements if they are threatened or disempowered by what is happening to them. To lay the blame of one's own inadequacy of responsibility on someone else and expect them to comply is to deny both you and them the right to a mind, a spirit, and the pleasure of living.

For a witch, it is unacceptable! An occultist cannot afford to place the control of his or her life in the hands of anyone or anything else, and as I have already made abundantly clear, the control of your will is the focal

point of training.

Exercise 1

1. Choose a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. If you are working the technique alone, you will need pencil and paper. If you are working with someone else, they will need the pencil and paper. They will question you and record the replies.

2. Write at the top of one side of the page, What I Want. Under that, write the numbers one through twenty down the page.

3. Write at the top of the other side of the page, What I Need.

4. Fill in all twenty lines of the first side with anything you want. Be honest with yourself. Say the things aloud as you write, and list twenty things (you can write more, not fewer).

5. When you have completed side one, turn the page over and write twenty or more things you need. Write until you have exhausted your answers.

6. Now compare your two lists.

7. Take another piece of paper and write at the top, Why? Go ahead and ask yourself, honestly, why you want what you want. Then do the same, on the other side of the paper, for your list of needs.

Contemplate, for all answers, what would really happen to you if you didn't get what you want or need, and what you would really feel if you did (some people I have worked with have included in their "need" list things they already have-pay attention to the question).

Gauge for yourself how important these things are to your well-being. If they really are not that necessary, then clear them from your mind because they are excess baggage, but if you could fill in twenty lines in the first place, then the excess was already there and your self-esteem would have been consistent with it.

Advertising, concepts of what is deemed successful, and concepts of what is deemed acceptable are all effective means of manipulating the individuality of a person or a people into conformist models. It's okay to do

what you do because you want to, and sometimes it's a matter of necessity to don the mask, but it's honorable to know who you are within the whole of it all and to don the mask only when it is expedient to do so-never forgetting that it's a mask!

Exercise 2

This exercise makes use of what is called the Book of Elements. It's going to be one of your primary grimoires. The technique is commonly used by most of the occultists whom I have known (myself included), and it works on the premise that practitioners will consistently work at erasing any mundane conditioning complexes that inhibit their ability to concentrate on, and control, whatever they do within their Craft.

The self (the circle) is divided into four somewhat equal parts (I say somewhat because although they are, in essence, equal, it is usually the case that the section dealing with emotions takes the most practice to balance.)

The four parts are Fire, Water, Earth, and Air. The qualities of these elements are as variable as the manifest elements themselves, so I prefer to present the manifest expressions prior to relating them to personality expressions.

Manifest Expressions

Fire

- Flame (all-from the flame of a candle through hearth fire to raging, out-of-control forest fires)
- Electricity
- Fission
- Friction
- Combustion
- Light
- Brilliance

- Heat
- Transformation through interaction with other elements

Water

- Lakes, rivers, oceans, dew, rain
- Aqueous bodily secretions
- Moisture (condensation, dampness, steam)
- Wetness
- Liquid
- Nonconforming limitlessness
- Mutability
- Magnetism
- Transformation through interaction with other elements

Earth

- All things solid
- That which is tactile
- Tangible reality
- Subject to the transformative function of decomposition
- Ground; both in its electrical sense and in its relativity to that which supports life (as we understand it)
- Structure and form
- Dimension
- Time

- Existence (as a sensate phenomenon)
- Transformation through interaction with other elements

Air

- All things atmospheric
- Gases
- Space
- That which is celestial
- Theory
- That which is ethereal or etheric
- Frequency
- Noumenon
- Sound and the medium through which it travels
- That which is invisible

Personal Expressions

Fire

People display the qualities of Fire when they are:

- Spontaneous
- Optimistic
- Lusty
- Impetuous
- Blatant

- Outspoken
- Demonstrative
- Combustible
- Ruthless

The qualities of creativity, self-expression through the spoken and written word, enthusiasm, aggression, and, often, boisterousness are demonstrations of a Fire-dominant individual.

Water

People display the qualities of Water when they are:

- Artistic
- Empathic
- Passive
- Feeling
- Sensual
- Confused
- Unpredictable
- Dreamy
- Indecisive
- Doubtful
- Inscrutable
- Enigmatic
- Romantic

The qualities of intuitiveness, inventiveness, responsiveness, nurturing, and the use of innuendo, self-pity, and victim-consciousness because of a lack of personal boundaries are demonstrations of a Water-dominant personality.

Earth

People display the qualities of Earth when they are:

- Productive
- Precise
- Calculating
- Sexual
- Determined
- Stubborn
- Aesthetic
- Petty
- Belligerent
- Brave
- Predictable

The qualities of perseverance, administration, fixety, strategy, and orthodoxy are demonstrations of the Earth-dominant personality.

Air

People display the qualities of Air when they are:

- Changeable
- Inspirational

- Logical
- Intellectual
- Idiosyncratic
- Exacting
- Unpredictable
- Challenging
- Abrasive
- Solitary
- Musically inclined
- Expansive
- Explicit
- Technical
- Scientific

The qualities of rhythm and harmony, quick-temperedness, rigidity, and the tendencies to analyze, get caught in the past, and to display either too much emotion or be unable to express emotion are all demonstrations of the Air-dominant personality.

To work the Book of Elements, you will first need to purchase a notebook and divide it into four equal parts. Title the first section Fire, the second section Water, the third Earth, and the fourth Air. Divide the pages of each section into two equal columns, one side titled Acceptable and the other titled Unacceptable. Down each side, list your own qualities and habits relative to those headings.

This is a process of self-observation, and it quite often takes several weeks or months, as you will not be aware of many of your traits without accompanying experiences to trigger them. Once you are finished with your