MEZLIM

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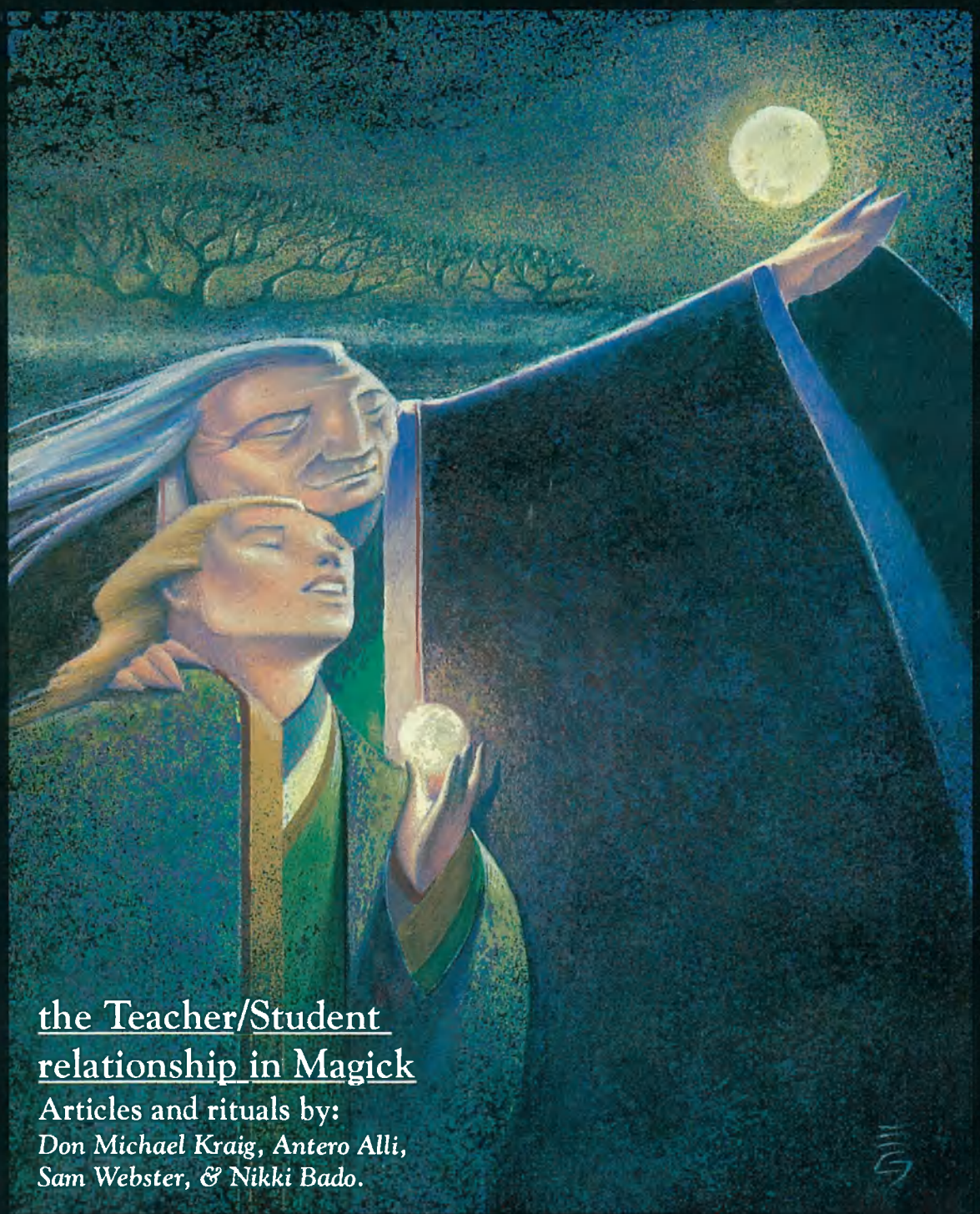

the Teacher/Student relationship in Magick

Articles and rituals by:
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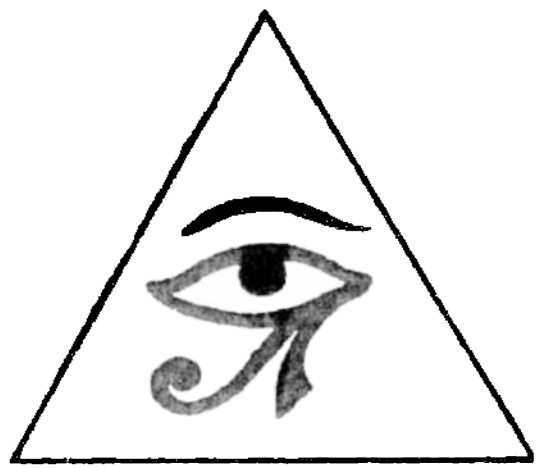

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EDITOR'S FORUM

What world do you live in?

It's a necessary question these days, and much more to the point than "what's your sign?"

Some of us live in a world in which the downfall of the Godless Communists has brought about the worldwide acclamation of American Democracy, just as we always knew it would. Others of us live in a world in which we are constantly tested by an omnipotent God that loves us but punishes us continually, because we are His chosen ones. Still others live in the world in which George Bush is the greatest current threat to world peace, because everyone knows that he's a madman bent on world domination.

Do any of these worlds sound familiar? Your own world is a product of what and how you've learned the world to be. It's difficult to separate perception from objective "truth" and so the way we perceive the world — is the way it IS.

Worldview is not so much a matter of politics as it is a reflection of your own internal landscape. By coming to understand the worldview of another person, you come to understand the person as well. By understanding that person, you may come to a deeper understanding of your own world — and of yourself.

When we intentionally alter our own internal landscape — thus altering our world as well — we are performing Magick. When we come together to join in the work of changing our world — we are performing Magick.

Could it be that the world that we see around us — with no Berlin Wall, with no Soviet threat, with the ecology movement becoming a part of mainstream America — could it all be the work of countless Magi of the New Aeon, all working together to save our world?

We are the Magick! We can make it happen!

Imagine!

Kenneth Deigh
Managing Editor

MEZLIM STAFF

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N'Chi and **MEZLIM** subscribe to the premise that we are entering a new aeon - a new age - which is bringing and will continue to bring many changes in the way we see ourselves and the world around us. We are dedicated to presenting information, views, images and ideas concerned with our transition into this new world which we are creating. Our editorial policy is androgynous, egalitarian and eclectic, supporting all growth oriented, magickal movements.

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The Student Teacher
Learning How To Learn About Magick

by Kenneth Deigh

It is not my intention in this article to deal with the communication of rote information from one generation to the next which we generally consider "teaching." Rather, I wish to move beneath that to a deeper level of learning - and teaching. One that is especially important - even essential - to the student of Magick.

If all we get out of a teacher/student relationship is the accumulation of lore and legend, then we could just as well turn to the public library or a good bookstore to act as mentor to our learning. There is, however, much more to the equation than that.

Learning as an archetypal journey

Somewhere in the back of my head there is a story that's been wanting to be written for over ten years. It begins with a seeker who climbs up into the mountains of some allegedly ancient land. There he finds an old man in a cave, who claims to have been waiting for him. This sage proceeds to teach him for a few years, during which time they become very close. Eventually it comes time for them to part ways. The young man must leave the mountains to seek his fortune and his further lessons in the world. He resists, thinking that he is dependent on his master for strength and wisdom. The old master promises him that one day he will return and find the master waiting there in the cave.

The seeker goes out into the world and has various and sundry archetypal adventures that take up many years. When he finally grows weary of the never ending quest for enlightenment, he goes back to the mountains and finds the cave empty. He searches for his old teacher but he is nowhere to be found, so the seeker settles down and waits - believing the old man's promise that the Master would return to the cave. He waits for many years, until one day a young seeker approaches the cave. Without thinking, the man - now much older and with considerable experience under his belt - says "I've been waiting for you." In doing so he realizes that he is the master who has returned to the cave, in order to await the next seeker - and so the cycle continues.

This story is a symbolic journey that all of us take in our pursuit of knowledge. When do we cease to be the student and become the teacher? When does the learning stop and the teaching begin? For the best teachers, like the man in the story, there is no real division, but a realization that they are both the seeker and the master - the student and the teacher.

When we start out on our path we have the idea that somewhere up ahead is someone holding the blazing light bulb of Truth. If we can only find the one who can give us that knowledge, then all would be well with the universe. Of course it's not that simple. There is no great and universal truth beyond that which we manifest in our own lives. It is the inner truth that we seek, but - not knowing where to look - we

project it outside the self into the world. If we are clever, we find someone to hold the projection for us, and we call that person Teacher. Then we proceed to grapple with our Teacher, determined to wrestle this precious jewel of Knowledge from HIr grasp. This - in a nutshell - is the process of which I speak.

Secrets vs. Mystery

As we live in a society that places great importance on individuality, there is a natural tendency for the potential seeker to want to "do it yourself." This is certainly an option, and it works well as long as you're just interested in building up a vast and relatively useless store of knowledge. As a method for really learning about Magick, it's not impossible, but it's easily the most difficult. At best, you find yourself painfully reinventing the wheel.

Many students of the occult fall prey to the confusion between knowledge and wisdom. I've often encountered people who have "studied for years" and can quote everything from the Wiccan Rede to the Book of the Law, but who know nothing about Magick. They have become a storehouse of magickal paraphernalia, without ever understanding the process itself. This is easy enough to do when the "secrets" of the old orders are being openly published in paperback form and the teachers seem to be few and far between. The danger is to mistake these newly revealed secrets for the true Mysteries.

This is not to say that you shouldn't use the resources you have at hand. By all means, pick up whatever books catch your interest. It's a good way to start developing an understanding of the basics, and it helps place you in the right place to find a teacher - when you're ready. Just don't make the mistake of reading sixteen books on Magick and then founding your own coven or lodge, because you've read more books than anyone else you know.

When you find a truly Magickal teacher and develop a relationship with HIr, you are doing something more than downloading data from someone else's mainframe. You are beginning an incredible process of self exploration and discovery.

To the Student

Yours is a difficult task. As they say in the east, you need to empty your cup in order for it to be filled. In this case, emptying your cup means realizing that you do not already know everything, and that there might actually be someone out there who has something to offer in the way of learning. This is easier for some than for others.

As a student, your responsibility is in choosing a path of learning and sticking to it. There's a tradition in Magick that the teacher should turn the prospective student down until/unless SHe asks three times. This tradition was developed to weed out at least some of those who jump at the chance to learn, and then shrivel away at the first touch of hard work and dedication.

This is not to say that you should remain in a system which you find to be contrary to your own intuitive warnings. The way to avoid this is to research the system before becoming too involved. Many systems have a "year and a day" period of waiting while they see if you are really suited for what they have to offer - and vice versa.

Once you've found a teacher, you will be

developing a rapport with Hlr; a psychic link that allows for much more effective communication and a greater understanding between you. Because of this closeness and the nature of your instruction, it is essential that clear boundaries be established for your behavior - and that of the teacher as well. These boundaries will differ from one system to the next, but it is essential that they be clearly stated up front. A good way to do this is to create a contract between you and the teacher, which outlines your respective expectations, rights and the aforementioned boundaries.

Clearly, if there is any aspect of the proposed contract which you are uncomfortable with, you need to make this known. This may even mean that you will have to search for another teacher. Better that than to find out much later that you should have.

Once the structure of your relationship has been defined, the real process can begin. You may find yourself having quite intense feelings - good or bad - toward your teacher. This is part of the process. Allow yourself to feel, and to discuss it with your teacher to the extent which you feel able.

You will encounter resistance - both external and internal - to your learning. There will be times when you want to quit; times when you don't feel like you can continue, like everything is against you. Stick to it! By weathering this resistance, you develop your will, without which you can never do effective magickal work.

To the Teacher

You are the one who must know what lies beyond words, and be able to take the student there.

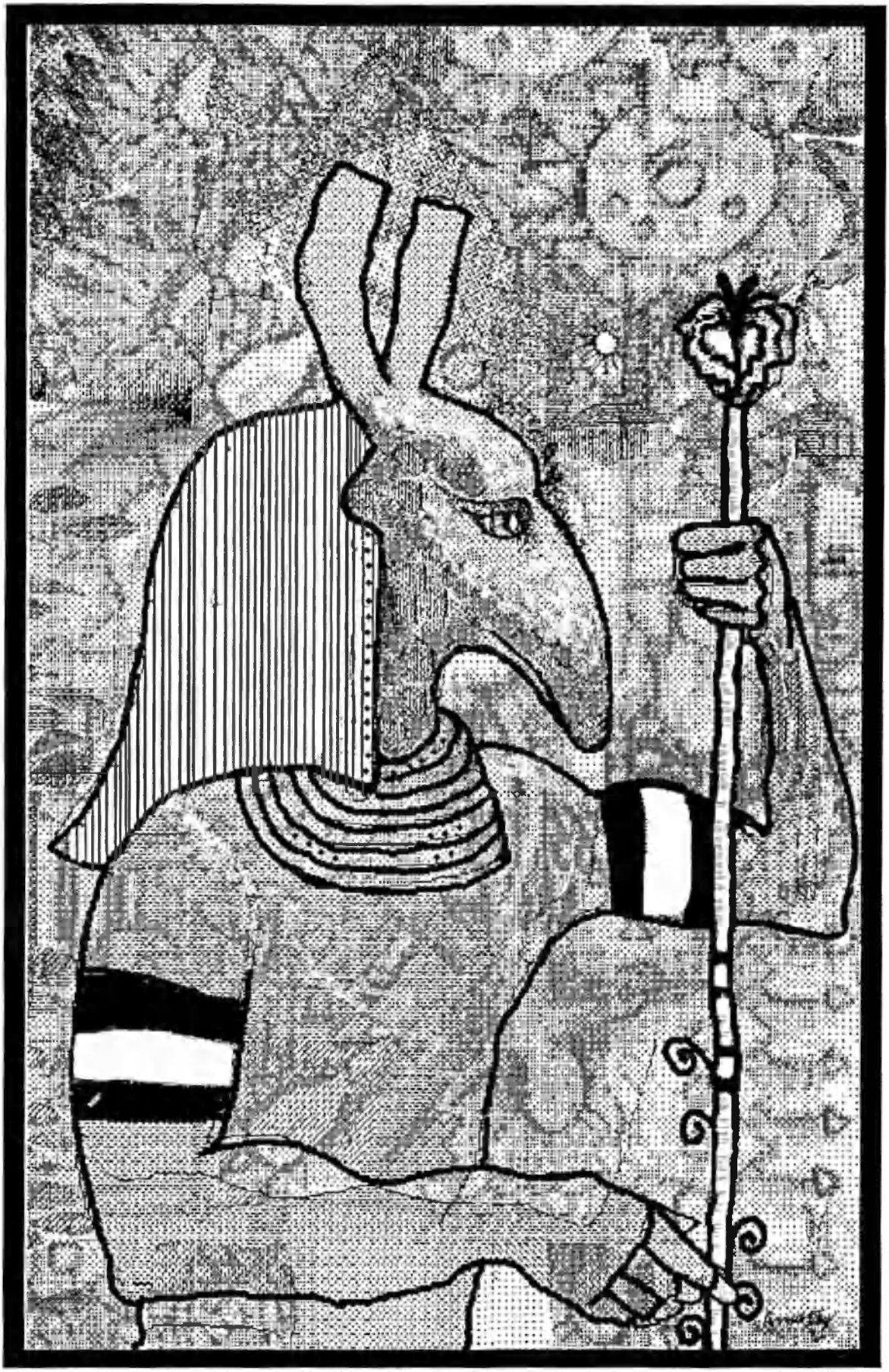
If the student's job is difficult, yours is even more so. You are the one who must hold the crown of your student's sovereignty until they are prepared to receive it. If your student must empty Hlr cup in order to be filled, you must break your cup, in order to be remade. This is part of the experience. As your student discovers new definitions of self, so do you. In doing so, the old definitions must give way, making room for your continued growth.

Teaching is not something you do for yourself, though any good teacher inevitably benefits from Hlr work. Every time SHe asks you a question, your student challenges you to step out of the way and allow what SHe needs to pass through you. You are the mirror into which your students will project all that they need to know of themselves. You are the gate which they use to emerge into the realization of themselves. Teaching is being in service to the person who your student is becoming.

You help to create and nurture the bond between yourself and your students, helping them to trust, to risk, to grow. You feed them on your own experience. You challenge them with your wisdom. And you probably wonder why they come to you. You wonder what you have to offer, though your student seems to be able to find it even when you can't.

In constantly questioning your own methods and resources, you will continue your own part of the process - being a perpetual student of the universe. This is the process to which we endeavor to awaken our students.

Ideally, we will all become the Student Teacher. Learning from both those without and those within.



HOW TO BE A *ROTTEN* TEACHER

By Donald Michael Kraig ©1991

I recently finished a book entitled *The Brother XII* by Ron MacIsaac, Don Clark and Charles Lillard (Porcépic Books, Canada, 1989). It describes the actual and alleged practices of the leader of an occult group in Canada. He allegedly forced his followers into hard labor for no money, stole from them, used electronic eavesdropping devices on them, used his supposed spirituality to cover up his sexual proclivities and finally ran off with a fortune in gold. This took place in the 1920s and '30s.

In the 60s there was a group in Los Angeles whose center of operations, an occult shop, was located near USC. This group was headed by a woman. They allegedly broke many laws, including multiple thefts and child abuse, which led to their eventual break-up. Their structure supposedly included each member giving large amounts of money to the group, i.e., for the use of the leader.

Each of these groups had several things in common including a powerful, charismatic leader who took advantage of his or her followers. This process has been repeated over and over, and I have no doubt that many of you reading this will be familiar with groups that are doing the same sort of thing. Some of the groups are very large and successful.

On the other hand, I know of another teacher named "Nat" who had a different experience in the 1970s. As a result of his work, practices and studies he was offered the local leadership of an occult group. He spent hundreds of dollars communicating and making donations to the Order to which he was a member (it was headquartered in England). Through his work on the local level he quickly had a group of about 10 people.

Each week he would plan the meetings and rituals. He would call everyone to inform them of the meetings (no one else would do it). He foresaw the group growing and prospering. Then he had a shock.

As he led a ritual he looked around and saw the eager faces looking at him for guidance. In a flash he realized that the people were not there to participate in the ritual. Few of them had done much work anyway. It dawned on him that they were there to be near him—after all, he was the big teacher.

But this was not what he had wanted! He had wanted to work with a group of people who would move forward with him, not a bunch of hero worshippers. He quickly came up with an excuse (he was too busy and wanted to spend more time with his girlfriend) and urged the group to continue without him. In a few weeks the group no longer existed.

Nat was terribly disappointed. His hopes for the spiritual growth of the students and the group were dashed and he felt as if he had wasted so much money, time and effort. For some time Nat did not want to even be a part of other groups, let alone lead them.

He felt like a failure until he accepted that he, as a result of this experience, had learned the difference between a follower and a student.

It's funny, but The Brother XII and the woman leader were successful while Nat was a failure. The first two had large groups and made a great deal of money. Nat wanted to help his students and when he found out that they really didn't want help, he let the group dissolve. He had spent hundreds of dollars in cash plus untold hours of time and effort. He was a "rotten" teacher.

THE TEACHER AND THE PUPIL

In many Hindu traditions, the guru (teacher) is almost an incarnation of deity. The guru's words are thought of as being the words of deity. Frequently they are treated like demi-gods. For some of the gurus this adulation is just part of the price they pay to get their spiritual message across. For others the lure of power, money and sex is too much and they lose their spiritual direction. There's no need to mention names here, you probably know some of them. Curiously, even the people who have been most abused by a misdirected guru will continue to support him or her. They will even come up with bizarre reasons to explain their teacher's questionable behavior. With devotion like that is it any wonder that they are great teachers?

Of course, most of the people who are reading this are not in India or Asia. Here in the West the most famous expression about teachers is that "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." While I have no doubt that this is true, it must also be remembered that there are corollaries to this: 1) *When the teacher is ready to teach, students will appear. 2) When the student is ready to be cheated, the cheater will appear.* And there will always be somebody ready to cheat others. I remember reading somewhere that when Barnum said "There's a sucker born every minute" he was being optimistic.

PARENT AND CHILD

It is unfortunate, but some teacher/student relationships are actually parent/child relationships. While that may have a great deal of value when the student is in 3rd grade, it is of questionable value in occult groups. Israel Regardie suggested that all people involved in occult work should spend some time with a psychotherapist. Perhaps this would allow the occult teacher to teach the principles of his or her system instead of wiping the dripping noses of his students.

GOOD TEACHER/ ROTTEN TEACHER

At this point we can start looking at a few of the differences between the good teacher and the rotten teacher:

GOOD TEACHER:

1) Wants followers
2) Demands large sums of money
3) Intimidates and uses coercion
4) Demands strict obedience and allegiance
5) Deserts and denounces those who disagree with him or will no longer follow him
6) Tells followers what they want to hear
7) Is an exclusive authority

8) Lives a lifestyle contradictory to what is taught while insisting followers obey the rules
9) May demand illegal, or at least questionable, actions
10) Treats followers like children

ROTTEN TEACHER

1) Wants people to develop and improve
2) Asks for what students can afford
3) Respects the student
4) Demands questions and self-reliance
5) Encourages group members to decide on their own futures
6) Tells students what they need to hear
7) Encourages comparisons and study
8) Lives a lifestyle similar to what is taught. Encourages students to do the same when it is right for them to do so.
9) Requires students to follow an ethical system
10) Treats students like adults

NO RIGHT OR WRONG

It would seem with this tongue-in-cheek article that it is very clear that the "rotten" teacher is the desirable one. Unfortunately, it's not that easy. If you are in need of becoming a follower and in need of being abused, it would be *wrong* for a spiritual teacher to accept you and not give you what you need. In short, for those who want and/or need an abusive parent, a "rotten" teacher would be just that—rotten.

So what can be done to resolve this? First, if you are on the level of a student seeking a teacher, make sure that you want a teacher and not a replacement for a parent. This includes possessing a strong self-image. If you want an abusive parent, you might do better looking for counseling rather than a spiritual teacher.

Second, if you are in the position of being a teacher, decide what you really want to do. Do you want to have a bunch followers who will support you and do your bidding? The "Good Teacher" list above gives you several ways to begin the process. If you would prefer helping people on their way to finding their individual spiritual paths, you might focus more on the "Rotten Teacher" list. You will also have to reject those who are looking for a parent who will tell them what to do rather than strong personalities who can use your guidance.

That may sound easy, but it is not. When you become the leader of a group, the adulation and adoration you receive from followers can quickly become addicting. The ego boost from this can be hard to push away. I've seen many who have started out as a rotten teacher only to fall prey to this and become a good teacher. Staying a rotten teacher and helping your students rather than gathering large sums of money, power and sometimes sex from followers can be difficult to do.

I know how difficult it is to do.

I was Nat.

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

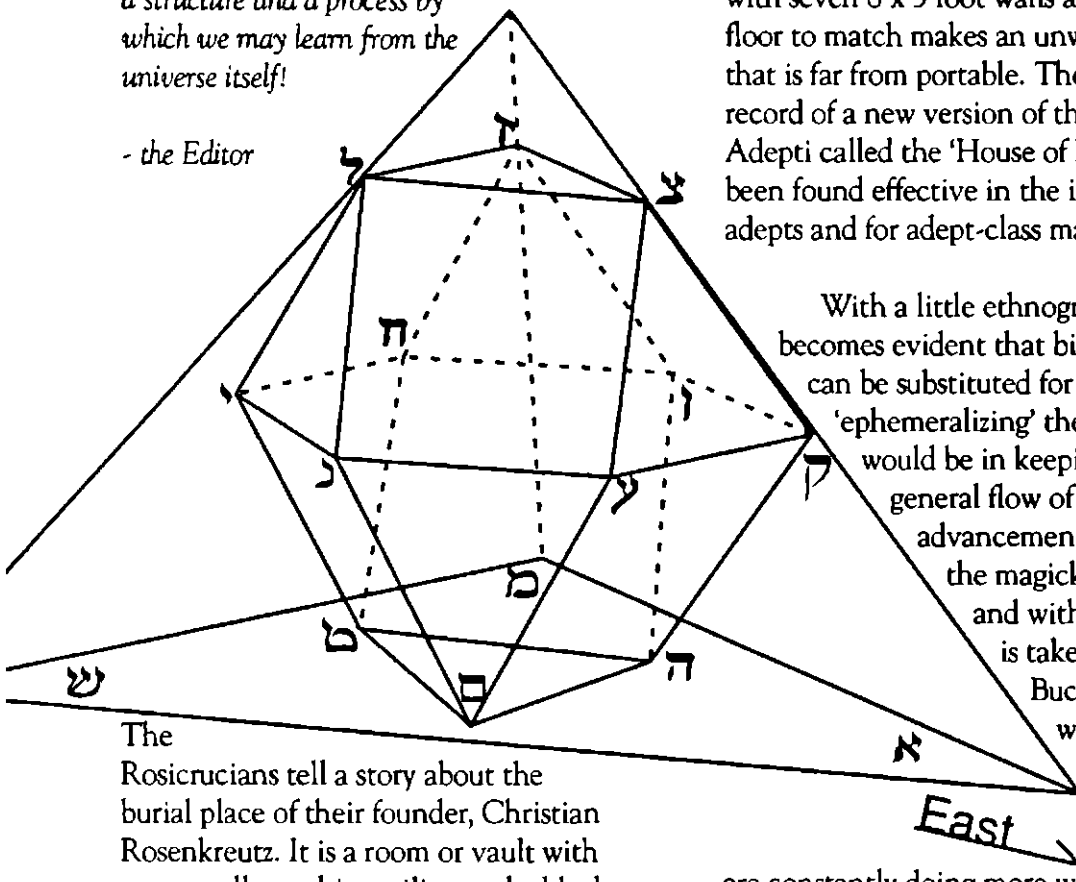
Actually, I am not as negative as the above sounds. I do believe, and have seen groups that have students and not robots under the control of a leader. It must be remembered that there cannot be a teacher without a student and vice-versa. It is a two-way relationship. Determine what you truly want—as a student or as a teacher—and seek it out.

The House of Khabs

by Sam Webster © 1991

Concerning the theme of this issue, I feel that this article is especially prevalent, as it describes a structure and a process by which we may learn from the universe itself!

- the Editor



The Rosicrucians tell a story about the burial place of their founder, Christian Rosenkreutz. It is a room or vault with seven walls, a white ceiling and a black floor, and altar in the middle over the coffin or pastos in which the body of CRC was lain. An inscription gave its purpose "Unto the Glory of the Rose Cross I have constructed this Tomb for Myself and a Compendium of Universal Unity." The Rosicrucian inner order of the Golden Dawn designed a room based on this design found in the Fama Fraternitas and used it for their 5=6 Adeptus Minor initiations and other allied magicks. They added the innovation of a rigorous color scheme and symbolism for the walls, floor and ceiling.

But the vault is still the tomb, a hall of the dead. This kind of symbolism is plainly unsuited for the current aeon, however potent for the last. Also building an object with seven 8 x 5 foot walls and a ceiling and floor to match makes an unwieldy structure that is far from portable. The following is a record of a new version of the Vault of the Adepti called the 'House of Khabs' that has been found effective in the initiation of adepts and for adept-class magick.

With a little ethnographic study it becomes evident that birth symbolism can be substituted for death. Also, 'ephemeralizing' the structure would be in keeping with the general flow of technical advancement both within the magickal community and without. This term is taken from R. Buckminster Fuller who uses it to describe the pattern he noted that we are constantly doing more with less. The best example of this is the pocket calculator which was once as large as a radio and very expensive and now is the size of a credit card and given away. Fuller's geometries give us the ability to ephemeralize the Vault of the Adepti and thereby form the House of Khabs.

The Rosicrucian story includes the tale of the vault's discovery by the adepti one hundred and twenty years after the death of the Founder. Since the transformation we would effect is also mythic we must present an addendum to that old tale:

"Long did they study the mysteries imparted unto them by their discovery of the vault and many profound secrets of the sacred Art revealed themselves in their study. Ninety years after the discovery of the Vault, the Colleagues sought to examine again the regalia and tools of the Founder as he lay within the Pastos.

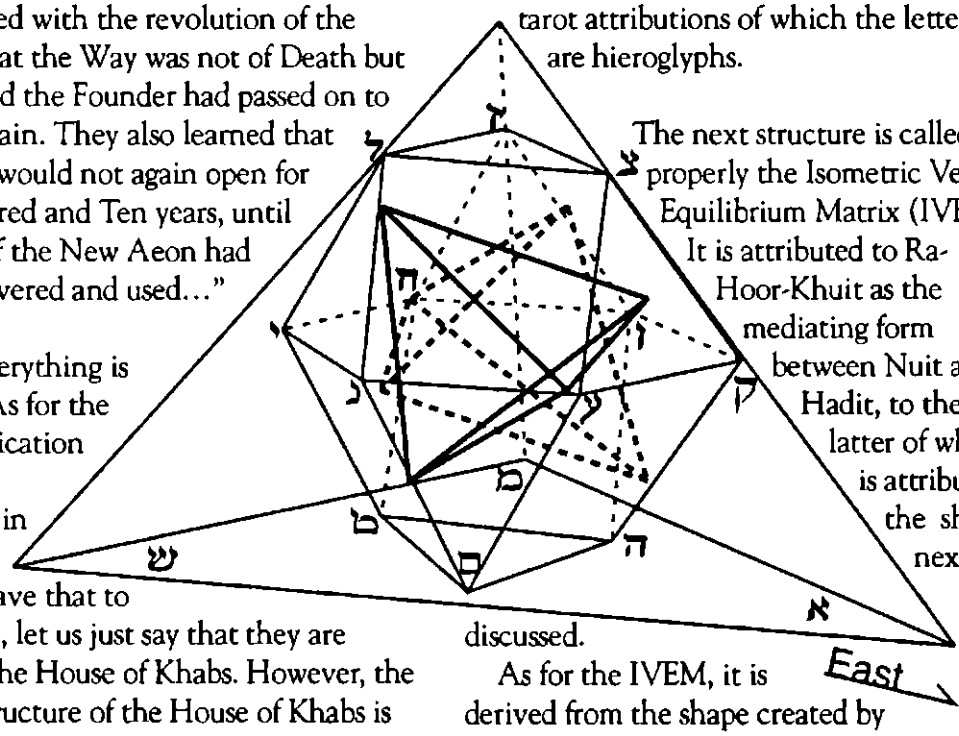
Opening the pastos they found therein no body; only the tools and regalia. Seeing this as vindications of their need to study them, they removed the tools and regalia and departed, sealing the door with the sign of N.O.X. for nothing remained within.

But, as soon as they had closed and sealed the Portal behind them, they heard a great crash, as though the Vault had collapsed upon itself, and although they tried they could not again open the Portal.

Again they consulted the ROTA, as they had of old, and came to an understanding. They learned that the formulae of initiation had changed with the revolution of the Aeons. That the Way was not of Death but of Birth and the Founder had passed on to be Born again. They also learned that the Portal would not again open for Two Hundred and Ten years, until the Keys of the New Aeon had been discovered and used..."

Thus everything is changed. As for the direct application of birth symbolism in the rite, we shall leave that to its initiates, let us just say that they are reborn in the House of Khabs. However, the physical structure of the House of Khabs is easy to discuss along with some of its attendant symbolism. As a whole, it is based on the fundamental geometric shapes that the Egyptians, and Assyrians and Plato all referred to and used, slightly modified by Fuller's synergetic outlook. I refer you to Plato's *Timaeus* for the foundational texts of this method as well as Fuller's *Synergetics I & II* for a more modern explanation of these forms.

The House of Khabs ("and Khabs is the name of my house", L.AL) is a structure built of three portions. The outermost is a tetrahedron, the minimum form in normal space. It is the overarching body of Nuit and delimits the space. It is made by a tripod of three poles and the ground on which it is placed. Ropes are run between the vertices on the ground providing the definition of the basal triangle. To each of the basal vertices is attributed a mother letter of the hebrew alphabet. To most of the rest of the vertices (of the rest of the structure we will describe) will be attributed each of the rest of the hebrew alphabet. Naturally, this alludes to the yetzeratic and tarot attributions of which the letters are hieroglyphs.



The next structure is called properly the Isometric Vector Equilibrium Matrix (IVEM). It is attributed to Ra-Hoor-Khuit as the mediating form between Nuit and Hadit, to the latter of which is attributed the shape next discussed.

As for the IVEM, it is derived from the shape created by the closest packing of equi-radius spheres in normal space. When this is done, regardless

of the size of the spheres, the same shape is always produced. This shape is found by connecting the center points of the twelve spheres as they arrange themselves around one sphere. Although it is easier to see than to describe, I will attempt it.

If you take a bowl and drop into it seven eggs, they will most likely arrange themselves in a hexagon with one in the middle. This describes the equatorial plane of the IVEM (remember, this being a regular shape, there are a variety of planes that could be similarly produced that would all have the same shape). Holding the hexagon stable, add imaginatively three spheres above this plane and three spheres below. They will naturally arrange themselves so as to form a hexagram if you were to line them up on the opposites sides of the equatorial plane. Connecting the centers of these spheres will give you the structure I am trying to describe.

This shape is considered by Fuller to be the essential structure governing the interpatterning of all other structures. Of this archetypal form Fuller says that if 'God' has a shape, this is it. Being so sanctified, this shape is referred to ritually as the Sphere of Qadosh. Having twelve vertices, we attribute to each of them the twelve simple letters assigned to the zodiac. Upon examination it may be noticed that each of the vertices can be taken in turn, one at a time, if one begins at a single point and proceeds to orbit the shape in a circle parallel to the chosen equatorial plane. Thus the zodiac, normally seen as a plane, can be attributed regularly about the IVEM. One point to note is exactly where one starts the orbit. This determines the location of the zodiacal signs in the House of Khabs. The dominant question is whether to place Heh-Aries in the East, which puts Lamed-Libra in the West, the entrance; or Tzaddi-Aquarius, which puts Teth-Leo in the West. I'll leave the exegesis of this to the reader.

One other attribution of this structure is formed by the rings that make up is edges. Besides the above description, this shape could be formed by four hexagons intersecting their centers in planes at 60° to each other. These could be attributed elementally, but as this structure alludes to more generalizable forms than the elements, we have attributed it to the three base colors: Black, white and red and also green for life. Students of comparative religions will recognize the prevalence and import of these colors. Students of the Golden Dawn will recognize their use in many GD ritual contexts. These relate also to certain embodiments of the powers of which the colors are the signatures used by initiates of this order. One of their principle purposes is to stabilize orbitals in the aura of the adepti employing these forms.

To actually make this shape is very easy. Having assembled the tripod by attaching poles together of sufficient height, say of twenty-five feet or so, perhaps formed of three small trees lashed together, the upper triangle of the IVEM is mostly constructed.

All one has to do is tie three ropes together at about the greatest height you can reach. From each of these three points attach and let dangle two ropes long enough to reach the ground. Assemble six poles of the same length as you will use for the cube, the next shape, into a hexagon. The simple way of doing this is to use rubber hosing at each of the vertices placed over the ends of two adjacent poles. This creates a flexible hexagon form. Center this hexagon in the tripod and attach the dangling ropes to each of the vertices such that the tripod poles bisect three of the poles of the hexagon,

(actually you have no choice in the matter), and raise the hexagon to about waist height. This completes the upper half of the IVEM. Next attach ropes to the vertices of the hexagon and run them down to the ground. These are to connect with the angles of a triangle of rope staked to the ground and placed concentric with the triangle aloft in the tripod (but on the ground) and oriented in the opposite direction so as to form a hexagram with the triangle above. This will result in the arrangement of these down going ropes in a manner staggered from the ones heading upward from the hexagon. (This is easier to see than to tell.) The poles of the hexagon were colored green and we used black and red crepe paper wrapped around the ropes to create the red and black rings. Since the rope was white the ring left bare sufficed.

The last general shape is also the most central. It is the revisionment of the Pastos or coffin of CRC. It is what is referred to in L.AL as the Palace of Four Gates, and as the "cube in the circle" attributed to Hadit. Its shape is that of a cube as it is formed by interlacing two tetrahedrons so that all of the edges are perpendicular to each other and all of the vertices are in the corners of the cube. If this is oriented so that each corner of the basal square is in a cardinal quarter, it forms vessica shaped openings in each of the quarters. These are the four gates referred to in L.AL and are also the secret doors of the adoration of Ra-Hoor-Khuit. To each of the vertices is attributed one of the double letters assigned to the zodiac and the odd one to Earth as a planet. The shape is itself formed by twelve bars each painted with a zodiacal color in the king scale and connected at their ends by specially made joints. One way of making them is by using three rubber hoses (as were used in the Sphere of Qadosh) which are long enough to fit over the poles and to be bound together in such a shape as to bring three pole ends together at one point.

The last structure in the House of Khabs is the central altar and the ceiling image. By these we incorporated the Rosicrucian and stellar symbolism necessary to the rite. The altar was a cubical table whose top surface is a forty-nine petaled rose on a gold equal armed cross in a black field. This is the "Rose of Charon." Each of the visible surfaces of the altar is covered with the Minutum Mundum (west), and the twelve-, seven- and three-fold color scales (which are used on the wands of the officers and on the complete rose) as they are attributed to the zodiac, the planets and the elements, respectively. The top edges of the panels are white and the bottom black. This formulates the "Rainbow about the Throne." The image aloft was hung at the level of the triangle in the tripod and is a stellar version of the Complete Symbol of the Rose Cross which uses all the hebrew letters in their full coloration according to the scheme of the classical Golden Dawn.

As a whole, the House of Khabs is a representation of the fundamental structures that govern form in our universe. As such it is a full dimensional model of what the Tibetan Buddhists call the dharmadhatu. In thelemic terms, this could be seen as the Law of Space. Also, if one notes the four-fold nature of the outer tetrahedron, the unity expressed by the IVEM and the eight-fold nature of the cube of the center, it will be recognized that this structure is that of the House 418.

BREAKING CULTURAL TRANCE 1991-95: When the Collective Dreambody Awakens

by Antero Alli © 1990

As I was rereading this article in preparation for this issue, I found myself thinking how well it described our current cultural transformation. Then I looked back at the copyright date and noticed that it was written before the Gulf War, before the reunification, and before the revolution in the U.S.S.R. Good call, Antero.

—the Editor

Perhaps the most difficult thing to believe is the very thing that is happening to oneself. Maybe the second most difficult thing for me to believe is what the mass media says is happening out there in the world.

There seems to be three dissident epochs occurring simultaneously, with most people living in various parts of each. There's the past-oriented Industrial/military complex now giving way to the recently emerged Information Age which, in turn, is rapidly reaching its hyper-saturation point, globally—with orbiting satellite networks—and mutating into a "virtual" reality of consciousness itself. We can watch any situation on earth, as it occurs, on a big screen monitor hooked up to a satellite dish. Yet, as television has demonstrated, advanced communications systems have never guaranteed a higher truth quotient in the quality of information transmitted. Programs, as we know, are predetermined by the individual, corporate and/or government programmer. As the minority who can still think for themselves have discovered: We are not the program.

As diverse sources of information combine and concentrate inside the psyche, a shift in consciousness occurs. At its saturation point, information turns into consciousness. We perceive through the filters of what our mind has consumed. On the mass collective level, a widespread cultural awakening is on the verge of occurring. This will most likely be catalyzed by global shock waves emanating from an epicenter in the Persian Gulf area. Its long-term effects may jumpstart collective consciousness, propelling humanity out of the Information Age and into "an era of invisibility" I will call The Age of Consciousness.

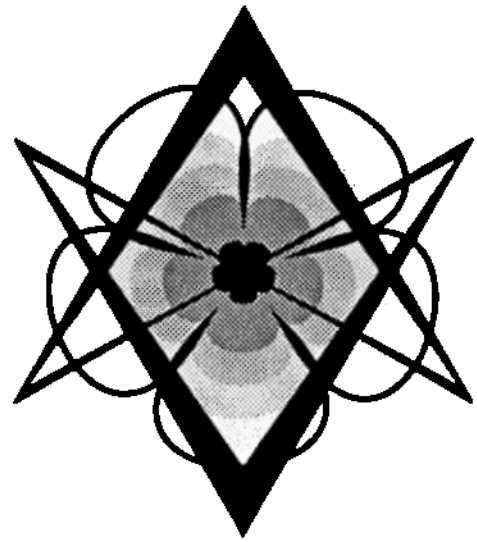
What does this mean? What you read, hear or see will never again be as critical as how your consciousness has been prepared to interpret the information. When does this happen? From an astrological vantage, this era of invisibility pervades our lives during the conjunction of two outer planets—Uranus and Neptune—from March 1991 through 1995. (The last and only time this century two outer planets were in a conjunction aspect commenced when Pluto conjunct Uranus from 1964 to 1968.) What will happen? The awakening of the collective (Uranus) dreambody (Neptune)—collective consciousness separates from its collective body and enters a phase of symbolic disassociation. The human species has an out-of-body experience! If you think that's a wild idea,

wait until it actually happens.

As you read these words, the Information Age explodes—inside and around you—with the Misinformation Missiles and Propaganda Bombs of outright Information Warfare. Traditionally, war has been fought for territory and economic gain. Information Wars are fought for the acquisition of territory indigenous to the Information Age, i.e., the human mind itself. In particular, it is the faculty of imagination that is under a direct threat of extinction from the onslaughts of multi-media overload. What the vast plethora of media outlets would have us believe is anything but the inner truths of our own intuition and the creative workings of our own imaginations. IMAGINATION ALERT: Multi-media, conglomerate Imagination Killers are now flooding collective consciousness with a non-stop assault of THEIR images, icons and concepts (via magazines, books, film, radio and television). DANGER! Your imagination may not be your own.

The Culture That Dreams Itself into History

As a symbol, Neptune represents (among many things) the transpersonal forces of the collective imagination and dreambody. Imagination, as defined here, is isomorphic to the internal workings of dreams and dreaming in general. They all generate images. At the onset of biological sleep, electro-chemical reactions in the human brain (specifically, the release of a psychoactive, neuro-transmitter called seratonin) trigger in consciousness a spontaneous stream of mental imaging—imagining—while the physical body slumbers. Raised to a larger scale: When the collective body sleeps, the



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collective psyche dreams. The effects of the collective dreambody can be seen by observing the mutating phenomena of "cultural trance", wherein a culture dreams itself into existence.

The function of imagination, in general, seems to include an ability to bond together—in the psyche—those images forming a basis for the inner world and life of the soul. In other words, without nurturing the faculty of imagination there may be no soul. "Species imagination", if you will, seems to operate as if it were the collective psyche's own cohesive agent—formed out of the strongest resonances with those images resembling the zeitgeist or, spirit of the times. The entertainment industry, in particular cinema and popular music, act as "Neptunian" mediums for catalyzing collective imagination and its process of dreaming its newly emergent culture into existence.

The seventies film, SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER, induced a collective "disco trance" in a large sector of the populace, just as the SEX PISTOLS, the premiere punk rock group, broke this trance and replenished it with its own brand of "anarchy trance." Both trances were "real" to their respective dreamers. The current wave of Hip Hop Rap music feels and looks like "reality" to millions of committed listeners and so, they dream themselves into the political history of its occurrence.

David Lynch's surprise dream hits, TWIN PEAKS and WILD AT HEART, have lured a large sector of the collective imagination into a trance of "humorous decay" where we learn to laugh as things fall apart while touched by their strange beauty. Already, other films have started to mimic Lynch's "dreaming style" in hopes of dreaming themselves into motion picture history. Like all film-makers, David Lynch did not "create" culture insomuch as he presented his dream...how he imagined it. The collective, through its various degrees of resonances with certain images over others, determines its cultural validity. The audience always has the final say in the realm of collective culture. By these examples, it's easier to see how collective consciousness floats from one cultural trance, or dream, to another while imagining its own history into being. In the realm of the soul, dreams and trances are the commerce circulating as local currency.

Another example of making and breaking cultural trance can be seen at work in our observations of the history and psychological effects of the atomic bomb. Since its inception and execution, the atomic bomb has made a home in our individual and collective psyches as a highly

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potent, and highly repressed, symbol—representing the greatest manmade force ever unleashed on this planet. Since most people alive today were born after 1945, the Bomb's status as a modern-day symbolic phenomena can no longer be denied. We've either learned to "live with the bomb" and the threat of our imminent extinction, and/or we've done our best to repress it—garnering untold degrees of latent psychic power as the bomb within. There it is, within our subconscious depths, a lock-up account of monumental psychic force pulsating inside a turbo-charged atomic image.

Consider. In the collective psyche, this awesome internal force remains ON HOLD until activated by the detonation of an out-there, external nuclear incident. Is this the "quantum leap" collective consciousness needs for species survival now? As much as the author abhors, and is naive to, the horrific realities of nuclear devastation, he must also confess his urge to awaken from his part in the collective slumber or, at least, know his life may somehow contribute to the awakening of others. The shrouded yet volatile politics of the Persian Gulf feels pregnant with unleashed destruction at the time of this writing. Despite the information from media smoke screens, we now know the United States is preparing for war.

The Bomb as Cosmic Trigger

Will this war be the catalyst that pulls the cosmic trigger, unshackling concentric global shock waves from a nuclear explosion? Is this to be how the USA defines its, until now hidden from public view, role in this world of nations? Will the Arab states ignite a sequence of terrorist attacks on American soil while American troops are thousands of miles away? The political revolution of the late Sixties emerged, in part, from a global response to American intervention in Viet Nam. Remember, 1964-1968 was the last and only time this century where global activities were marked by the conjunction aspect of two outer planets (astrology refers to Uranus, Neptune and Pluto as the "outer" planets which, when in conjunction aspect, have been known to herald widespread political, economic and socio-religious shifts).

A highly idealistic and nearly impossible alternative to nuclear warfare is the prospect of engaging the kind of meditation which serves to ignite the Bomb Within. Miracles do happen, though...so, why not atomic miracles? As individual psyches, each of us can participate as a more creative force right now by OWNING THE BOMB WITHIN. LOVE THE BOMB WITHIN.

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"C'mon baby...light my fire, try and set the night on fire!"

- Jim Morrison of the DOORS

Image is King in the Land of the Blind

When the mind fixates on an image of reality to the exclusion of the very reality that image refers to, consciousness fragments and begins to split (schiz) the psyche (phrenia). The "diseases of the future" will tend to be schizophrenically based in the erroneous identification with images (a.k.a., the "eating the menu instead of the meal" syndrome), especially as the greater collective continues living out symbolic lives instead of real ones...without realizing the difference. The distinction between "the symbolic" and "the real" is as basic as night and day yet, as a result of being inundated with culturally-conditioned images from birth, many of us still don't know the difference today.

"It's the real thing, in the back of your mind, what you're hoping to find...it's the real thing. Coke is!"

A post-hypnotic suggestion from the Imagination Killers Handbook

As suggested earlier, the territory being fought for and conquered during the Information Wars is nothing less than the human mind itself. The list of mental casualties include those who have never learned to think and process information through their own imaginations. These are the victims of Imagination Death, whose own imaginations have been sucked out and replaced by designer replicas supplied by the Corporate Imagination Killers referred to earlier. (For more symptoms and remedies of this dilemma, please see my book, ASTROLOGIK, pages 205-212.) Advertising geniuses worldwide know the economic value of upstaging public imagination with images promising more security, more status and more sex appeal. For those left with their imaginations intact, congratulations: You are surviving the World Entertainment Wars. ("World Entertainment War" is also the name of a rock 'n' roll group led by California astrologer/poet, Rob "Pope Artaud" Brezsny).

As a culture sophisticates, it deepens its reliance on its images, icons and symbols as a way of defining itself and communicating with other cultures. As the accumulating mix of a culture's images float around in its collective psyche certain isomorphic icons coalesce to produce and project an "illusion of reality." That is to say, when enough images agree with each other they almost seem to conspire and form into a more convincing "fact". Examples of these include passing fads, fashion statements, artistic trends and the slower moving socio-political and economic shifts, as well as the slowest turning wheels of established religio-moral doctrines. Whosoever controls the metaphor, governs the mind—personally and collectively.

Babes in the Abyss

I'm referring to this period (March 1991-95) as an era of invisibility for several reasons, the first of which includes a more widespread need for accepting things unknown and unknowable. For example: As soon as we realize how network television and other multi-media outlets are controlled by those who pay them for advertising, the sooner it grows obvious how narrow and distorted the spectrum of available information is. For the most part nobody knows what is happening. The Persian Gulf is proof enough of how much front-page, headline newspaper can be printed that says so little. Ham-radio operators pointing their antennas at Iraq pick up more reliable data in three minutes than mass media can in three weeks. The real question seems to be: Once we have information, how are we interpreting it and putting it through our own imaginations?

To your average culture vulture, being a "nobody" is akin to death.

IF there is a nuclear incident poised to send shock waves around the world and IF this does release tremendous forces from within our charged psyches, what kind of effects can we anticipate? That depends upon each individual mind—of how one has chosen to conceptualize the psychic realm and/or build defenses against recognizing its existence. IF the tragic occurrence of a nuclear explosion were to occur, I believe there would be a deep spectrum of reactions running the psychological gamut of people completely flipping out on one end and on the other end, people flipping even deeper into their bodies...with all the gradations in between. Theoretically, psychic survival is now more paramount than physical.

One's psychic survival may depend on the degree of uncertainty one is willing to permit, alongside a faith in the capacity for intuitive resonance with unknowns. This amounts to keeping our antennas clean and the mobility of pointing them wherever we need the impressions of incoming signals. For those of us still immobilized by the paralysis of analysis or whose antennas are warped in self-preoccupation, a rude awakening awaits. With all the usual information sources either exposed as fraudulent or, at best distorted, we may only be able to depend on our instincts, innate sensibilities and our best shot at interpreting them.

What is meant here by "psychic" is simply perception direct enough to be relatively free of culturally-conditioned concepts and beliefs. Using the term "psychic", we can already recognize certain conditioned responses: New age, flaky, occult, hidden, foreboding, evil, witchcraft, the devil's work, and so on. The actual state "psychic" refers to, however, is altogether different. The psychic, or perceptive, state is a product of a mind cleaned of its identification with thoughts, concepts and images...a mind that includes no-mind. This is mind in a dynamic relationship with the potential state of being...void, or nothingness, corresponding roughly with our comfort in being nothing...and, in our conscious choice to be nobody-but-ourselves.

In this predominantly void-ignorant culture, there is little or no external support for being nothing. To your average culture vulture, being a "nobody" is akin to death. Mass media wizards know better than to

appeal too directly to this void within us and do a good job barely dressing it up. They know how the less something exists, the more people want it. Imagination Killers stay in business by implementing formula-tested images with the greatest public appeal to an individual's security, status, ideological and sexual positions in life. The more defined the image, the greater the chance of hooking an indecisive mind. The more imaginative the concept, the greater the intrigue and entertainment for the consuming mind.

Ironically, this professional "avoidance of void" inadvertently creates an invisible cultural oasis for psyches perceptive enough to see through the sham. These minds belong to the psychic survivors. They refresh their psyches through a kind of "identification bypass" by choosing not to be anything or anybody but themselves. Inside the heart of the Void, awakening minds find nourishment in a concept-free zone, as well as refuge from the non-stop impressions of pre-conditioned iconography—now parading as the next new car or lipstick color or smash dance or dishwater detergent. This is why and how image is king in the land of the blind.

Being nothing implies a certain willingness to see through yourself and through the world around you and, posits the values of transparency and invisibility. Here, our emptiness is neither a "good" nothing nor a "bad" nothing; it is simply beyond image, alive inside the heart of silence. The mind that learns to live with this truth is a mind wearing images like a wardrobe, disrobing at the drop of a hat in the presence of the beloved. The spiritual autonomy afforded by this intimacy-with-void does not come easily; like anything else, it is hard earned if it is to be of lasting value.

"Almost anybody can learn to think or believe or know, but not a single human being can be taught to be. Why? Because whenever you think or you believe or you know, you are a lot of other people; but the moment you are being, you're nobody-but-yourself. To be nobody-but-yourself—in a world which is doing its best night and day to make you everybody else—means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight, and never stop fighting... Does this sound dismal? It isn't. It's the most wonderful life on earth." e.e. cummings

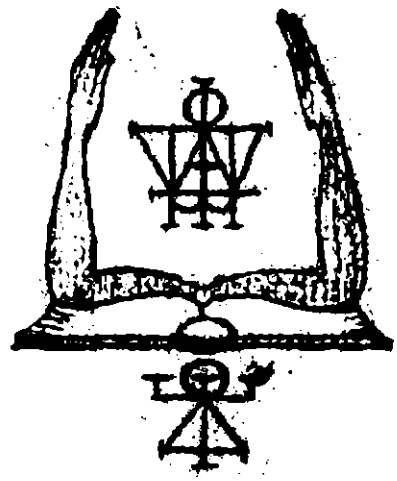
Antero Alli is the author of ASTROLOGIK plus four other rebellious manifestos on mystical realism. For his free katalog of books, tapes & services, write him at PO Box 45758, Seattle, WA USA 98145.

The Perpetual Edge

The Later Years Of Austin Osman Spare

by Jaq D. Hawkins

Note: It is presumed that readers of this essay will have some previous knowledge of the history of A. O. Spare. With that in mind, I will begin with a sparse outline of this history for the sake of context.



Austin Osman Spare was a well-known artist and magician of great talent. He was born the son of a London policeman on the last day of 1886, and by the age of 19 had made a name for himself as an artist in the West End of London. His first published work, 'Earth Inferno', was hailed as a collection of unusual graphic drawings. However, even in this early work, his commentaries showed a deep spiritual interest and a viewpoint of his fellow man that was uncommon to the average artist or collector. There are several comments in 'Earth Inferno' depicting an attitude toward mainstream society that comes from a perspective outside of this mainstream. One such reads: "The perpetual youth of man arises, Draws aside the curtain-faith (a token of humanity's LIMITED knowledge), and exposes the inferno of THE NORMAL."

'The Book Of Pleasure', published in 1913, is considered his most important magical work. Spare's art and magic were always intertwined, depicting varied aspects of himself. His published works were illustrated by his unique drawing style, whether they were meant as books on magic or as art collections.

In the mid 1920's, Spare had become disillusioned with the values of the day, especially among the self-absorbed smart set with whom his artistic successes had him dealing. In 1927 he published 'The Anathema of Zos: A Sermon to the Hypocrites'. With this work Spare left his life of success behind. In his own words: "I turned my back on fame and continued unmolested my quests into the unknown realms, my natural stoicism supporting me in times of want."

The work contains only one drawing, a self-portrait in profile with a hand raised in the traditional gesture of excommunication. The text shows his disillusion with the values and attitudes of the people to whom it is addressed. After the publication of this work, he was shunned by former friends and fellow artists. There were a few more art exhibitions, but he did not publish any more books. He spent the remainder of his life living in obscurity, his companions being the lower class residents of the London pavements, including the prostitutes and other seedy characters that he used for models in those days. He occupied a run down basement apartment, making his living by selling his drawings for trifling sums of money in the local pub.

One may wonder why a man with the natural resource of Spare's obvious talent, as well as his past reputation as an artist, would 'settle' for such a life style when he may have been able to re-establish his artistic fame and fortune over time. Spare spent these years concentrating more on his magical philosophy and observing a different part of society than that from which he had turned away.

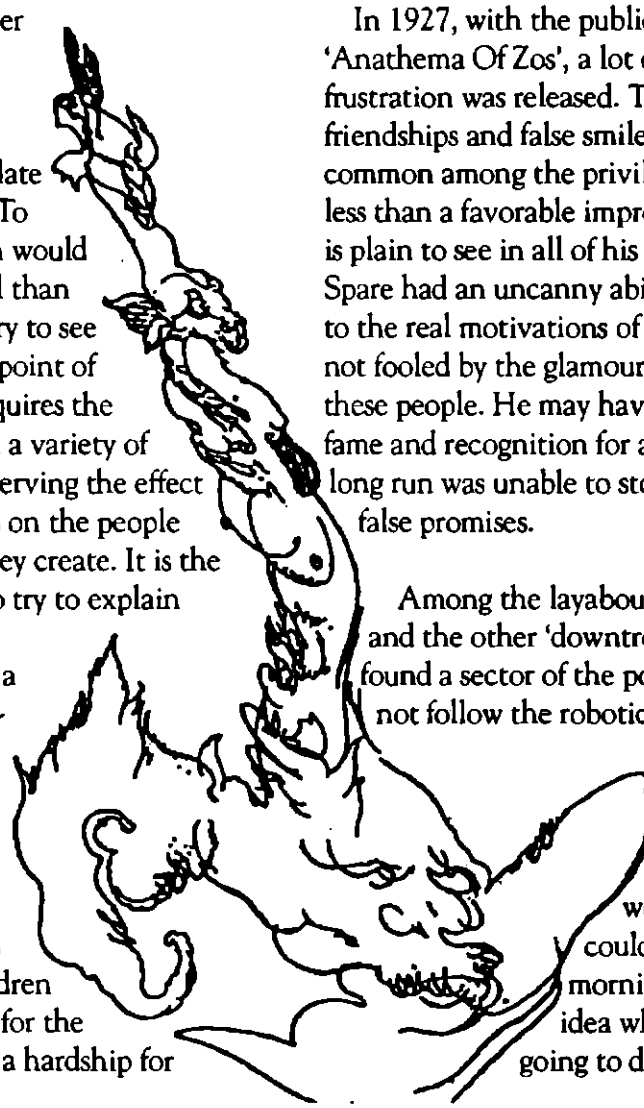
Spare was not blind to the faults of the lower classes either, but money did not hold much importance for him. He drew the people that he happened to see, and traded his talent for the price of a meal or a drink quite often. He squandered what little money he had on drink and women, finding value in pleasures rather than material things.

Even Spare's closest friends can only speculate as to his motivations. To understand why a man would choose to live less well than he might, it is necessary to see the situation from his point of view. This, I think, requires the experience of living in a variety of circumstances and observing the effect of these circumstances on the people within the societies they create. It is the purpose of this essay to try to explain this point of view, by someone who has had a similar variety of inter-societal experiences.

As already stated, Spare began life in working class circumstances. He was the middle of five children and money was scarce for the family. Art school was a hardship for the family, and it is likely that Spare was able to appreciate the sacrifices that his family would have to have made to provide tuition and materials. With his artistic successes, Spare was drawn into a different part of society. Art patrons of the day were probably as varied as they are today, with the exception that the financial resources required to partake of this sort of diversion in those days were further removed from the middle classes than what is required today. This was before the days that a middle-class wage earner could produce a major credit card to invest in a promising work of art. In those days, an art collector was likely to be described as "rich and spoiled", at least by those less fortunate.

In 1927, with the publication of 'Anathema Of Zos', a lot of built up frustration was released. The fair weather friendships and false smiles which are all too common among the privileged classes left less than a favorable impression on Spare. It is plain to see in all of his writings that Spare had an uncanny ability to see through to the real motivations of people. He was not fooled by the glamour and games of these people. He may have enjoyed the fame and recognition for a time, but in the long run was unable to stomach the lies and false promises.

Among the layabouts, the prostitutes and the other 'downtrodden', Spare found a sector of the population who did not follow the robotic life style into which the 'system' shuffles the average citizen. These were people who could get up in the morning and have no idea what they were going to do today, certainly



not what they did yesterday. Each day holds a new adventure for these people of the streets. They can be found in any major city, any period of time. I am not referring to the homeless of today or the mentally ill people who have become recently publicized in the media. I am referring to people who, with the independence of their own spirit, choose not to 'take their place' in society. They choose to live in lesser financial circumstances than they might because in exchange they have freedom. There are no bills to pay beyond the rent, if that. They live by various means. Some trade some talent such as street performers; some sell some part of themselves, such as prostitutes; some simply beg on the streets. This can be more profitable than most people realize.

"If you want the truth, ask a cockney!"

Life on the streets, surviving from one moment to the next, provides the right impetus for what Ray Sherwin in his book 'Theatre Of Magick' refers to as "living on the edge". This phrase has been used by many, but how many people who use it have ever truly experienced it? Sherwin uses situations of physical danger as examples in his book, but all that is required for the emotional state that we are discussing is a certain awareness that most people only experience in these times of danger. People of the streets live in this emotional state most of the time. Some of them are living slightly outside of the law, others are simply aware of the vulnerability that they face every day. Few of them would change their circumstances.

In 'The Book Of Pleasure', Spare tells us not to indulge in idle mummery and imitation, "You are alive!" He is referring to ritual, but he may just as well be talking about how the average person lives his or her life. We do what is expected, and despite some small rebellious behaviour on occasion we imitate what we are taught is the norm. Not so the street people. Spare said, "If you want the truth, ask a cockney!" In this sector of society, Spare found the obscurity necessary to spend his time within his own mystical state, without the distractions of material acquisition or any reason to please society. Spare had his art and his spells to sell. He would not accept large amounts for either, to the confusion of many. He remained in simple circumstances for the remainder of his life. If he sometimes longed for the comforts of prosperity as he became older, still, he took no action to change his life. Thirty years is a long time. He was not idle; he left papers behind on his magical philosophies, and many drawings. He died in May of 1956, several months before I was born, but I am inclined to believe that he died a satisfied man.

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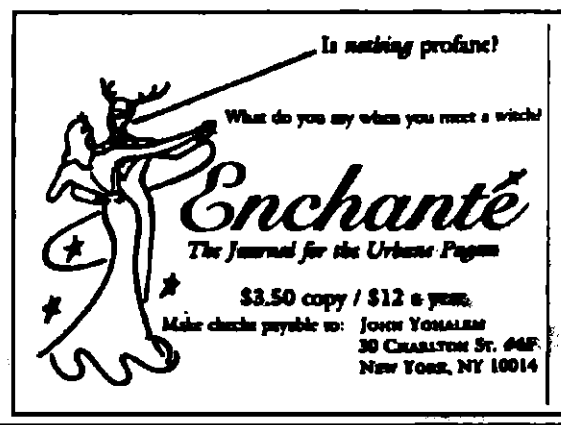
'Images And Oracles Of Austin Osman Spare' by Kenneth Grant

'Theatre Of Magick' by Ray Sherwin

'Excess Spare' compiled by TOPY (a collection of articles by various authors by or about A. O. Spare)



Changing the Face of the Sacred
Women Who Walk the Path of the Goddess*

by Nikki Bado

INTRODUCTION

The re-emergence of Goddess religions in Western culture has provided men and women with roles and positions of authority which are both powerful and highly valued within the religions themselves. These religions frequently display internal structures which are not as hierarchically oriented as more patriarchal religions. Chief among these Goddess religions is Wicca, otherwise called "Witchcraft," "the Craft," or "The Old Religion." An examination of women's religious roles in a modern Wiccan group will illustrate how these priestesses of the Goddess are helping to change the face of the sacred in American religious culture. I am an initiated and trained priestess of the Craft and have been practicing the religion for over fifteen years. Here the focus will be on the group dynamics and religious roles of the priestesses who work together in our circle, the Crystals of the Medicine Shield, a small coven based in central and northern Ohio.

THE WICCAN RELIGIOUS TRADITION

In order to appreciate a discussion of religious roles and group dynamics in a Wiccan group, it is helpful to have some understanding of the religion itself.[1] The Craft is a nature religion whose origins predate Christianity, tracing back ultimately to the shamanic and folk beliefs of Western paganism. It is perhaps the oldest extant religion in the West, descending in spirit from our earliest folk beliefs and customs. What we know today as the Craft has, over the past century or so, been reconstructed from various traditions whose teachings and inspirations have been preserved through the ages in fragments of poetry and song, herb lore and nature wisdom, myth and folk ritual.

The Craft is very different in structure and worldview from what are usually referred to as the three major religions of the West, i.e., Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The Old Religion is closer in spirit and form to some Native American traditions, and some forms of Wicca incorporate a strong shamanic element within ritual structure, sharing elements of shamanic traditions which are followed throughout many parts of the world. The Craft has also been compared to the European mystery traditions. In speaking of the similarity between the Craft and what we know about the mystery traditions, Margot Adler writes:

> "If...we define the Craft as 'the European heritage of Goddess worship,' the connections with the mysteries of Demeter and Kore become clearer. Above and beyond the murky area of historical and geographical connections, the philosophical connections are real. What little we know of the Mysteries seems to indicate that these rites emphasized (as the Craft, at its best, does today) experience as opposed to dogma, and metaphor and myth as opposed to doctrine. Both the Mysteries and the Craft emphasize initiatory processes that lead to a widening of perceptions. Neither emphasizes theology, belief, or the

written word. In both, participants expect to lead normal lives in the world, as well as attain spiritual enrichment."[2]

Although there is an increasing number of widely-known spokespersons for the Craft, there is no set of elders who establish religious dogma as such, no group of prophets who reveal sacred texts. Instead, this emphasis on personal experience of the sacred, on myth and metaphor, and the widening of perception through initiatory processes has created a state of rich diversity in approach, in structure, in group organization, and in ritual within the Old Religion. For example, some groups favor a balance between the worship of the God and Goddess in their rituals; others concentrate more on the Goddess. Covens range from being feminist separatist to balanced male/female. There are also groups which include only men. Structures range from absolute minimal to highly organized patterns of degree advancement and training. Ritual takes on a wide variety of forms as well, from the most elementary to the most sophisticated patterns of ritual behavior and expression. However, within this state of diversity, there are nevertheless many points of commonality.

In the Wiccan worldview, there is no warring dichotomy between Spirit and Nature. Rather, they are part and parcel of one another; the sacred permeates all aspects of the cycle of life and death. Witchcraft takes its teachings primarily from Nature, in the cycle of the seasons, which we call the Wheel of the Year, we are inspired to see and experience the sacred dimension within the rhythms of life all around us. The Wheel of the Year is marked with eight sabbats, or holy days, which celebrate changes in both the seasons of Nature and the lives of humans. Becoming aware of and in tune with the rhythms of Nature—the cycles of beginning, growth, and ending, learning how to work with these rhythms and not against them—these are the lessons of the Wheel of the Year. In these we find great wisdom and comfort—seeing in every ending a new beginning, in every death a rebirth. A belief in reincarnation is a central feature to the Craft.

Another important feature that we share in common is worship of the Great Goddess in Her three broad aspects of Maiden, Mother, and Crone. We also worship the God in His many aspects, chief among them the Lord of the Sun, the Lord of the Ripening Grain, and the Horned God of the Animals—the God of the Hunt.[3] The various aspects of the Gods manifest themselves within the different cycles of the seasons. For example, aspects of the Goddess can be related to the lunar monthly cycle: The Maiden is the new/waxing moon; the Mother is the full moon; and the Crone is the dark/waning moon. Aspects of the God can be related to the solar wheel, with an emphasis on His solar aspect from Yule through early summer, His vegetation aspect in summer and fall harvest, and his forest/animal aspect in the winter.

It must be stressed that our concepts of deity are not parallel structures to the Judeo-Christian concept of God the Father, with a female element "thrown in" for good measure. We see our Gods as present and alive in this world, not removed from it, ruling on some "higher" or "better" plane. Speaking eloquently of the Goddess, Starhawk writes:

"She is the world, and all things in it: Moon, sun, earth, star, stone, seed, flowing river, wind, wave, leaf and branch, bud and blossom, fang and claw, woman and man."[4]

When we invoke the Gods into our circles, we are invoking Them into our lives, that we may reach that divine spark of Their being which is within each and every one of us. Our images of deity are very powerful and moving descriptions of the sacred which are inspiring and empowering to both male and female witches. Although she was speaking directly of the Goddess, Starhawk describes well what our images of deity empower us to do:

> "(They) inspire us to see ourselves as divine, our bodies as healthy, the changing phases of our lives as holy, our aggression as healthy, our anger as purifying, and our power to nurture and create, but also to limit and destroy when necessary, as the very force that sustains all life."[5]

Respect for all forms of life is central to Craft ethics. The major ethical concept of the Old Religion revolves around the rede "An it harm none, do as ye will." What this rede articulates is perhaps the best that any of us can hope to do ethically, to follow our hearts after we determine to the best of our abilities that our path will not harm others.

Wiccans also believe in the law of the threefold return, which, simply stated, means that you reap what you sow—in triple measure. Ethics are of special importance in conducting ceremonies or rites for others. It is considered extremely unethical to attempt to manipulate or harm others through the means of rites or magic. Moreover, because of the law of the threefold return, it is believed that such negative actions will bounce back on the sender—in triple measure. Even in the case of healing ceremonies, wherein one operates with the best of intentions, it is considered good form to ask the person's permission before sending prayers or visualizations about good health. In the cases where this permission cannot be directly obtained—for example, due to emergency or unconsciousness or the inadvisability in some cases of asking one's relative if it's all right for a group of witches to send their blessings!—then any healing energy or visualizations are directed to what we term the person's "higher self" that it may receive these blessings if it wants to, or, failing that, that these blessings may simply be directed with love toward the Earth and Her creatures.

In ritual, Witches work with the elemental forces known symbolically as earth, air, fire, water, and spirit. An important part of the ritual experience is the sealing off of the area from the outside world, usually through the symbolic invocation of the elements, which gives us the psychological effect of being able to forget mundane concerns and focus on the ritual itself. Such an area is called the sacred space. Witches conduct their rituals within a circle, whose directions have certain correspondences to seasons, colors, animals, ages of life, etc. After the sacred space is created and blessed, the Gods are invoked into the circle through prayer and song and chanting, often accompanied by dancing or drumming. Finally, the purpose of the rite is stated and the ritual is begun.

POWER, SACRALITY AND GROUP DYNAMICS

After having illustrated some of the ways Craft groups are similar as well as diverse, let's move on to the composition of the Medicine Shield. Our group is composed of four initiated priestesses. This is not a political statement; none of the men who are studying have yet been initiated. We come from a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, ranging from WASP upper middle class to European

working class. Our ages range from early twenties to mid-forties. The Shield can also be said to include children, since the children of our members are taught the religion of their parents and participate in some of the ceremonies, as they would in almost any religion. Including the five students who are studying for initiation, the following list represents just a few of the labels we might use to describe ourselves: Secretary, graduate student, housewife, metalsmith, corporate lawyer, farmer, artist, and factory worker. Our incomes range from well off to student poverty. This coven has worked together for four years. Sue and I were responsible for the formation of the Shield and the training and initiation of those in our group. We were initiated into the same parent coven and have been working together ever since.

A coven is essentially a group of clergy in various stages of training and expertise. Therefore, within the Craft, there is no lay-priestly dichotomy; everyone in the group is either a priest or a priestess.[6] Initiation into the priesthood is both a central ritual experience and a crucial screening process for the group. An applicant has to demonstrate a high level of dedication, self-discipline and a willingness to undertake a rigorous course of study. Initiation is seen ideally as a lifelong commitment to both the religion and the group.

Craft groups are small; most number less than fifteen. It is absolutely essential that everyone in the group be able to work together harmoniously and dynamically on a variety of levels. The initiation of a student must be agreed upon by everyone in the group. If any of us would express serious reservations about an applicant, that initiation would not occur until (if and when) those reservations could be removed. While the applicant may be refused initiation into our particular coven, he or she is not necessarily denied access to the Craft. Occasionally, during the course of study, a student may be referred to a group or religion which more closely fits his or her interests or personal style. The group must work together to create an environment in which ritual experiences may be understood and shared. Critical attention is given from the outset to the development of group dynamics, a sense of mutual commitment, respect, and trust.

I think this can be illustrated by looking at the actual development of our group. When Sue and I first talked about forming the group, we relied upon our previous training as priestesses and the experiences within the Western pagan tradition that we had had since leaving our parent group. Together we discussed, and sometimes debated, what form the group would take; for example, the nature of the initiation and the pattern of ritual construction. Eventually we arrived at a point where we both felt comfortable with the basic form and confident of our ability to meet the time and energy demands of a group.

Together we initiated Gayla, the first member of the group. Now her training began in earnest, merging both academic study with "hands on" experience. Full participation in the ritual is a key to our personal group dynamics. By participating in the actual working of each ritual, Gayla would be learning the tools necessary to enable her to responsibly manage the energies created by the ritual. She would be able to make the transition from the mechanical or physical experience of the act, for example, carrying the incense around the circle, to the sacred or magical experience of the act, the invocation of the air element into the circle as a part of the creation of sacred space. Eventually, Gayla

would be able to conduct a ritual on her own.

I must take a moment to point out that by our emphasis on full participation in the ritual experience, Sue and I made an interesting and critical departure from the practices of our parent coven. Access to the full range of participatory ritual experience was quite limited for the average member of our old group. Take, for example, the ritual invocation of the God and Goddess. In our parent group, the God and Goddess were invoked into the circle upon specific people only—the God into the High Priest and the Goddess into the High Priestess. During invocation, everyone else essentially became "serfs" to the invoked priesthood "nobility." This is where we perceived that ritual has a political or power dimension. It can be used to perpetuate certain forms of exclusion or deny access to power, and therefore, preserve a concrete form of hierarchy. Ritual institutionalization of gender roles, for example, can mirror and preserve forms of exclusivity which predominate within the culture, as when women are denied access to power. We reasoned that it (this power dimension of ritual) can also be used to ensure access to power, albeit a different kind of power as far as our group was concerned. We saw power dynamics within our group not as power over other people, but rather access to an empowering ritual experience which reinforces the fundamental respect of sacrality of the individual human being and detracts from no one else. Our invocations are performed to the entire circle, so that everyone in the group has an opportunity to participate fully in the ritual experience of the presence of both God and Goddess within the circle and within themselves.

When Pat, the fourth member of the Shield, was initiated, Gayla's training took on a new dimension as she helped teach Pat the basics. This arrangement produces a variety of benefits. First, it demonstrates whether or not the teacher has actually mastered her lesson. Second, it gives her a chance to build up her confidence and test her own interpretations and ideas, possibly coming up with some creative approach which had not occurred to us. This creative participation in ritual construction and group training enables a person to feel as if she is making a real contribution to the character and dynamics of the group. It gives her experience with the duties of the priesthood, and finally, it spreads the responsibility of training more evenly throughout the group.

As Pat mastered the basic knowledge of ritual construction and became proficient in the general practice of our religion, she in turn took on a more active role in the group. Now she and Gayla were both responsible for mastering a subject and then teaching each other, and sometimes also teaching both Sue and me. In addition, Pat has taken on a beginning Wicca study group of three students. While we all work their rituals together and occasionally present classes to the study group, the primary responsibility is hers.

In only four years our circle has changed from one which was run primarily by two women to a group which is now more fully run by four. While status and level of responsibility within the Shield are determined by experience and degree of training, this responsibility and status are shared more fully and completely by all as each new initiate successfully completes an aspect of training. For us, the centrality of a group dynamic engenders a mutual support network and mutual growth. Thus, the hierarchy or power structure of the group is more fluid and not based upon exclusion of

anyone from any aspect of training.

Continued mastery of each level enables our rituals to remain creative and dynamically changing experiences for each of us. Sue and I no longer need to focus our attention on Pat and Gayla in order to check their progress or see if they are having a problem with the circle. We trust completely their ability to grasp the flow of the ritual, and we trust each other to be inspired. This frees us to experience a different dimension of the ritual no matter how many times we have performed that ritual in the past.

In conclusion, we see the Old Religion as helping to change the way we perceive the sacred in American religious culture. For example, no longer is the face of the sacred only male. Our Goddess in all Her aspects and names is as sacred and powerfully moving an image for us as is our God in His many guises. Within the structure of the religion itself, women have roles which are both extremely powerful and valuable. We realize that the Craft is not the only Western religion which provides role models for women. But we note that within the Craft these role models are never ones of passivity and obedience to male authority. In our society, religion is sometimes perceived as something you're born into and ritual as a static and repetitive experience to be endured. In the Craft there is emphasis on religion as a chosen path, one in which the sacred is not separate from, but permeates life. Ritual becomes a dynamic, creative force, capable of providing an empowering dimension to the realm of human experience.

NOTES

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1) While there is insufficient space here for a detailed history or analysis of the Craft, there are many excellent books on the market, e.g., Starhawk's THE SPIRAL DANCE, Margot Adler's DRAWING DOWN THE MOON, Doreen Valiente's WITCHCRAFT FOR TOMORROW, or Janet and Stewart Farrar's books THE WITCHES' GODDESS, EIGHT SABBATS FOR WITCHES, or WITCHES' WAY. They offer much information on the Old Religion.

2) Margot Adler, DRAWING DOWN THE MOON: WITCHES, DRUIDS, GODDESS-WORSHIPPERS, AND OTHER PAGANS IN AMERICA TODAY. (New York: Viking Press, 1989), p. 389.

3) This may not be true for Dianic sects of the Craft, some of whom worship the Goddess exclusively.

4) Starhawk, THE SPIRAL DANCE: A REBIRTH OF THE ANCIENT RELIGION OF THE GREAT GODDESS. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 8.

5) Ibid., p. 9.

6) Some people suggested understanding the Craft within the context of a broad religious field called paganism, which includes a wide variety of nature religions. While I think this understanding is correct, one must be careful in making any hard and fast statements about similarity between Wicca and priesthoods of other Western religions. Since most Craft groups today do not stand in a position of authority "over" a body of pagans, it is difficult to draw quite the same analogy between Wiccans and Christian priests, who have authority over their congregations. It is thought that at one time in history, Wiccan-type priests and priestesses were the spiritual leaders and spokespersons of a larger, uninitiated congregation. This relationship hardly exists in quite the same form today, although many Wiccan groups take initiative and responsibility in larger pagan activities, many of which include ecological or environmental concerns.

Hear us, Great Mother

Who emanates from the Triune One.
Blessed be your myriad names.
Help us spread your rose gold
Light of Love
That we may hear the Song of Destiny.
Provide us with leaven
for tomorrow's bread
Nourish us with the ever-flowing milk of
Your Loving-kindness.
Refresh us with the Waters of Life
Breathe into us your Spirit of Delight
Forgive us our Follies
and errors as we strive
To better Love our fellow beings.
Protect us from the dark night
of our fears.
And as we gaze upon your symbol,
The Magickal Moon,
Know it is you whom we adore.
Be pleased as we seek to perfect ourselves
As living temples of your glowing
Goddess image, everlastingly beauteous.
So mote it be, eternally.

—Andres

On the Invokation of Eris:
Chaos as Prerequisite to Change

by D. Rose Hartmann

"In a dark time, the eye begins to see"
—Theodore Roethke

A Partial Exegesis on Humpty Dumpty

I have it from good sources that Humpty Dumpty never fell off the wall, but was pushed off by a mad woman with the initial E.

Since childhood, I have sympathized with poor Humpty—constructing emotional analogies between his cracked shell and my broken dolls, my run-over cat, and, as I hit puberty, my fractured heart—vainly wishing that the King's horses and the King's men could put him (along with my cat and I) together again. It never occurred to me to consider Humpty's feelings on the matter—did he want to be put back together, and if so, should he trust the minions of the King to re-construct him as he willed to be re-constructed?

Lately, I've been examining the roots and reasons which feed my current belief system while experimenting with my perceived reality. I have employed magickal ritual, along with a process of brutal self-psychoanalysation, in an attempt to exhume or reveal my "true" self (whomever that might be), and to peel back the masks of my personality as well as remove the armour which defends whatever might reside inside. I intend to crack my own eggshell which, I suspect, was imposed upon me for my own protection by the King's horses and Men (disguised, of course, as educational institutions, parental instruction, religious commandments, social mores, tv, law, and, particularly, my own attachment to these "cultures"). Sometimes, when my shell begins to crack, I feel like I'm going insane, losing my ground, hurling headfirst into Chapel Perilous. I'm afraid that if I cast off my shell in its entirety, I'll disappear; so I hold back.

The aforementioned source asked: Do you think Mr. Dumpty was his shell and nothing more? Well, I had always thought of it that way. Yet according to Nature's reality and logic, an eggshell functions as a protectant of an egg, the embryonic container of seed-life, that in-definable stuff of potentia which may grow-up to be a ducky, or an eagle, or a serpent, as the DNA desires. When the lifeform has evolved to the point where its chances for survival are decent, the shell cracks. So what's the tragedy? And why do the King's horses and men want to put the shell back together again? Do they want to stifle the life form and keep it from emerging? Are they concerned for its safety? Are they in conspiracy against the new creature, afraid of its power? The eggshell cracks, the force of the serpent slithers forth, and I persist in being my own sledgehammer.

Break the Shell and you'll find Magick

The revelation of the lifeforce or spark of Chaos which resides beneath the shell of the personality or ego is at the core of the magickal life. The poet and writer

Sherwood Anderson figuratively described the human condition (particularly the artist's condition) as a pregnant woman inside a suit of armour. When we recognize our eggshells and notice the weight of our armour, we can choose to crawl from or re-form our shells; we can choose to remove our breastplates, go naked, or re-structure our entire suit; we can choose to give birth to new aspects of ourselves. The shell of our external reality can be cracked and re-formed as well, though the one usually changes simultaneously with the other as any given reality (save perhaps pure mathematics) is transactional; the perceiver plus the perceived result in the artform defined as The World As We Know It—"We are all greater artists than we realize."

As we realize that we are "works" of art as well as artists, and exercise our talents, we give ourselves residence in the world of magick, happily juggling our self concepts along with our realities. So the preliminary task for any magickian is to get rid of HIr armour or shell and get acquainted with the life underneath. In the beginning, the shell might be cracked only during times of extreme emotion or during magickal ritual, when the magickian purposely alters consciousness—the King's horses and men are really quite competent, the shell resilient, and the armour tenacious. However, with perseverance and time, the shell wears thin, the armour corrodes, and we no longer practice magick, but live magickally.

By the way, the goddess who serendipitously tipped Humpty off the wall goes by the name of Eris. ("Humpty Dumpty" may be interpreted as a metaphor for Adam Kadmon, Cosmic Egg, etc., but we won't go into that now.)

Who is this Egg-cracker named Eris?

The goddess Eris (or Discordia) is the midwife of Chaos, the bringer of creative destruction. She may also be, if the magickian so wills, the handmaiden of magickal practices. In my own life and magickal work, she is called upon as a necessary preliminary. But before I discuss how the invokation of Eris aids the progression of the magickal life, let me introduce you to her.

She is not revered for her manners, nor her beauty or grace, and as far as I know, there are no temples or statues or odes in her honor (although she is notably present in the character Mary Poppins and in the tornado which blew Dorothy out of Kansas). Eris is a messenger of the Crone, in that she serves the crone's destructive wisdom, yet she is not as dark nor old nor wise as Hecate, but frenzied, flirtatious, quick to anger, mischievous, and "devil may care." Eris is a trickster, a willful reprobate who gets her kicks by shaking things up and stirring the soup. She is the force of I-Ching # 23: Breaking Apart. She is an anthromorphization of the Tower Card in the Tarot. As an evolutionary impetus, she brings the sorrows of "letting go" as well as the joys of creative opportunity. She's about High Risk—a force which aids in the transgression of our limits, boundaries, and restrictions.

The Upholders of the Status Quo or Dominant Culture in Vogue, (currently referred to by many as the Patriarchy), condemn Eris as a trouble maker, for she is a goddess of active rebellion. She is the driving force of heresy—spiritual, political, and social—taking pleasure in disrupting the cultural patterns that have outlived

their ability to provide real experience and enthusiastically rejecting the formulistic or robotic life which stale cultures often produce. Eris assists evolution, and as she draws her lifeforce from the eternal progression of contraries, she works day and night to cure stasis of its stiffness. Yet while the hard-headed conservative might wage war against the idea that change is the only constant, the wise magickian works to plug into the Prima Potentia of Chaos, playing and flirting with Hir maid-of-honor Eris, taking sweetsour pleasure in the perpetual creation and destruction of perceived reality, death and rebirth, death and rebirth.

The force of the universe is free and amoral, and like any energy, it may be harnessed for evolution or regression, depending on the will of SHe who knows how to find and use it. It is easy to see why the Status Quo Police (as worshippers of the One and Only Reality) fear and hate the friends of Eris, and are on the march to anathematize the magickians, witches, shamen, and artists—those who play in multiple realities—as sinners, criminals, reprobates, and children of the devil. Dion Fortune defines evil as "that which is moving in the opposite direction to evolution (and) as the principle of inertia which binds the 'good'...the principle of creative movement."

Disobedience is the Greatest Taboo

Eris is famous for indirectly causing the Trojan War. Myth has it that having been intentionally overlooked when the invitations were sent for the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (discord is not a favorite during wedding vows), she disobeyed and crashed the party anyway. Spitefully, she rolled the famous Apple of Discord across the dance floor. The Apple, as the legend goes, was marked "For the Fairest" and was claimed by Athene, Aphrodite, and Hera. Since only one of the three could be THE fairest, Paris was called to judge the first beauty contest. Aphrodite won by bribing him with the most beautiful woman in the world, who just happened to be Helen of Troy and the "possession" (as women were in those barbaric days) of another man. So the Trojan War began.

That Eris's apple-rolling, rather than the lust and desire of Paris, is blamed for the War, seems a tad unfair to me—a plot, more likely, to tarnish the name of the midwife of Chaos.

Perhaps it is fitting to make an analogy with a story of another Chaotic midwife, Eve. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, it was Eve who abruptly destroyed the Status Quo, the reality, of Eden. Like Eris, Eve rebelled against the gods (Elohim is plural) by her willful and fateful act of disobedience. Her eating of the infamous apple indirectly caused the exile of herself and her boyfriend Adam from the Garden (the gods' wrath was the direct cause of the actual exile). Out of the safe, cultivated, harmonious and static and into the wild, changing, dangerous, and discordant.

It is interesting to note that Apples play an important role in the stories of both Eris and Eve. Is it only coincidental that an apple when cut horizontally reveals the five-pointed star or pentacle (try it yourself)—a symbol feared by the patriarchal systems then and now?

Many theorists see the myth of The Fall as representative of WoMan's evolutionary move away from innocence (blind faith, obedience, and dependence) and toward experience (consciousness, the ability to

self-reflect, the will to change and create change); thus interpreted, "falling" was a very fortunate move, a rite of passage, an opportunity to come into our own. Similarly, Humpty's "great" fall, can be read "great" meaning "terrible" or "great" meaning "supreme", "fortuitous", or "wonderful". And even though War is never pleasant, the battle of Troy was the catalyst for much change and progress (not to mention a fertile sea of archetype and myth from which artist and poets of past and present might fish from).

Eris as a Preliminary to Magickal Change.

Magick, of course, is concerned with the re-ordering of the magickian's reality. As magickians we aim to change ourselves, our consciousness, and/or our circumstances in accord with our will. Through magickal practice and ritual we aim to cultivate the power necessary to manifest such change.

Most magickal practices presume a sympathetic model of the planet or universe—a web of life, if you like. The idea that energies can be manipulated is based on the realization that, at a certain dimension or when in a more sensitive state of perception, all things are interconnected —the paradoxical idea that we are One, yet Many. While in the reality-tunnel of our "normal" state of consciousness, we believe ourselves to be autonomic, individual, unconnected to the whole or unable to perceive certain levels of existence. But when we choose to alter our reality through ritual, sex, drugs, sensory deprivation, or what you will, "normal" reality ceases to be. I think those of us who spend much of our time in the workaday world are aware that "normal" consciousness frequently sabotages magickal success, working as a wall to block sympathetic reality while bombarding us with doubt, interference, reactionary thinking and criticism. As Peter Carroll emphatically states in *Liber Null*, "Altered states of consciousness are the key to magical powers."

Magickal reality also pre-supposes the existence of a free-for-all powersource —which has its center everywhere and circumference nowhere—variously called the Archetypal World, the lifeforce, Void, Atman, Tao, Anima Mundi, Spirit, Chaos, etc. This is the stuff from which magick, inspiration and genius stems. It is the thread which connects us to the ancient mind, the Great Memory, the Akashic Records, or the Aboriginal Dreamtime, holding the potential of future as well as the tapestry of the past. It is the force which, upon amalgamation and application of conscious will, allows us to speak the language of our primal ancestors: Animals, insects, plants, algaes, stones, rivers, and, earlier still, the stars, and, perhaps, to communicate with our future selves.

This inter-connected model of the universe or web of life is no longer limited to those of a mystical/magickal mindset, but is also a model chosen by many modern physicists, as it seems to work in accord with the scientific system based on the Quantum Inseparability Principle. Bell' s Theorem puts forth the concept of non-locality, which notes that on a sub-atomic level, every particle is connected to every other particle. The idea of information being able to "travel" faster than light or "information without transportation" would certainly explain the concept of synchronicity, magickal coincidence, and telepathy. Dr. David Bohm speculates that the universe is not only non-local, but holographic. This model fits perfectly with the age-old idea that WoMan, along with everything else in

the world, is a microcosm of the whole, containing all the information of the whole—past, present, and future. One needs only to tap into it.

When the magickian "plugs" into the spark of Chaos within, and communicates HIr desire by the application of concentrated will, SHe acquires the power to influence HIr external environment.

Summoning Eris for Fun and Magick

Magick employs ritual to invoke the archetypal mind (which is simply the art of tuning into those "cosmic" signals we normally edit) and to expose and make accessible our powersource— the potential energy of Chaos. We enter a "non-local" state where our definitions of reality, our masks of personality, temporarily fall away. Who we believe we are at any given moment is always fiction, for we are another thing a moment later; or as W.B. Yeats implied we cannot "know the dancer from the dance." When the protective circle of self-concept dissolves, we enter into magickal trance. Eris prepares us by scrambling our programs, confusing us, and ferrying us into the space of No-Form, the lap of Chaos: Hence, we find ourselves in reach of magickal power.

Emptied of prior definition and highly impressionable, we use whatever means or rituals we choose to change the station to a reality more in accord with our will, or create a wholly new one. We may re-program ourselves, clothing ourselves with new belief systems or realities as creatively and as often AS WE WILL. (As I see it, the more the better.) As we commit ourselves to a practice of magickal cruci-fictions, the dis-identification and re-definition of our perceived selves and realities, our "normal" reality changes to a "magickal" reality, and we soon re-cognize that we are no-thing, everything, and something, simultaneously, and that "nothing is true, everything is permissible."

Formal ritual performed in this Concept-Free state has a high success rate, evoking or invoking what spirits, angels, demons, gods, or goddesses, in the form and style you expect, and as you will. Plugged into the source of your power—the Chaotic Pool of Potentia—you may wish to employ your concentrated will and imagination, thereby utilizing this force to "charge" your magickal tools, talismans, and amulets, or to project your desire into the Cornucopian Womb of the Universe. The magickal will is very effective when applied in the dimension of potential (Chaos), more so, I think, than when applied to the denser astral or physical planes, where it is can be refracted by opposing wills or sabotaged by your own re-actionary mental processes. Your magick will work, so be certain that you want that which you will. Also, it helps to have some sort of symbol of your desire at hand to concentrate upon or verbalize, so you won't need to regain "normal" consciousness in order to remember the purpose of your ritual. A prepared sigil, word of power, or image works well. Formal invokations should be memorized.

How shall I invoke Thee? Many and Joyful are the Ways.

There are thousands of ways to invoke Eris. You might devote yourself to meditation on the TOWER card, or better yet, draw or paint your own. It helps to get out of your head where all your programs, as well as the potential re-actions to your

current programs and future programs, exist. Forget the mind; get into your body instead. Prior to practicing formal ritual, spell-casting, or magickal work, prepare yourself and your space by breaking apart "normal" reality.

Perform a frenzied Erisian dance, whirling like a crazy dervish until you don't know which way is which, stand on your head for an hour, indulge in extended sexual practice or tantra (prolonged sexual activity is perhaps the simplest and most pleasurable way to alter consciousness), or have sex with an unusual person under unusual circumstances. Throw yourself into an extreme emotional state (terror, devotion, or anger), drum until you become the beat, give your ear to dissonant music, or stare at a cubist painting until you understand it. Hold your breath or try Kriya Yoga techniques. Laugh for the sake of laughter and nothing else (try listening to the song "I Love to Laugh," available on the Mary Poppins soundtrack, for a couple hours). Talk gibberish or practice socratic dialogue with yourself.

If you Invoke Eris in your daily life, she will take some of the tedium out of mundane tasks and greatly speed up your passage into a magickal multiple reality . A good way to start is to break habits and replace them with new ones, then break the new habits and replace them, and so on. Or, walk in a different way, talk to strangers, act "out of character" (tell your friends you're performing an experiment), wear clothing which is not your style, explore new routes to work, eat exotic foods, eat on the floor, eat without utensils, write with the hand you don't write with, try to believe in ideas you abhor (temporarily), make love to someone who is not your "type".

Question your beliefs about the world, your ideas of your self, your goals and desires: Be brutally "honest" with yourself and beg your friends to do the same. Find out where you are and why; you can search your "soul" more effectively than any therapist. What is important is that you

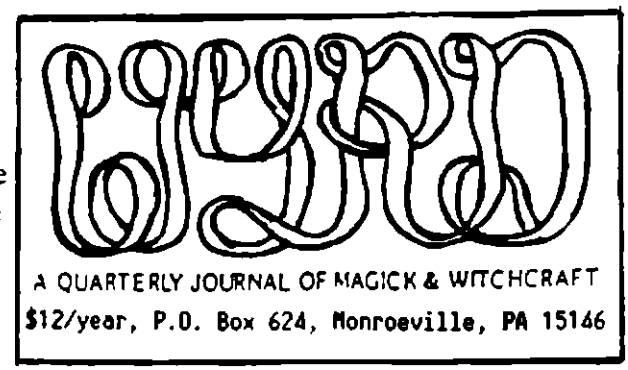
1) recognize the foundations, scaffolds, and walls of your "normal" reality; and,

2) demolish them and build anew. To reside in "magickal" reality, you must turn the channel, again and again and again.

As we become magickal, synchonicities become common occurrences and wishes begin to come true so frequently that one refrains from wishing carelessly. Things just fall into place. Thus, our magick is no more restricted to the time we put aside specifically for such practices; instead, we become magick. Eris, as the midwife of Chaos, helps to provide us with the necessary dis-orientation and dis-illusionment, both in our magickal rituals and our everyday lives, so we may more easily cast off the shells which separate our essential spark, in all its marvelous and ancient luminosity, from that of everything else in the universe. And so we realize that "All the World's a Stage" and "Every Man and Woman is a Star."

Magick lives in everything; you simply have to tap your own sources. YOU ARE MAGICK !

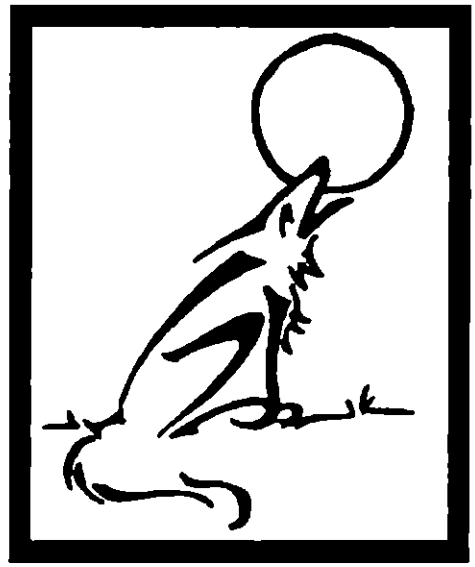
(Thanks to Antero Alli for the terms No-Form and Concept-Free.)



COYOTE MAGICK
Learning to Shock the System

By Otter

Coyote magick is the art of learning to drop our egos, of learning to turn despair into joy, and to laugh at yourself and the world we live in. It involves learning to get off our gilded asses and understand new ideas, and how to overcome our fears by facing them.



I was first introduced to Coyote magick in the form of a young punk rocker named Jesse. His hobby was to shock the system. At first his behavior appalled me, his performances flew in the face of every tradition I clung to. I would try to hide from him, but invariably run into him. Over the years I started to realize that my horror of his behavior was merely a defense against new ideas, and an attempt to protect a bloated ego.

In the seven years I have known Jesse I've learned more about magick and real life than from any book. Jesse never realized he was teaching, and I never realized I was learning, we were just having fun.

The Coyote is a trickster spirit, in some legends he is the creator, in others he stole fire and brought it to the indians. He is the divine fool, always playing tricks, so clever he occasionally tricks himself.

Almost all cultures have a trickster, someone to throw the divine monkey wrench into the system. The Coyote doesn't act out of malice, he just acts. Always romping, always playing.

We now live in a world that values order over chaos. Chaos is often viewed as evil. Some are taught that laughter and spirituality shouldn't mix. Chuckling during a ritual is a no-no. We learn to take ourselves far too seriously. This isn't to say that some rituals aren't serious—just that you should be able to laugh with and at magick. Learn to have fun with it. A Coyote once said, "if you're not having fun then you're not doing it right." So lighten up—the gods enjoy laughter just as much as the next person. So much so, in fact, that the Hopi indians hold a festival to celebrate a baby's first laugh. Laughing is said to deliver the infant from evil spirits.

We are entering the age of the global village, the New Aeon, and while the practice of magick is extremely personal, and it is very hard to separate your personal ego from it, we should try to remain objective. We should take pride in the magickal community, and not just our own personal trip. Personal ego is a barrier to exploring the inner child. Too much ego leads to stagnation, because one becomes too proud to learn.

With so many different paths available to us to learn from, why do we insist on petty sniping? Wiccans knock Ceremonials who in turn knock Shamen who in turn knock Gardnerians who in turn knock Crowley, in the attempt to create a pecking order based on personal ego, ignorance, and insecurity.

I have known people who treat the word

eclectic as a dirty word, who thought that those people who espoused eclecticism didn't have enough discipline to follow a single "tradition". I see some of these same "traditions" as suffering from inbreeding. If eclecticism is a cross pollenization of ideas, wouldn't this lead to a more vital hybrid?

According to tradition, the Coyote was a slut. He would mate with anything, including a rock. His magick is compatible with all magicks, providing people are willing to lose the personal ego trip of an order or tradition, and be willing to grow.

In Ceremonial Magick people talk about "crossing the Abyss." In order to cross this Abyss you have to transcend personal ego. I have met some folk who claim to have done this, some with egos so large they were lucky to have crossed the street, much less crossed the Abyss. The Coyote is the nemesis of this pomposity. He's the little voice in the back of the room that shouts "the Emperor has no clothes!"

He is the inner guide that teaches you to laugh at yourself, and that your magick should be an expression of yourself. He also teaches you how to be a child again, and to play in the mud. Most of all, he teaches you how to sit on a hill and howl with delight at the universe we are all part of. His magick is the expression of the joy of living.

In 1990 a group of like minded individuals got together and rented a huge six bedroom house. This allowed us studio space, temple space and living space. We named the building Coyote House. Until the Department of Transportation tore it down to make room for a growing freeway, it acted as a halfway house for the magickally disenfranchised.

Coyote House was an experiment in tribal living. The members came from diverse backgrounds, from punks and artists to academics and fairies. Our common denominator was that we were all mystic misfits and magickal outcasts.

We bonded together to create the family we didn't have as children. We named the Coyote as the patron of the house. We all had different magickal backgrounds, but held the Coyote as common ground, and set out to explore and understand each others' trips and talents.

We were truly an eclectic household with practices ranging from Wicca, Shamanism, Qabalah, and Chaos Magick. The only house rule was that you had to respect each others' paths.

The local Pagan community had diverse reactions to us. Some thought it was a grand idea; some thought we were "black magicians" because they misunderstood some of our rituals; some couldn't handle having "loose cannons" thumb their noses at blatant pomposity. All in all, I believe we had a positive influence on the community. We acted as a clearing house, directing new people to groups with similar interests, and exposed people to new ideas. It was a time of growth for both us and the local magickal community.

Here are the seventy five cent profundities we discovered in Coyote House. The original sources range from Crowley to Ken Deigh to a drunken night on the porch. Coyotes are never too proud to scavenge thoughts! Some less scrupulous Coyotes coined the phrase "scratch off the serial numbers and call it your own". With proper reinterpretation and perhaps a new paint job, it is your own.

1. There is no "grade" other than "neophyte."

The biggest injustice you can do to yourself is to stop learning, and fall back on established thoughts for the convenience and security they hold. The Coyote invites you to explore the lesser travelled avenues of your path, to experience and learn.

2. There are no victims, only participants.

This means taking responsibility for yourself. Shit happens. Sometimes good shit, sometimes bad, but it's always your shit! So stop whining and learn to turn a turd into a treasure; there is always a lesson to be learned, and a story to be told. The Coyote is not for the armchair magician. He will lead you into places and situations where you will be forced to reexamine your life and your values.

3. There are no limits.

The only limits are the ones you impose upon yourself. Some limits are valuable, others are the useless baggage of outdated traditions. Review these limitations and discover which ones are truly valid to you, and which you cling to out of ignorance or habit.

Everyone experiences the Coyote differently, but he dances for all. So drop your ego and kick up your heels! The world is larger then you have ever imagined.

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Shir Bereshit
Song Of The Beginning

by Sabra © 1991

There has been a growing interest lately in the Hebrew Goddess, Asherah and the Hebrew pagan religion that existed prior to the domination of the Hebrew culture by the cult of Yahweh.

This Song/Poem was written originally in Hebrew and then translated into English by the author, Sabra. We will be featuring an article by Sabra on Hebrew Paganism in a future issue. If you would be interested in obtaining a copy of the Hebrew version of Shir Bereshit, you may write to Sabra in care of Mezlim.

—the Editor

1 In the beginning there was God
In the beginning there was Goddess
HaShem is my name said the God
I Am Who I am.
My name is Shekhina, said the Goddess
I am the Sacred Spirit
I am the Soul in All
I am the Soul of the All

She was the Goddess
She was the Shekhina
She was the Kadesha
And he was the Name.
She was the Goddess
She was the Shekhina
She was the Kadesha
And he was the Name.

2 You are my beloved
said the Goddess to the God
You are my beloved
Said the God to Her.
Goddess, come let us become as One
God, come let us become as One.
God cleaved to Goddess
And she flowed into Him
And their Powers grew twofold
For all Power is in Love

God turned into Goddess
God turned into Goddess
God turned into Goddess
And Goddess became God.
He became the Sacred Spirit
He became the Shekhina
He became the Kadesha
And She became the Name.

3 In the Beginning the Gods
made the Heavens and all Earth
In the Beginning the Gods
made the Heavens and all Earth
And they saw that it was good
The Upper World was good
And they saw that it was good
The Lower World was good.

God was Goddess like
God was Goddess like
God was Goddess like
Their power was twofold.
Goddess was God like
Goddess was God like
Goddess was God like
Their Power was Love.

4 In the Beginning the Gods
made Adam and Adama
We will make them in Our likeness
Man and Woman therefore
They will be made

And They saw that it
was good, Adam and Adama
For in Gods' own image
they are made: Man and Woman
-And it was good.

God was Goddess like
God was Goddess like
God was Goddess like
and Goddess was like God.
He was like Shekhina
He was like Kadesha
He was like Adama
And she was like the Name.

5 The Sacred House was destroyed
in which God and Goddess
dwelt in love and joy.
The sacred House was destroyed
by hand of Adam's brood.
Holy Secret's buried in the ruins
Inner chamber stands no more
And the People were abducted
and the Shekhina with them.

God where is your Goddess
God where is your Goddess
God where is your Goddess
Your Powers are going to wane.
Goddess where's your God
Goddess where's your God
Goddess where's your God
Your Powers are going to wane.

6 Adam's children stood in the ruins
asking Is there only a God?
He could no longer speak to them
For He has no voice without Kadesha.
For the Shekhina has left Him
And his Power is gone with Her.
For the Shekhina has left Him
And his Power is gone with Her.

God has no Goddess
God has no Goddess
Goddess has no God
And their Power is gone.
Goddess without God
Goddess without God
Goddess without God
The World's Balance is gone.

7 And in the Upper Worlds
Darkness has begun to fall
For in the Lower World
The Shekhina was forgotten
And in the Upper Worlds
Darkness has begun to fall
For in the Lower Worlds
The Shekhina is no more

God without Goddess
God without Goddess
God without Goddess
And their Powers are gone.
Goddess without God
Goddess without God
Goddess without God
The World's Balance is gone.

8 Since then the God
has had no Goddess
And the Goddess has had no God
And their Powers have waned
And the World's Balance disappeared.
God be again the Goddess!
Goddess be again the God!
For all Balance lays in your Oneness
For all Balance lays in your Love.

God be the Goddess
God be the Goddess
God be the Goddess
Be He Who Is She.
Goddess be the God
Goddess be the God
Goddess be the God
Be She who Is He.

THE INITIATION OF KURGASIAX, NIGHTSIDE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

by Mishlen

INITIATION

The chakras are wombs, wombs of the human body, wombs shared by male and female alike. When congress is enacted with the Old Ones, their seed may fall upon any one of these vortexes. The chakra within which they are absorbed is dependent upon the type of rite and the focus of attention of the magickan. The various effects—powers—which each fertilization gives is dependent, also, upon which chakra it falls. Therefore, in any one particular ritual, it is possible to receive various types of initiations by focusing upon different resting places for the power or powers involved.

The Seed grows, slowly or quickly, depending upon the resistance encountered within. It may grow in the dark, and suddenly be perceived full-grown. Initiation is the Seed and the full grown Realization. Initiation is the result of all such growth.

Touch the Seed, and you touch the Power Realized.

Theory:

The Mystery of Kurgasiax is the mystery of the Wheel. The I is at the center; the edges (boundary) of the Wheel are the edges of Mystery; the area outside of it is the Unknown. The way in which it differs from its dayside Wheel of Fortune is hidden in the relationship of Universe A to Universe B.

In order to learn/grow, one must commune with the edges of the Wheel. This is the realm of Mystery, where we enlarge ourselves through experiences with that outside ourselves. The keys for stability in this unstable place, are Mercy and Strength—Geburah and Chesed—the first emanations below the Abyss (Separation).

Strength borne of anger is unstable in itself. Mercy without the action borne of strength, is weak. The translation of energy from Geburah to Chesed manifests as the magickal Weapons of the magickan become the magickal Tools, the essential Tools of the Adept.

What is less obvious is the importance of Mercy (which can be a powerful mantra!). The act of doing something anyway. It is an "irrational" act—a method of controlling one's universe. One acts "in spite of". One forgives. By creating this controlled act, one draws upon the power of creation, the power of the Word. You are no longer reacting blindly to the stimuli of your environment; you are creating your own.

The mechanistic cause <–> effect process of the multiverse has no mercy. It is up to us to create it. Consider how important that choice is.

Geburah-strict judgment is an equalizing, knee-jerk reaction to situations. Within it there is no choice. Fairness and equality are not the highest truth—but it is the truth by which our country is run. Laws must exist where there is no love to temper action. Mercy is a product of love. Mercy allows for choice. The Weapons become the Tools—tools to use at Will. The choice to act anyway.

Practice:

The practical application of Kurgasiax is revealed within the sigil itself. Here we find a glyph for the magickal working involved. The horned circle with the x within represents the earth, our Wheel. Outside the earth lie the Stars, the stars which influence our destiny while on earth. The path between the magnetic stars and the magnetic earth is our point of departure from enforced response, into freedom. Knowing the Stars allows that freedom. And how do we do this? How do we escape earth's endless chain of cause <–> effect?

The Key exists in the relationship of macrocosm to microcosm. We must look inside ourselves first. The Stars exist inside of us. They are accessed through the Sahasrara Chakra, that center at the top of the head. It is here that the "Kalas of the Stars" rain down. It is here that we find our Stars and begin our journey. When the Star is found within, you are at the beginning of the path. The Star within sets up a sympathetic vibration with the Star outside, in the night sky. That sympathetic vibration is the path which leads you out of yourself, and into freedom.

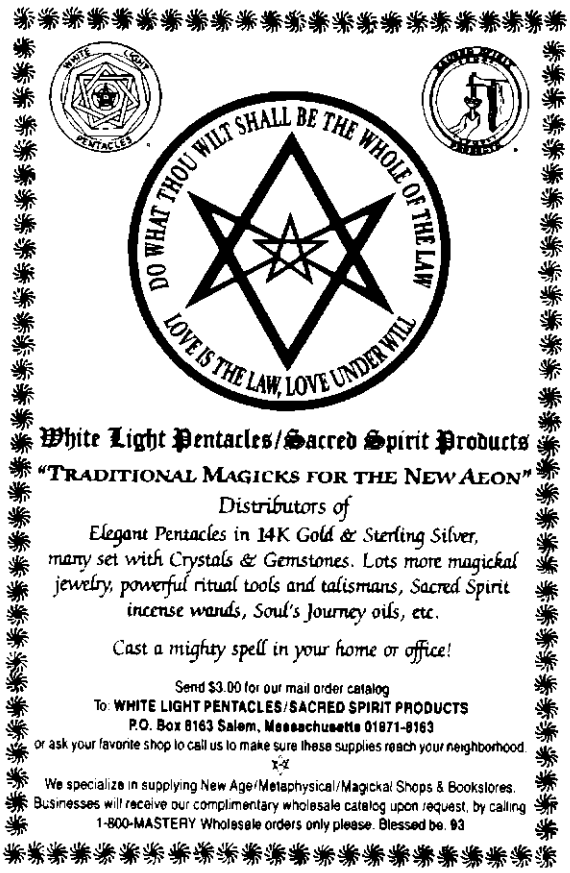
What we have, finally, is a path up the right-hand side of the Tree: From Malkuth to Netzach, through the Wheel to Chesed, through the Hierophant to Chokmah, the realm of Stars. It is a path well worth travelling.

THE TREE OF NIGHT

(Developed by Linda Falorio with Fred Fowler and Mishlen Linden. Presented by Linda Falorio and Fred Fowler at SUMMERHAWK, 1990 e.v.) PO Box 9011, Pittsburgh, PA 15224.

Kether - Sahasrara - Crown

The Image: The Star-Sponge Vision: The Kalas of the Stars rain down from transplutonian dimensions.



Vision of the Great Old Ones, "the people who come from the other side of the sea" of interstellar space, the Mu, the Moa.

Power = trans-dimensional/interstellar time-travel.

Binah/Chokmah - Ajna - Brow

The Image: The Inward-Looking Eye, "With Thy right eye create an Universe".

Vision of the reflection of the Moon upon still, dark water; rainbows of oil upon water.

Power = to enter the Dream Time, to leave the body at will.

Daath - Vishuddha - Knot of Shiva - Decussation of the Pyramids

The Image: The Winged Serpent as Androgyne-Gyander.

Vision of the Labyrinth, entrance to "Universe B" via the Tunnels of Set.

Power = of the voltigeurs, of shape-shifting, of the Shaman, of cosmic transmutation of the primal cell; knowledge of past-present-future as existent in the Now.

Tiphareth - Anahata - Heart

The Image: The Black Snake devouring the eclipsed Sun; the crossroads.

Vision of the Ego-less Void between the Worlds, "for there is no god where I am".

Power = of invisibility; of entering another's body.

Veil of Paroketh - Knot of Vishnu - Diaphragm - Manipura

The Image: The Black Hole, matter collapsed upon itself, "for my left hand has crushed an Universe, and nought remains"; a dark rain cloud.

Vision of "The Howler in the waste".

Power = speech in silence; hunger, the shroud.

Yesod - Svadisthana - Navel

The Image: The Primal Soup as it moves and froths.

Vision of the swamp, waters of illusion; the water gourd, the cup filled with wine.

Power = of fascination and enchantment; imagination kindled by desire; creation of one's own universe.

Knot of Brahma - "Centar" - Ch'i

The Image: The Web, tentacles.

Vision of interconnected nodes of infinitely corroding light.

Power = the drum, as keeper and creator of time.

Malkuth - Muladhara - Que

The Image: Nuit, the Silver Rain, the sexual kalas as they pour forth from the

body of the Suvasini.

Vision of The Dance of sex-birth-death-bliss; the staff with skull on top - the empty mind.

Power = of tantric energy exchange, of distilling the transforming elixir; of raising kundalini up the spine into the shower of stars.

TYPHONIAN TERATOMAS:

THE SHADOW OF THE ABYSS

By Mishlen Linden

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Signed and sigilized by the author

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VOICE OF THE SHEYA
An Interactive Magickal Forum

I am a teacher; I am also a student. One can be either, but should be both. Good teachers constantly learn; good students constantly teach. The teacher/student relationship is one of balance and shared responsibility. As a teacher/student of a new and growing tradition, as one of the Sheya, I find myself caught up in questions regarding just how I fit into the overall process of growth for individuals (including myself) who are working the path of Sheya.

Sheya is new: New words, new concepts, new people, new experiences. All of us are learning a great deal—daily—so who has the time and/or the surety of knowledge to hold themselves forth as a teacher of our new tradition? I do—and I don't.

Time is a precious commodity; yet I must find more of it because, when I explain the ideas and concepts of Sheya to others, I clarify my own understanding of them. When others question me, I question myself and in finding my own answers I grow more certain of my path and of my work.

I am a good teacher because I know that I can never know it all; because I know that there will always be things that I can learn from others; and, because I understand that perspective (and therefore learning) is merely a matter of approach (where we are each coming from within our own individual processes) and/or placement (where we are right now). When the light fails to illuminate the concept on DC, try AC.

I am a good student because my desire to learn is fierce like the heat at the core of a blue-white star. I consume knowledge and seek it everywhere in every aspect of my existence. I realize that I will never know it all, but that will not stop me from trying to learn as much as I can in my lifetime. Additionally, I seek practical knowledge. I have been a student of theory for nothing other than theory's sake and I didn't like it. Give me a theory that I understand and then set me free to apply it. To me, successfully applied theory which gives results is the greatest joy of learning.

Sheya is new: New perspectives, new thoughts, new growth. I sit in a circle of friends/lovers/peers and redefine the core of my Being. It is painful. There are times that I would rather hide from the consequences of my choices, of my path. However, I am also very honest with myself as well as with others. Sooner or later this honesty will shine its light on my process and then I must look and choose and act accordingly.

Teachers and students must be honest. No learning, no true growth can be founded upon lies. Moistened binks lying about in ponds distributing swords is no basis for a system of government*and dishonesty with the Self is no basis for any truly successful path of self actualization. It is impossible to change those things which either do not exist or which we deny exist. Honesty with one's Self as well as with others is a critical factor in a good teacher/student relationship. From a foundation built upon truth, great and wonderful growth can be accomplished.

Sheya is new: New challenges, new pathways, new processes. There is no end to this or any other path of learning for it leads to teaching which in turn leads once again to learning and so on in a continuous spiral of knowledge. And so I learn, so what? Am I merely a pit into which knowledge is tossed? If I attain great knowledge but have no purpose for it, how can I complete the pattern and balance the energy used by this Self in the attainment of such knowledge?

I must teach or admit my failure to maintain the balance of my existence. I must learn or I will ossify and die. Nothing is static. To finalize my definitions and my process is to stop the coursing of the blood of life through my veins. There can be no greater career than that of teacher/student—for in every aspect of our lives, this relationship provides the basis for our growth and development.

I participated in a ritual this past summer in which I invoked the Goddess (Dhyanna, in the Sheya tradition) and then had individual interactions with each of the ritual's participants. There were over 60 of them and I was worried that I would not be able to provide so many individuals with what was needed.

The ritual lasted almost 5 hours and my invocation was effective for the Goddess did speak to each participant and the results (as told to me later) were very effective. She, who was also me, was a good teacher, but afterwards I found that I had also learned a great deal. Many of the things that were said to the participants were also being "said" to me. In part, I was teaching myself via messages from my Higher Self.

I also learned from each of the participants as they shared a part of themselves with me who was She. I had not expected the results to be so profound, but the experience remains fresh in my memory and a constant reminder of the power of shared interaction and knowledge.

I am translating this knowledge into the overall definition of my responsibilities as a Sheya. As a new tradition, it has, as of yet, few teachers. I perceive myself as a student, but I have progressed further than most of the other students for I have been studying it longer. I sense an imbalance and an internal pressure to teach—as both a way to address the imbalance and as another method of learning.

I am struggling with this because, although I feel the imbalance, I sometimes doubt that I am qualified to teach. It is a fear not grounded in fact—logically, I know that I am almost ready—but the fear, probably of "failure", remains. As with most fears, it is best dealt with by facing its source. Therefore, I will teach; and, in teaching, learn; and, in facing my fears, change my world. This is my path and my process.

Sheya is new: I am new; because I remake my Self with each new moment, with each new experience. I am not who I was last year, last month, last week—even yesterday. I am who I am becoming. And through all this, both within and without, I am Teacher/Student of my world, of my life, of my Self. So mote it always be.

*From Monty Python's The Holy Grail.

– ΔTath Zal

Antero Alli's

WISE GUY ASTROLOGY

This column was channeled by the Holy MacIntosh. Yes, computers channel people. People change channels. Channels are sometimes wet, almost always on TV and never the truth. If you don't believe me, go ahead, change the channel; no matter where you go, there's a monitor.

ARIES:

Knock the "con" off conquest and you'll be back in control. Besides answers were never your forte; they're anti-improvisational sedatives that'll put you to sleep while boring everybody around you to tears.

TAURUS

Keep your cash stash under secret lock and key before even thinking about getting high. It's not that everybody's out to get you; it's more like one person's out to get it all while you're not looking. Trust me...

GEMINI:

Of course, uncertainty breeds anxiety; wh[illegible]u expect, greater returns through ambiguity ?! What worked then, doesn't now and you've got barely enough time to nail your own ass to the line, OK ? Ready ? GO!

CANCER:

Your secret life inside the soft, white underbelly is starting to show so you better know it's time to blow...put that show on the road, don't look back or at the very least, get some shelter from those storms.

LEO:

The couple that plays together stays together, so what are you waiting for...a new audience ?! God told me to tell you to shut up and have a Coke and then: Swing your partner round and round and round.

VIRGO:

Time to fan the flames of your psyche's primitive wish levels! Convert that outdated and embarrassing "fear of dirt" into an outright fanatical commitment to a cleaner chaos; lose yourself, you're sticking out.

LIBRA:

Between your iron-maiden policy of fairness and tyranny, your scales are full. But, hey...perception isn't everything. If you're so smart, why aren't you confused ?! Yes, even grace can be an impediment to action.

SCORPIO:

If you're not killing yourself at least twice a day by now, other people might start doing it for you. The disadvantage is they might be literalists; the advantage is they may fall in love with you. Take your pick.

SAGITTARIUS:

All that's lost through repetition is time. Consciousness expansion experiments disguised as relationships leave you feeling high as a kite, cut loose in a thunderstorm. Repent with a compatibility dogma.

CAPRICORN:

Intention makes an accident a crime. Now's the time to privately review your flaws. Collapse just enough internal hierarchy to start talking normal again and then, implement your famous squeeze play.

AQUARIUS:

My sources tell me there are strong, troubled spirits in your house. If your will is animating anything outside your own physical body, you're in trouble, too. Act casual but get back. Then softly... walk away.