

MEZLIM

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MEZLIM

STAFF

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EDITOR'S FORUM

The nice thing about living your life by habit is that you very rarely have to really bother to think, or choose or act from your heart. Most of your decisions are all ready made for you by that very functional, ever vigilant mechanism we call the Ego.

It gets us up in the morning, puts us to bed at night and takes care of almost everything in between, allowing us some freedom (while we're safely asleep) to explore the rest of our Self - and then forget about it the next morning.

The deeply ingrained, mechanistic routine that most of today's "individuals" are accustomed to, provides a wonderfully thick blanket between our fragile minds and the horrifying expanse of reality.

It is placed there by our life experience, structured by parents, trimmed to fit by teachers, solidified by peers and sanctified by priests.

And, it wouldn't be so bad if we didn't add to this, one fatal misapprehension: We mistake the machine for the creator, the Ego for

the Self.

This mistake keeps millions of us spinning our wheels, ever pursuing some illusive sense of well being; running from the ever growing emptiness within.

Some turn around in this flight from Self and confront the terror; the insubstantial but debilitating realization that they have spent their whole lives sleep walking in circles.

Then comes the age old question: "After enlightenment, then what?" What do we do after we wake up?

We start doing all the things we did before. Waking up, going to work, eating, chopping wood, whatever. The difference is, we do it by choice, with the full knowledge and force of our awakened Will.

It doesn't make it any easier. It just means we're more alive, living an adventure, rather than plodding through a monotonous dream.

"Waking up is hard to do."

Namaste,

Kenneth Deigh

The Intentional Relationship

by J. Perry Damarru

Tradition

There was a time - not too long ago - when young couples walked through the portals of marriage into relationships which were ready-made for life. All the boundaries and all the rules were set long ago; long enough ago to no longer be questioned. It was the way things were "supposed to be."

Upon marriage, the young folks knew that they could count on the wisdom of their parents, grandparents and other extended family and friends to give them a fairly good idea of what was to be expected of them in the relationship, and of what they could expect out of the relationship in return. Before the wedding, each was initiated rather informally into the mysteries of their sex, and was offered the anecdotal rules and regulations of the life they were moving into.

These rules usually held throughout the rest of their lives together, and they in turn passed the model on to their offspring. And, strangely enough, it seemed to work. Possibly because they lived in a world which this sort of relationship was appropriate to. It was a relationship that assured the survival of the tribe, the clan, the people - even if it did seem to limit the individual.

Times have changed. The status quo, which still struggles to maintain this model within the mainstream, has been substantially deposed within our pagan

community. While the family is still important, it has come to mean something different to us. No longer are our relationships externally defined by rote adherence to cultural dogma. No longer are we bound by the chains of traditional matrimony. We are free!

But just what does this freedom bring?

Within the pagan community, most people who choose to enter into a relationship do so without the prearranged model that our ancestors were so accustomed to. Those models, for the most part, have been rejected in favor of hazily defined contracts more in keeping with the current reality motif. That is to say, more politically correct. Some even go so far as to genuinely seek to discover what their own personal needs are and try to get them met. This is what I mean by "intentional relationship." Its parameters are consciously chosen rather than accepted from tradition.

The models for handfasting ceremonies - and everything that comes after - draw on traditions from the ancient Celts, the Gauls, Africa, India and everywhere in between. But does any of this borrowed finery really address the needs and difficulties arising from this transformation of the basic unit of our society?

This article explores these issues somewhat casually. Hopefully it will stir up some answers as well. While I'll be referring to the most common pairing of male and female, the intentional relationship often extends to less traditional "marriages" of man/man, woman/woman, woman/man/woman, etc. and I feel that these same issues

apply, though the specific roles may vary.

The New Order

With these dramatic changes come many pros and cons. Let's face it. As rigid as the old traditional marriage was, at least everyone knew where they stood. One of the biggest problems with the new way of approaching relationships is that we are starting from scratch. With the old way we had our parameters set for us. We knew what the wife was supposed to do and what the husband was supposed to do. We knew who was responsible for cleaning the house and who was to take out the garbage. Everything else fit into the prearranged structure, so there were fewer "big" decisions to make, and therefore, much less stress. We were given clear boundaries; commitments etched in the stone of society; and, we knew what the payoff was. We would never be alone, even when we were old and sick. How many of us know that now?

Under the old system, you knew who your family was.

On the positive side, the new relationships tend to be much more elastic, more responsive to our needs, more expressive of who we are and generally more healthy. But, the bottom line is, we have to make them up as we go along. And this requires a tremendous amount of courage, commitment and energy.

In the ideal relationship, we explore the boundaries of this new territory bit by bit. We discover ourselves in the process, revealing our authentic Self as we go along.

We learn to communicate all our feelings; to speak from the heart; and, to achieve real intimacy, as well as healthy individuality. Ideally our commitments are based on our continued growth, both as individuals and within the context of our relationships. And, as so often happens, these ideals run into a number of snags.

The most common obstacles usually appear some time after the couple is wedded. Gradually, over the first year or so, unconscious expectations begin to arise. Often she feels that it's "his job" to provide economically for the family, though they had agreed to share the responsibility. He may feel frustrated by household chores that he was never programmed to perform. Either or both of them may feel trapped and stifled, without really knowing why. When these frustrations are realized and voiced, they are usually found to arise from societal programming that is not easily erased by the choice of an alternative relationship. Defusing these old scripts takes patience and understanding, and is essential to the ongoing health of the relationship.

The Intentional Family

Just as the old fashioned married couple formed the basis for their society, so do our various primary relationships form the foundation of our community. And just as the rigidity of matrimony was mirrored in that culture, so our newly emerging culture reflects the creativity and confusion of our situation.

Under the old system, you knew who your family was. You were related by blood, and nothing could change that. Once again, whatever its drawbacks, it was stable. Blood was, after all, thicker than water. This is no longer necessarily so. Many of us

have divorced ourselves (or been rejected) from biological families that could neither understand nor accept our differences in religious practice, philosophy and life style. In its place, we are choosing our "family" from among those with whom we feel an empathic connection; those who share our chosen values and dreams.

But most of us don't really know what it means to be family yet. Just as we are discovering the ins and outs of our non-traditional partnerships, we are also exploring how we can meet our wants and needs for family. Sometimes this exploration can bear painful fruits. We may discover that the person we connected so well to at the midsummer festival is simply too busy to even write or call the rest of the year. We may find that the person we invite into our home does not share our sense of personal property, and we must ask them to leave. Or we may realize that we are the ones who do not measure up to another's expectation of "family." After all, what the word means to me, may not be what it means to you.

as long as we rebel against
structure...we will remain
without definition

Finally, our intentional relationships often merge with our intentional families, bringing even greater potential - and stress. A common example is a working magickal group or coven, composed of several individuals and couples that come together to form a family-like group. Inevitably, the stresses of each individual and couple will find reflection and expression within the family dynamic. An argument or break-up in one relationship may cause a rending of


the whole family unit.

One way to avoid this is to carefully delineate boundaries beforehand. Guidelines for behavior within the group allow each person to make their own choices about the level of intimacy and sharing they wish to commit to. These guidelines may include a clear statement of what it means to be a member of the group (expectations, responsibilities and privileges); how disagreements are to be handled; on what grounds may someone be dismissed from the group; and, what the purpose of the group is.

Similar guidelines might be used within the context of our personal relationships and even to define ourselves as individuals.

Naturally, the suggestion of "rules" will bring the same response that we have had to the "old order" - rebellion. This is a shame, because as long as we rebel against structure - even our own chosen structure - we will remain without definition, as family, as couples and as individuals.





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THE "I" WORD

and honest communication of any and all issues that arise during the work.

by Tath Zal

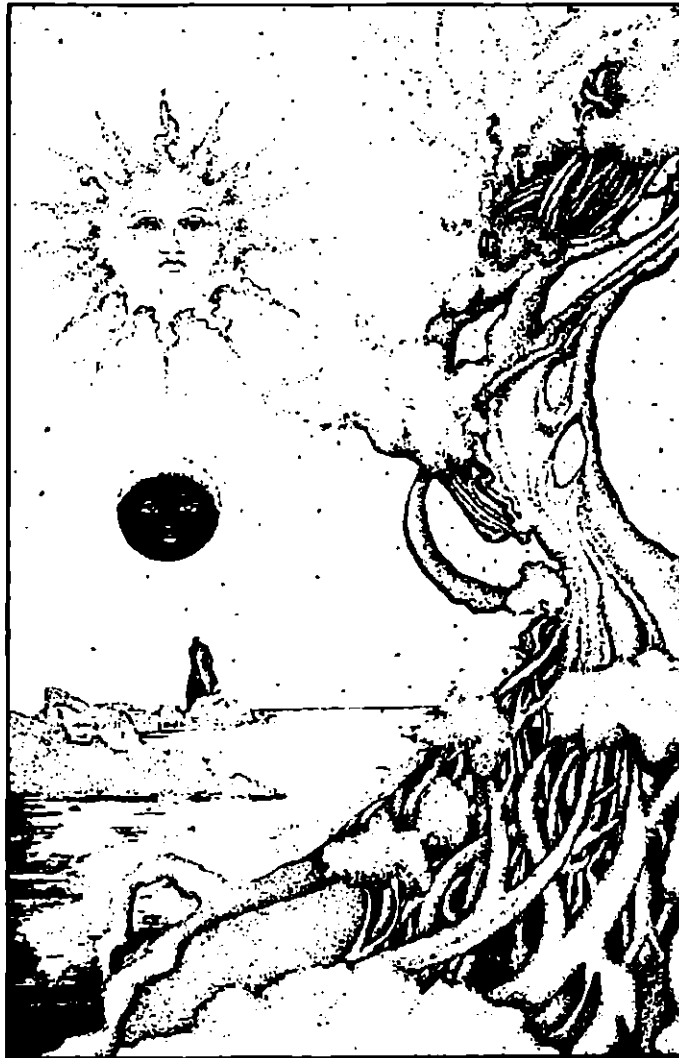
If it's that much work, why bother?

The "I" word—intimacy—is one which most people fail to explore or even address in their relationships. It's too scary to let others see the "real" you because, after all, they might not like you if they really saw the "true" you; or they might use the information gained about the "true" you to hurt you; or, even worse, they just might not even give a damn—and then you would be truly lost.

Any of this sound even vaguely familiar?

Intimacy work in relationships, pagan or otherwise, is difficult, time-consuming, and, at times, extremely painful. It takes a high degree of trust in the person who is sharing this work with you; dedication to addressing your intimacy issues (we've all got them) and increasing your knowledge of your Self and the way(s) you deal with these issues; and, a strong commitment to clear, timely

I have had a few intimate relationships in



© Tala

my life—one which included sex and several others which did not. Every one of these relationships was and is a never-ending well of renewal. Joy, sorrow, fear, anger, love—the full range of human emotions is free to be expressed within the context of these intimate relationships because my intimate partner/friend(s) and I know the "real" people behind the emotions, and love that "real" person, and trust

in that love to carry us through the storms and darkness of everyday living.

It is having such partner/friends which makes the difficult times easier to bear. We can reveal our fears, our pain and our hopes to our intimate partner/friends without soft-pedaling the depth of our feelings because of the additional fear of being unloved or

unlovable. This sharing of ourselves, this expression of vulnerability makes us all seem more human to one another—and less like mysterious, seemingly superior beings made of mirrors and lights. (I, too, have feet of clay—want to share my waterproof boots?)

Even the good times, sunshine and light, are better with these intimate partner/friends because they can be shared fully in all their beauty and happiness. But the best part is the silliness! Yea, verily, bring forth the Royal Silliness in all it's pomp(ousness) and circumstance(s)!

To be silly is to be vulnerable, to put oneself in a position which is laughable and trust that others will appreciate your mood and your actions and will laugh with you. Being silly in safe circumstances—with intimate partner/friends—can bring about a strong “release” of internal restrictions, primarily those we place on ourselves in our efforts to look good, behave well, and get ahead in the external world. The release of such restrictions is critical to our further growth upon whatever path we each, as individuals, have chosen. Thus, intimacy not only requires growth within the context of the work necessary to attain and maintain it within one's relationships, but it also encourages growth as a result of the environment which it provides for its practitioners.

When you share yourself fully with your partner/friends, then nothing is taboo—there are no restrictions, no limits. This means that all experimentation—as long as it has the mutual consent of all the participating parties—is allowed. You are free to be vulnerable and need not fear deliberate hurt; you are free to reveal your innermost Self and need not fear being rejected or ignored. There is tremendous

power being repressed in each and every one of us, bound up in the fear of pain and rejection. To free one's Self from this fear, even if only for short periods in the presence of an intimate partner/friend, is incredibly empowering.

The additional energy freed by the release of this fear can be channelled any number of ways. With my partner/friend with whom I was also sensual/sexual, we used this power to create the most impassioned, uninhibited, imaginative and downright powerful sex I have ever experienced (and I am no novice to this sport!!) I, who pride myself on never losing my head (or my consciousness) regardless of the situation, actually passed out during one afternoon of intense lovemaking from the sheer energy/power of my orgasm!

Intimacy is about depth of relationships, not breadth

We were alternatively silly, serious, intense and animalistic—no restrictions limited us because anything could be said, anything could be done, as long as we both agreed to it. With the open and non-judgmental communication that intimacy brings, all wishes and desires could be expressed freely and acted upon if desired by both parties, or not, if one party did not so desire, without any loss of “face” by either party. It was lovemaking at a level seldom experienced by most people and I am still somewhat awed at the power of even just the memory of that particular time in my life.

I am no longer in an intimate relationship with that particular partner/friend. Circumstances arose which caused us each to make choices which

diminished and eventually eliminated any time we had together. Truly intimate relationships cannot continue without substantive amounts of time dedicated to connecting and communicating with one another. It is possible to have any number of friends and acquaintances, but only a few, and sometimes even only one intimate partner/friend at a time—simply because of this time constraint. (There are rare instances of immediate and/or long-lived intimacy which remains undiminished even after long periods of time without contact. However, these are extremely infrequent and are to be especially cherished. Why not take advantage of such a strong “connect” by spending more time together?)

Intimacy is about depth of relationships, not breadth, and to use one’s given capacity to seek and maintain a broad spectrum of friendships diminishes one’s capacity to develop a truly intimate relationship. This is neither bad nor good as it is not a judgment issue, but rather a choice made at the time a relationship is being formed by the individuals who are forming it.

I’ve mentioned the word “choice” in addressing the issue of whether or not to become intimate when forming a new partner/friend relationship or even within the context of changing an existing, but previously non-intimate relationship. The use of this word implies that there is a conscious decision on the part of the individuals who are forming this relationship to either spend the effort to be intimate, or not, dependent upon the preferences of the parties involved.

Unfortunately, I have seldom seen such “choice” consciously exercised in a manner which provides each individual with an equal measure of that commodity. Usually one party within a relationship

unconsciously decides to become intimate, and then proceeds to share deep secrets and other intimate details of themselves with the other. This first party is often hurt when the second party neither respects such communications as the private and trusting revelations that they are, nor reciprocates in kind with comparable revelations about themselves.

The second party is generally not the callous, boorish person which they may appear to be at this point. Rather, it is merely that the second party has made no decision, consciously or unconsciously, to become intimate. Thus, it would not occur to them to expend their energy in forming an intimate relationship. They do not perceive the revelations of the first party as intimate communications because they are neither expecting such, nor planning on revealing any similar information about themselves. The situation is out of balance and therefore doomed to end eventually (only balanced systems/situations can continue indefinitely).

Another out of balance situation that I have both witnessed and personally experienced is the situation in which a potential partner/friend clearly states that they wish to form an intimate relationship, to let down their walls as it were. And so, you proceed on the path of one who is working on “intimacy issues” with this new partner/friend, only to discover that the wall they let down was merely the small fence at the edge of their property line, and you are now facing a walled fortress that would do King Arthur proud!

Your new partner/friend sincerely believes that the fence he/she took down was the largest single barrier to intimacy remaining within him/her Self. He/she has not yet perceived the fortress within, or, at least, is

not ready to acknowledge it and deal with its presence. Past experience has taught me that the best course of action at this point is to select a level of interaction which is appropriate to my new partner/friend's capacity to share. A comparable level of sharing results in a balanced relationship which is more stable and long-lasting, a source of future potential growth. However, in this instance, I have found it to be more practical (and less painful—those walls are hard!) to find someone else to share my deeper work with, someone who is more comparable to my current stage of growth and development in this area.

It cannot be stressed enough that intimate relationships are primarily dependent upon clear, timely and honest communication, both at the outset of a relationship and then continuing throughout its existence. The choice to form an intimate relationship must, at some time, be consciously (and concurrently) acknowledged and communicated by all parties to the relationship. In addition, both (or all) parties involved must be at comparable levels of growth and development in this area for the relationship to have balance and therefore greater duration. The longer such an intimate relationship endures, the greater the growth and development which can occur. However, as with all other great work(s), the benefits are no greater than the efforts expended.

This is WORK!! I believe it to be magickal work. It takes discipline, focus and force of will to maintain clear, timely and honest communication with another human being. The results are freedom (mostly from fear) and growth for the individuals involved. Sounds like a magickal working to me. Why not try it out the next time you're thinking of forming a

new relationship or even changing an existing one? It should result, at the very least, in that ancient Chinese blessing/curse about "living in interesting times".

Still dragging your feet? How about some external world statistics to add to your evaluation of whether or not you ought to undertake this work? Modern scientific research tells us that approximately 25% of the people that you meet will like the "you" that you present to them (fact or fiction, doesn't make any difference), another 25% will dislike this same "you" and approximately 50% will be indifferent. Why not have the 25% that are going to like you anyway, like you for who you really are? Let go of fear! Cast off negative Self-images. Go forth, grow and be fruitful, get intimate. It's worth it.



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Mixed Marriages

by Maeve

Within the magickal community are many different perspectives on lifestyle, beliefs and practices. For those entering the community for the first time, this can seem overwhelming. A single person can meet a wide variety of people, open to any type of relationship - sexual or otherwise. For the married individual, many problems arise and must be dealt with - whether your mate is pagan or not.

I entered the local pagan community over two years ago. Until then, I had been in a strictly monogamous relationship. I had no problems practicing my faith and keeping a close relationship with my husband. All of a sudden, it seemed, I was noticed, approached and tempted. I write this article to help those who might find themselves in a similar situation...

Before I married my husband, I had led a rather flamboyant life. I was sexually active with a number of other people. But, when I took my wedding vows, I stated that I would forsake all others - forever. Then, I found myself within a different world with



different rules. I talked to my mate concerning the differences in pagan values versus the judeo-christian values that our

marriage was established upon. At that time in my life, I didn't place too much value upon my wedding vows or our strictly monogamous relationship. I wanted to rebel against anything that had any resemblance to the ethics that I had been raised with; and I felt that my husband was trying unfairly to 'control' me. I ended up pressuring him into some non-monogamous agreements that were definitely not fair, since he had not changed - I had.

For awhile, he tried to go along with me in order to please me. However, I could tell (and he later confessed) that he could not live within the context of a non-monogamous relationship. I talked with my High Priest concerning this. He too is married, but after he entered the priesthood, his wife asked that their relationship be monogamous even though he had values similar to myself. He brought up some very interesting points which I would like to share with you.

First of all, we are our word. That means that whenever we make a promise, we are obliged to keep it. It doesn't mean that we can take it back upon a whim - not even if that "whim" might be a good looking male or female dancing 'round the bonfire skyclad, who wants to crawl off into the bushes with you (and



crawl off into the bushes with you (and you know that your mate would never find out). It means that, if we take back our word, we lose a bit of ourselves. We are being untrue not just to our mate, but to ourselves. Since most of us live by the Wiccan Rede "and it harm none," by not being honest and keeping our word, we are hurting ourselves. It doesn't matter when that word was given, it was given. If you can't live with your vow to your mate, then you might want to examine the basis of your relationship. Is one fling at the fire worth risking the comfort and caring you have spent years developing in your present relationship? This was something that I really took to heart. This is what I ask myself when I am in a situation where I would otherwise love to indulge a "whim".

Secondly, talk with your mate. Find out where the boundaries lie. Does a ban on sexual activity outside your marriage include all encounters? What about members of the same sex? Does the ban include flirting? There might be some sort of compromise that can be established between the two of you. Perhaps your mate might approve of a different scenario where they can 'play' along with you. Then again, maybe not. The main focus is to keep the lines of communication open with your spouse.

Do you feel that your mate wants to limit your sexual activity for the sake of controlling you? Is it because you want to be controlled? At one time, I did feel that my mate did not want to me to experience others because he wanted to control me. I had no problems with the idea of him sleeping with another wo/man. Yet, as I stated, he didn't want to indulge in any other relationships. I had to respect that. As it ended up, it really wasn't a matter of control, but a matter of our vows to each

other. After much contemplation and discussion, we established some compromises in which we cater more to each other's whims within our marriage bed.

For those who are contemplating marriage, I suggest that you address these issues. If you enter the relationship agreeing to keep it closed, changing the ground rules later can be very difficult, even jeopardizing the ultimate survival of your union.

Another facet to consider is how sex is perceived in your relationship. Is your marriage a relationship in which you want to save sex as a sacrament? What about trust? Do you want to jeopardize the trust that you have established with your mate? It is almost impossible to rebuild trust once it has been lost within a relationship.

One other area to address in a mixed marriage is the mysteries and secrets known and practiced within the Craft. For those who belong to a magical society or Coven, there are certain things one must keep secret. If you are married to someone who doesn't subscribe to your faith, this might cause some problems since you may not reveal what you know. What if your mate wants to know what is going on in Circle? What I suggest is that you explain to your mate that you may not reveal the details of your activities in Circle, but that you would never do anything within the Circle that could cause problems in your marriage, and then ask that they trust you and your word. If your Coven or group practices the actual Great Rite, talk to your High Priest/ess concerning your problem with this issue. The final decision, of course, is yours.

There are many avenues to explore in the pagan lifestyle. I hope that you find a common ground and happiness with your mate in whatever choices you make.

Blessed Be.

The Polyamorous Binary Star

by KIA

Day One

As I write this, my sweet lover is off to a festival, without me. Free! Enjoying himself (I hope)! I wonder who he will share himself with, what it will be like, for both of them. You see, we are trying what many pagan couples attempt: We are trying to manifest as a loving, harmonious couple while exploring (!) other lovers. We desire to have one main lover, yet not be bound by any unnecessary dogma. "Also, take your fill and will of love as ye will, when, where and with whom ye will! But always unto me." — so sayeth Nuit. I don't think there is anything particularly pagan about this type of relationship, although the Greek and Egyptian pantheons are replete with gods in coitus with other god/desses, wood-nymphs and what have you; the sexual interpretation of the IHVH formula is incestuous. Yet this is not the overall mindset of a pagan. Yes, we live in a freer and more adventurous community, but just because we accept and celebrate our sexuality doesn't mean that we must fuck everyone we know.

So what's this new word, "polyamorous"? Although "polygamy" and "monogamy" speak a well-defined contrast, they're based on the Greek gamos, marriage. I've never been married, and most of the pagan couples I know are not even hand-fasted. Polyamorous means "many loves" and although I am keeping one favorite, I certainly do love my other lovers! There is a deep level of intimacy that I have with my main man, that I do not expect to find or to

cultivate in the others, yet I enjoy their company. As far as "binary star," this image portrays the state of two stars in orbit around each other, within a field of light. The stars retain their individuality while contributing to a third entity.

My dedication to this project comes from my intent: To be free of these uncomfortable self-wrought chains. I want to celebrate our sexuality in all its innocence, without the (ho-hum) drama of "infidelity". I want our society to give up its obsession with sex, stop alternately worshipping/rejecting it. I'd like to see lovemaking used as a tool to free people, to help them understand and accept others, while building self-confidence and independence.

Day Two

Filled my day with other friends, other pursuits. I miss him, but I still have a life! I have things to do!

I have been through this work with three long-term lovers, successful to some degree. I have been there to counsel when first a person releases their hold on their lovers, and their partners unite with someone else. I must say that I am still struggling through this, although for gods' sake, some consider me an expert. Argh. Right now I can feel the twang in my guts, the loneliness and doubt — but I know he loves me! I know he loves me only! Our relationship is well-rooted and still in the finery of its spring bloom. Why do I doubt? Why am I still so insecure?

Because in some ways I have grounded on him, and I have certain expectations of the

future with him. We all look to a modicum of stability in our futures: We continue to manifest our bodies, at least, and keep breathing. We form alliances, and when sequences are harmonious, we expect that they will more or less continue that way...unless...DISASTER strikes. The unknown barges in on our lovely afternoon tea party, and poof! there goes your romance. "You, the Great KIA, fear the unknown?! How many times did you say you've been through the Abyss?!" One too many, thanks, yet I expect I'll be going back. I wouldn't say that every one of these polyamorous events is a strike from the blue, or that it must be treated as a life-threatening, crisis-care situation. It only feels that way.

Still, I don't want to just rationalize these feelings away. I allow myself to feel them and find their sources. Many influences at the roots: My father leaving when I was a child/feeling used for sex by a lover/being rejected by potential lovers/feeling that he is my "other half"/wondering how much I really mean to him — can I be replaced?

The strong part of me hops up and says "Of course you can't be replaced!" Yay for me. The rest of it...I can only build from here. These experiences cannot be erased, and although the hurt remains, I can breathe it out, I can reassure myself that I am a whole being. It takes some doing — nobody ever said the Great Work would be easy.

I did enjoy my day. I don't mind going to bed without him. I miss cuddling with him, but he hogs the covers.

Day Three

Argh. A short dream I just had reveals a fear, and I am unable to get back to sleep: He returns home, and I am overjoyed! He barely acknowledges my presence; he's

caught up in the events of his weekend. I try to tell him about my weekend, and he suddenly brightens and exclaims, "My Cinderella will be calling soon! Diana will be calling me at 4:30!" and then rushes off to unpack and prepare for the call, totally ignoring me. Ouch.

The main relationship must not be forsaken. It is the lifeline. It is the root of the freedom, remember? It is what is providing the opportunity to explore. We two found something special about each other, and that must be well-grounded and nurtured, even in the face of excitement about a new lover. If your main squeeze can be so easily forgotten, you have a problem in this relationship that needs looking at.

There is a balance regarding the amount of hurt that will be encountered. The individuals must decide for themselves what that is. When I was first working through this, I went through a disgusting amount of pain — some was caused by my insecurities, some was caused by callousness on the part of my main lover. If partners have respect for each other, and a degree of maturity, they will feel when they are overstepping their boundaries. A certain amount of hurt will accompany growth, but if there is too much hurt, perhaps you and your partner are not ready for this ordeal.

As for my dream, I can see that I am apprehensive about his return, and hearing about his weekend. For Goddess' sake, I don't even know if he'll take a lover! It's an irrational fear, and it's based on illusion more than past experiences. Although our relationship is stable and growing, I still wonder if he would hurt me without thinking. I still feel like I don't really know him. (Could I ever?) I will reassure myself, and catch my breath: I know I am his beloved mistress; I know that even if this is suddenly the end of our relationship, I am strong enough to carry on. (Am I?)

It's always different when YOU are the one with a new lover. You get caught up in the romance, the freedom. Perhaps you even begin to question your main relationship. So many opportunities for growth here (AFGO)! Yes, examine your main relationship: Do you really want to join in a binary star? Are you really prepared for that compromising, or would you rather explore other lifestyles? Have you fallen into this model because most people use it, or because your parents used it? Do you like seeing the same person every day, sharing with them, loving them? Is your partner the kind of person you really like hanging out with, or are you finding you're really looking for a different type of person?

Be considerate to all your lovers. Be aware of the feelings of your main lover, who is brave enough to work on this lifestyle with you. Inform your new lovers IMMEDIATELY that you have a steady partner that you will go home to. Have respect for yourself in your explorations: Choose your new lovers as carefully as you would choose a new one for your main partner. Whatever energies you mix with, you will be bringing home and sharing in your binary star. If this is not immediately obvious, let me explain:

When people make love, not only their bodies but their subtle fields interact, weave together. Subtle links are forged in ecstasy and are not easily broken. The more ecstasy you share, the stronger the links. If you make love with one person often, you are forming a third field that contains both of you — thus, the binary star, or, Love. When one star engages in ecstasy with a different star, a totally new set of interactions is grounded, and all those interactions are brought along when the binary star is re-engaged. Experience has been gathered, and the wandering star has

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mysteriously "changed". This is, of course, the case in all experience. A more concrete example is when a soldier goes off to war, leaving his honey behind. Whether or not he makes love with anybody, he gathers dramatic experiences, and is not the "same" person when he returns. The change in one person may be disconcerting or exciting to the other, and this is the challenge in the Polyamorous Binary Star. Change has been invoked into a small solidified structure. Does it have enough flexibility and integrity to allow for growth? Or will it stifle, or break apart?

Day Four

I miss him, I miss him, I miss him! But he'll be home today! At this point, I don't much care what he's done at the festival, I just want him back in my arms.

Reading back over this article, it looks

like mostly questions! ??? ! Some answers have appeared: That I am still self-reliant, that I can entertain myself when my darling is away. I do remember what it was like to be single — I remember the freedom and being answerable only to myself. Yet I gave it up (once again) to be close to someone, to open myself to trust again, to even the possibility of pain. This human angst is what I incarnated for, the feelings, the sex!, the ordeals and all the joy. I am happy in my love with this man. Some "ifs" remain, but they can only be answered upon his return. I imagine that we will come together in joy, that he will delightedly share everything he discovered at the festival, that he will appreciate the time away from me, yet be so happy to return to me.

P.S.: Yes — it was a happy ending.



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BINDING A COMMUNITY

by Paul Joseph Rovelli

A community of any sort is a synergistic and dynamic force that proves the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Take any collection of individuals and put them together in a space and time and the grouping takes on a life of its own. A personality emerges that can not only speak louder than any individual; but can drown the very force that created it.

This is true, as I've said, with any society. How much more so can this be with a union of Magickians on the macrocosmic scale or between two lovers—microcosmically. There's a current that flows through; both within and without. Circumstances are created and manipulated and the dance is begun.

So now there are new friends, family and lovers. In the womb of the goddess we swim through the primordial web of our dreams, hopes, fears, and neuroses; vying for that ultimate union with that we know not what. We affirm loyalty and fidelity; whether through initiation rituals or some other rite of passage such as a wedding or the establishment of a constitution.

Politics is defined as the interaction of people in a common effort. To say that such and such a group is better than another because they don't have any political machine or bureaucracy to contend with is a misnomer. A few friends on a fishing trip can easily create as much a political dynamic as any order or coven. It can be in

the choosing of what kind of food to pack for the trip or what menu of rituals the group should pursue.

It's not the politics that's bad; but the vision or lack thereof that moves the body politic. We all have our private and collective dreams. In any coupling or grouping, these need to be articulately addressed and clearly stated. Else, a confusion develops that can cause stress to the organization. We can see this in our nation's politics as fundamentalist zealots vie for power in our alleged secular culture.

This transitional situation in our political union as a nation has yet to achieve any sense of commonality in defining a vision. The same can be said for more and more individuals in the fabric of our domestic structure. Quite a few people, not unlike you and me, have had to find a way to brave the dismissal of the traditional religions offered to us by our families with all its securities and the virtue of common acceptance.

From this we have leapt into an uncertain world that is still birthing. More and more people every year are entering into Magickal orders and covens where there are no institutions and conventions to provide stability and the nurturing support that can be derived from these things. The rules and playing field can change from moment to moment and new member to new member. It is easy for any one individual to lose their sense of potency and empowerment within the group very quickly.

Alliances form that clash with other alliances and groups splinter. "Merry meet and merry part" can be an ideal that doesn't always seem attainable. "No bond can unite the divided but love" is a very real lesson that teaches the only way to avoid any decadent corruption of the original focus of a group.

How to cope with this is the nature of the struggle. In seeking a common destiny there is a great struggle along the way that defines our character and polishes our metal. We become ennobled by the effort.

Of course, there is the break-down of character as we work through the neuroses of our collective and individual psyche. This is the tender point of any union. It can lead to a stronger whole if we can hang onto a certain leap of faith. We should strive to maintain the memory of our ideal from the outset when the waters get rough.

And, in coming through this, we reach into an ecstasy that can bind us together for a lifetime. We become soul mates and spiritual kin. And, there is great fortitude to be gained for the individuals that endure to the end.

There is a new Thelemic society starting under the auspices of the Chancellor of the A.'.A.'. It is called the Holy Order of Ra-Hoor-Khuit (H.O.O.R.). Those of us who choose to brave such a new flagship have a major task ahead of us if our efforts are to amount to anything.

It can be hoped that by our example others will seek us out. It can be hoped that we have what it takes. Success can be our only proof.



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Neophyte's Niche

by Donna Stanford-Blake

What Next?

As I sit down to write this article, a nagging little question keeps tugging at a corner of my consciousness. "What next?" "What next?" It is not an unfamiliar question. Unsettling - but not unfamiliar. It's unsettling because I realize the question would not be there unless I had arrived at a certain point of growth where my choices are no longer linear. Being at point "A" does not mean I necessarily need to move to point "B". I could go to "D" or "X". The destination is no longer the important aspect of the journey. The decision to move, to go, to make up my mind where I will go next - that is the crucial aspect now. I never have been too good at making up my mind, so I thoroughly detest this stage of growth. Some may call this freedom, but I call it confusion.

Since my articles usually stem from my own questions and since this is the burning question of the moment I will ask YOU, dear reader, "WHAT NEXT?"

This is your column as well as mine. What questions would you like to ask? Maybe you are new to this "witchy/magickal/pagan" stuff. Or perhaps you are a seasoned veteran that still remembers the questions that were important to you in the beginning. Whichever, I invite you to send me your queries and inquiries. I will choose the most provocative questions, find interesting folk to answer, write appropriate comments, then violá - Neophyte's Niche!

I also have openings for interesting folk to answer questions. You don't have to be an expert, but a few seasons of living in this "alternative spirituality" is a definite plus. Writing talent is not a prerequisite either. That's why we have editors. Just send me your name, address, phone number, a brief bio, and the name you wish to be published under - all strictly confidential. Although there isn't any monetary compensation for contributions, seeing your name in print is in itself ample reward (at least that's what they keep telling me!).

I have found that it helps to look back to see where you have been before deciding where you need to go. This serves to clarify where you want to go and also prevents going back the way you came. A definite improvement over the old "one step forward, two steps back" method of spiritual growth. When Neophyte's Niche debuted five issues ago, I began at the beginning - "Why Magick?"

I wondered why so many intelligent, creative people choose to do Magick - or Wicca or Neo-Paganism. So I asked them. I received many different replies but the common theme was "it works." Sublimely simple. Why do anything if it doesn't do what it is supposed to do? Exactly what does Magick do? In a word - transformation. With Magick you have the means for personal transformation that the people queried have not found in any other spiritual path. This is profound and life changing - at least it was for me. Because that was when I decided to begin practicing Magick - only to find I already was.

My research and interviewing turned up one somewhat peculiar trait of this “alternative” spirituality that I wasn’t sure I understood. Magickal names. Why change that perfectly good name your parents hung on you at birth? Your Christian name. ...Oh... It started to make more sense after I thought about the implications a bit more. I dealt with the many aspects of magickal names in my second article “What’s in a Name.”

My interviewees were asked about the significance of magickal names, how to choose a name, and how to use it. I discovered the power of a label we take for granted everyday - and the power inherent in using a “new” label designed either purposely or by some greater wisdom. A name can be a tool to aid in working toward self-transformation. It may be secret or used publicly (as an author’s name for example). Whether selected by oneself, by a priest(ess) or teacher, or a whole group, it is a very special part of “being Magick”. I have never viewed names quite the same since that article. That was the first time my by-line read Donna Stanford-Blake. We grow in small steps.

One of the most important tools used in Magick is ritual. It is found in every religion of the world. In fact, as I discovered in my third article, it is found in practically every aspect of our daily lives. To be honest, I have always had a problem with ritual. I viewed it as meaningless movements and words orchestrated to impress the masses. To be sure, some rituals are created for just that reason. But for my third article I focused on “The Purpose of Ritual.”

My first conscious recollection of ritual was in church. Boring. So boring and ineffectual that I was turned off by rituals

for a very long time. When I discovered Magick, I rediscovered ritual and its true purpose. I asked several practitioners how they viewed the purpose of ritual and how it was used in their lives. The answers varied as much as the people, but I found that it was hard to separate ritual from the fabric of life. It is the way we focus our will - our intent. Of course, empty ritual is possible - look inside most institutions. But just focus one tiny portion of your personal power and its usefulness becomes apparent. I was collecting my Magickal tools: A name to change how I thought of myself and now a way to focus my will - tools of transformation.

One of the most powerful rituals is initiation. I knew little about it, but the theme of our next issue was initiation, so I decided that would also be the title of my fourth article.

“Initiation” deals with the experience of the first or most memorable initiation and the related after effects from three very diverse people’s perspectives. In what was beginning to become a pattern, I heard three different versions of the same theme. Initiation can be a dramatic turning point in a life. But, the ceremony must have a clearly understood intent - both by the initiate and the initiator. The time afterwards is also crucial. Just as a new life is more fragile immediately following birth, so should a new initiate be handled gently: Gently fed the appropriate knowledge and shown a different way of being. I also learned that it does not have to be a planned event. In fact, most of us have experienced some type of self-initiation. Someone’s words or a book that spoke to a deep part of yourself - after which you didn’t view the world in quite the same way. Weren’t you thirsty for information or experiences after that event? If you

happened not to get what you hungered for, your half-formed growth was stunted – but, given the proper nourishment, you flowered. Puberty. Death. Birth. Not necessarily in that order - but all initiations just the same.

My initiation into Paganism was my first festival. Not surprisingly, it was also the title of my fifth article. I asked myself and four assorted Pagans about their experiences and advice for others venturing forth to their first Pagan gathering. I was very excited and had a bad case of what I call “first festival jitters.” Not everyone gets them, but I had made this festival a test. Would this Magickal/Pagan group really be the supportive spiritual family I had been searching for? I agonized - but I needn't have worried - it was great! This article - even more than the others - showed the common feelings of the people I asked to share their views. All voiced - and I seconded - the very special feelings a first festival elicits. The memories are almost as tender and enduring as a first love! And the advice to future first time festival goers was unanimous - “GO!” I look forward to being able to go to my second festival soon. I'm no longer anxious about becoming part of the community - I want to sample more of it. Festivals are habit forming!

Over a year ago, I was pitifully ignorant of Magick as a spiritual path. I even thought the title of this column was a bit presumptuous! In the months since, I have gathered my tools and taken a few tentative steps into this unique but surprisingly familiar way of being. Now I can confidently call myself “neophyte”!

When I look back on the last five articles, I am intensely aware of all the wonderful people I have met. I want to thank them for their time and knowledge.

Each one helped create the article they contributed to. Their words triggered my own words and aided my writing - and my growth. I thank you all deeply and from my heart: Bill Covert, Diane Tabor, Rick Peters, ΔKeter Elan, Don Michael Kraig (twice!), Lisa Peschel, Kenn Deigh, E.E. Rehmus, ΔBarak, Hezrah, Nikki Bado, ΔDamien, Amagoto, Shayna, Aravah, Jim, Carol, and Holly. Without you this neophyte would never have found her niche, thank-you!

The act of writing is itself a tool of growth - as these five articles have taught me. My goal at the beginning was to answer my questions in the hopes they would answer yours, too. But, my inner clamor is now somewhat assuaged by the answers I have found and received. It is now your turn. I am excited and curious at the response I will get. Will the questions mirror new ones of my own or will they spark a different line of exploration? I wait and wonder - What next?

Please send all replies to: N'Chi, Attention: Donna Stanford-Blake, P. O. Box 19566, Cincinnati, OH 45219. Due to the nature of magazine publishing, articles based on reader input will not appear until Imbolc 1994.



THE “SATANIC PANIC” IN AMERICA, Part I

by Donald Michael Kraig

In its April 1987 issue, FATE magazine published one of the first, reasonable, modern articles on the subject of Satanism and alleged child abuse by Satanists to appear in the national media (“Satanism and Child Abuse by Charles Rappleye”). Rather than coming to dubious conclusions based on little evidence, the author ends the article by asking questions:

- Why have no [murder] victims’ bodies been found?
- Why are these [satanic child abuse] cases surfacing in 1984 and ’85 when they never have before?
- Why are children’s stories [of satanic abuse], from different parts of the country, basically the same?

Since that time, dozens of books, numerous articles and many thousands of pages have been written on the subject. During my tenure as Editor-in-Chief of FATE (October 1989–October 1992) magazine, I received many letters from people who had seen some of the books or exploitative TV shows and wanted to know what was going on. Although many people mock FATE (especially due to some of the ads we had to run), all of the articles that were published while I was in charge were checked for documentation and veracity.

I had promised to answer those letters and worked on the following article for several years; FATE, moving in a different direction, has chosen not to publish it. Therefore, it is offered here. The questions raised in that early FATE article may now be answered.

MY QUALIFICATIONS

As I studied material on the subject, I discovered that most of it was written by people trying to promote their particular version of Christianity. Many of their arguments, based on theology rather than physical evidence, are highly dubious. Regrettably, much of this spurious information has been pushed as reality to the media and even to law enforcement agencies. On the other hand, a few of the seemingly objective books on the subject were written either by Satanists or by people who support the Satanic movement. There are far fewer of these books than those by Christian fundamentalists.

I think it is fair to let readers know where writers stand. I am an occultist. I am not a Satanist (satanist), nor have I ever been a member of any Satanic (satanic) organization. (I use the capitalized version to mean religious Satanism and the lower-case version to mean self-styled satanism.) My written comments on this go back over a decade to the book *How to Avoid Psychic Fraud* (out-of-print). My basic advice is that people should stay away from any form of Satanism (satanism) as it is based on negativity (anti-Christianity), rather than anything positive, or it is just an excuse for hedonistic behavior. My thoughts on this remain unchanged to this day.

I became involved in this issue even more actively when I purchased a copy of the book *The Edge of Evil* by Jerry Johnston (Word Publishing, Dallas, 1989). In it, a friend of mine was described as a “black magician.” I called my friend and talked to

him about it. When he finally remembered meeting Johnston, he alleged that Johnston met him under false pretenses and that he had never claimed to be a “black magician.” The book had a direct falsehood. (In fact, my friend is currently studying for the ministry!) I went back over the *The Edge of Evil* and discovered 85 errors—misstatements, false innuendos and errors in logic. This does not include my disagreements with the author’s ideas, just corrections of facts.

SATANISM TODAY

There are two types of satanism practiced today. The first I call Religious Satanism. There are two primary Satanic religious organizations in the U.S. today: One is the Church of Satan, founded in the mid-1960s by former lion tamer Anton LaVey. He does not consider Satan to be an entity, but rather an energy or desire to work against the restrictive status quo. His philosophy is basically self-responsibility, Ayn Rand’s Objectivism and hedonism. The other Satanic group is the Temple of Set led by Michael Aquino. Although he claims that Satan is merely a misunderstanding of the Egyptian Set, he also calls himself the “Second Beast of Revelation” (*Newsweek*, November 16, 1987) showing his Satanic roots (he began in LaVey’s group). His philosophy is similar to LaVey’s, although he throws in some Nietzscheism and belief in an entity, Set, who became interpreted (or misinterpreted) as Satan. ---

Due to the fact that some people are inclined to believe that Satanists do terrible things, both groups tend to be closely watched by law enforcement agencies. Neither group, as a group or under group authority can afford to break any laws, although some may find execrable Mr.

Aquino’s trip (along with his lieutenant, Mr. Edred Thorson) to Germany where they performed rituals at the site of a Nazi castle where the Nazi SS had also performed rituals.

Most of the membership of these groups is by way of mail order. There is no way for any mail order organization to know about the true make-up of its membership. It is certainly possible that people who are mail-order members of either organization commit crimes, but that is not the fault of those organizations. But, even if every member of those organizations did commit crimes, we should not think that there are tens of thousands of maniacs running around. The actual membership of these organizations is very small, numbering in the hundreds, or a few thousand at most (*Newsweek* estimated fewer than 100 members in the Temple of Set in 1987 in the cited article, although Aquino claimed “about 1,000 members” in 1986 [“Occult Crime: A Law Enforcement Primer.” Office of Criminal Justice Planning, California.]).

The second type are what I call the Self-Styled Satanists. Of these, there are two types. The first consists mainly of young people, adolescents trying to establish their identities in an adult world. Sometimes they do this by offending their parents and their parents’ society. Those who grew up in the ’60s did this by wearing long hair, jeans and tee shirts and listening to rock and roll. Before them came the beatniks who offended people by wearing sweatshirts and listening to cool jazz. Before that were the Zoot suiters and before that were the flappers. Each generation breaks down barriers that their parents would not touch. The vast majority eventually leave this experimentation and adopt a modified version of the morals and ethics of their parents.

For most adolescents, self-styled satanism is merely a phase—just like playing house, riding skateboards, building plastic models and so forth are phases. They learn about satanism through movies, symbols of some rock bands and some books, including those by LaVey, the invented book entitled *The Necronomicon*, and possibly some of the books filled with wild (and false) stories published by a few Christian fundamentalists. There is no religious or spiritual reality to their satanism and it is frequently filled with contradictions.

A problem can develop if this temporary phase becomes a long-term obsession. Adolescents examining the world will normally have a variety of interests, a variety which changes fairly frequently. If they become obsessed with anything—satanism, football, one rock group, a school clique, a particular Christian sect—and that obsession lasts for many months (especially if they exclude other interests), parents would be advised to try to find out what the child is gaining from the obsession that he or she is not getting within the family. It may or may not be healthy. I would also advise encouraging (without force) other pursuits.

It should be pointed out that these self-styled satanists occasionally become fundamentalist Christians. Discounting several who are simply frauds, there is an easy explanation for their “surprising” conversion: they were Christians all along.

This type of self-styled satanism is simply a form of Christianity. In it, there is Christ (good) and Satan (bad). The theology (what little there is) is simply that of an inverted Christianity which worships an evil deity instead of a good one. Since the people following this type of satanism

are usually young and have not firmed up their belief system, it is not difficult to move them from one deity to another in their pantheon.

Some Christians will balk at satanism being termed a Christian sect, but it is so. Merely because a Hindu worships Brahma and not Shiva does not imply that the person is not a Hindu. Likewise, merely because a person worships the sociologically bad deity in a pantheon does not imply that the person is not a believer in that pantheon.

Finally there is the type of satanist who is truly dangerous. He (and it is almost always a man) is a sociopath and usually had a long ledger of crimes or anti-social behavior before stumbling upon satanism as an excuse for their sociopathy. The murderer Richard Ramirez, the “Night Stalker,” is such a sociopath. Sometimes such a person is very charismatic and can acquire followers. Groups such as these are always small. Examples of this type of self-styled satanism group include the Manson family and the drug killers in Matamoros, Mexico, although both had other aspects to them. Frequently, such a person was abused—mentally, physically and sexually—as a child.

THE MODERN SATANISM FUROR

The beginnings of the current “Satanic Panic” can be traced back to a book called *Michele Remembers* by Michele Smith and Lawrence Pazder, published in 1980. Michele’s father had abandoned the family and her alcoholic mother had died when Michele was 14. Michele suffered from phobias and depression. After four years of therapy she went to Pazder, a psychiatrist.

He hypnotized her, and while in the highly-suggestible hypnotic state she revealed that she had been abused by a satanic cult. One of her claims was that she had been a breeder—she was forced to have children and sacrifice them to Satan. Pazder did no research to verify the story, but “felt” it could be true. Rather than treat her from the standpoint of a psychiatrist, he called in a priest to work with Michele. Pazder became romantically involved with Smith and she divorced her husband to marry him. I would point out that there is no evidence whatsoever to corroborate any of Michele Smith’s claims.

Before this book, none of the people who claimed to be survivors of satanic cults ever talked about being a breeder. *Michele Remembers* was a best-seller, but the event that brought fear into America’s heart came when Lauren Stratford, author of *Satan’s Underground*, appeared on a Geraldo Rivera television show, one of the most watched television programs of all time. On it, Ms. Stratford claimed she was a breeder and was involved in killing babies. With that, the flood gates were open and numerous women, many allegedly suffering from Multiple Personality Syndrome (MPD) came forth with claims of being breeders and sacrificing their own children.

Soon after this, a Christian newspaper, *Cornerstone*, discovered that Stratford, whose real name was Laurel Rose Wilson, actually came from a strict Christian family. They found witnesses who declared that scars she showed, claiming them to be inflicted by cult members, were actually made by herself. At one time, she had claimed to be blind when, in fact, she could see. Medical evidence showed she had never been pregnant and could not have been a breeder. Her publisher, Harvest House, withdrew the book (and its sequel)

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from publication even though it was selling well. To my knowledge, neither Geraldo Rivera nor Harvest House has ever apologized for foisting this blatant deception on the American public.

MPD

A victim of MPD usually had terrible childhood experiences, frequently involving sexual abuse by a relative or close family acquaintance. To mentally survive, that child creates an artificial personality and reality to rationalize what occurred.

Sometimes they create several personalities (up to 100 or more, although most have 10 or less) and realities. MPD develops when, as an adolescent or adult, the person cannot separate their real or "core" self and real world from the artificial world(s) and personality or personalities. Sometimes the victim may not be ready to acknowledge what really occurred and will create more personalities and worlds to mask the inner reality. Some authorities also claim that MPD may be iatrogenic: additional personalities ("alters") being created by inadvertent actions of the therapist or by the client trying to please the therapist.

One of the problems of understanding MPD and how it relates to satanism is the difference between the way a therapist must approach a client and the way a crime must be approached by law enforcement. To the therapist, the goal must be to help the patient unite the multiple personalities into a whole, unified personality. The therapist must deal with each personality as if it were real, even if it is not! Law enforcement must only deal with what is actual and probable with corroborating evidence. The therapists who are sellers of the satan scare do not understand this. Merely because it "feels" or "sounds" real to a therapist proves nothing.

Others, such as Bob Larson (who was recently blasted in the Christian media) on his daily "Talk Back" radio program, promulgate the idea that satanic abuse causes MPD. While that may be possible, he presents no proof for that theory.

According to a "noted psychiatrist," people who suffer from MPD also "spontaneously fall into a trance and 'become' other people. They appear to have many personalities. In actuality, they are hypnotizing themselves." ("Satanic Panic" in *Penthouse* by Laurence Gonzales.) "Such people, who are also easily hypnotized by therapists, suffer from a variety of curious traits, among them 'a pathological compliance with people in the environment, including the therapist.'" In short, people suffering from MPD will make up stories to comply with the ideas of the therapist or others.

Another problem associated with MPD is something called "trance logic." Victims of MPD (and they are victims of both the disease and some therapists) go into a trance-like state and cannot distinguish between reality and fantasy. Some MPD patients have claimed "that their hearts were removed and replaced with the heart of an animal in ritual surgery while they were conscious." ("Satanic Panic" article.)

It should also be noted that many traditional psychologists and psychiatrists believe that MPD is very rare and that there are only a handful of real, documented cases. They claim that most of the MPD cases which are being claimed today are misinterpretations or are being created by the patient in order to keep the interest of the therapist. According to the Primetime Live TV program of January 7, 1993, some "victims" of MPD are now claiming that they did not suffer from MPD and now deny

being involved in satanic rituals.

“SATANIC PANIC” CLAIMS VERSUS LOGIC

Some of the claims of the promoters of the current satanic panic are bizarre or based on half-truths. Here are a few of the major claims and the facts which refute those claims:

Claim: Hundreds of thousands of children are kidnapped and sacrificed by satanists each year.

The basis of this claim can be seen in statistics. According to the National Child Safety Council (NCSC), a branch of the U.S. Department of Justice that keeps statistics related to child safety, there are approximately 240,000 missing children reports made each year. What is not revealed by the satan scare promoters is that within a few days or weeks, 120,000—half—of the cases are resolved because the report was an error or a runaway returns home. Over 119,900 more turn out to be either abductions by a non-custodial parent, runaways who don't go home or “throwaways” who are not welcome at home.

The FBI reported only 67 stranger abductions in 1984, 53 in 1985 and 57 for 1986. The NCSC estimates that they receive more than half of the reports of stranger abductions. That means that at most there are 140 stranger abductions in the U.S. each year. Half of those children are eventually recovered (none of the kidnapers were satanists) leaving 70 children taken by theoretical satanists.

Even one child who is kidnapped and murdered is one too many, but let's put it in

perspective. There are about 150 child drownings in pools each year and about 2,100 children are murdered by their parents in the U.S. each year. That means a child is twice as likely to drown in a pool than be kidnapped by a stranger who might be a satanist and 30 times more likely to be murdered by their parents!

Claim: Playing the game “Dungeons and Dragons” leads people to satanism.

Dungeons and Dragons is a “role-playing” game. In this sense, it is similar to playing “house” or “cops-and-robbers” or pretending some sticks are guns and playing “war.” Dungeons and Dragons simply adds some fantasy elements, including make-believe characters with magical or psychic powers. Players of “D & D” may pretend to be these characters, just as children playing “house” may pretend to be a mommy and daddy.

The furor over this game was started by one woman, Pat Pulling, after her 16-year-old son killed himself. She searched her son's room and found books and paraphernalia associated with the game and concluded that her son's death was caused by his involvement with the game. She claimed in her book, *The Devil's Web: Who is Stalking Your Children for Satan?* and at numerous lectures, that the family was shocked at the suicide and had little indication that her son “Bink” might have had emotional problems. She claims that he had a terrible fear of a “death curse” that was put on him while playing the game.

However, according to Carlson and Larue in *Satanism In America* (Buffalo, NY. Committee for Scientific Examination of Religion. 1989.), she earlier claimed that in his final weeks he growled, screamed, and crawled on all fours on the ground. The

family had 19 rabbits that were found torn to pieces and a cat was found disemboweled. But she didn't talk about this bizarre behavior in her book. Instead, she talked about how the family was planning to go to Disneyland.

Perhaps she was just looking for some way to justify her own lack of attention to her son. It should be pointed out that she also claimed in the Richmond, Virginia, *News Leader* that "about 8 percent of the Richmond population [was] involved in Satanic worship at some level." This would mean about 56,000 people—more than the number of Methodists in the area. Later she explained she meant people who were actively involved in the occult. Note that Ms. Pulling, and others like her, try to describe anything they don't like as satanic.

Again, if children are obsessed with anything—a particular sport, a particular band, a particular religion or even D & D—to the exclusion of other interests, parents should try to offer them alternatives. None of them are bad in themselves. The problem is if young people become obsessed with them.

Claim: Heavy Metal or "Black Heavy Metal" music leads to satanism.

While it is true that there are a few music groups or members of groups who profess to be satanists, the majority of groups that use satanic symbols do so to sell albums and are not satanic at all. But the real question is, so what if they are? So what if they present that image? No one got upset over Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Christopher Lee or others who played similar nasty roles.

I repeat: a problem can develop if someone becomes obsessed with a particular group (or activity or philosophy). They may

even create a false or imagined image of that group and try to live out that image. Parents need to pay attention to what their children are doing.

Sometimes people look for easy solutions to complex problems. Singer Ozzy Osborne has a song called "Suicide Solution." Its message is that a friend of his committed suicide through alcoholism and that the "suicide solution"—was not a solution at all: the song is anti-suicide. Yet, Osborne was sued by a man whose son had committed suicide after locking himself in his room and listening to the song over and over.

The facts of the case imply, however, that the father might not have been able to deal with his own alleged responsibility in the death—the young man was doing poorly in school, he had just broken up with his girlfriend, and the father allowed the young man (who was under 18) to take a six pack of beer into the room where he drank it and committed suicide.

It is likely that a variety of things led up to the suicide. It is also possible that the father, like Ms. Pulling, did not understand his son's problems and was looking for a rationalization to explain the death.

Claim: There are four levels of cult involvement, leading from "dabbling" to criminal activity.

This four level model is supposed to show how a child or adolescent can begin with simple game-playing and end up committing crimes including human sacrifice. While this model is trotted out in virtually every book on the subject, there has never been one independent study performed in order to validate it. Nor have those who promote this model indicated

how people moving through the levels change their inner nature. One claim is that alienated, intelligent youngsters who are loners will be recruited by a satanic cult. Such an intelligent loner would not be easy for a group to control. This is the last type of person whom a group would want to involve. The claim of four levels of cult involvement is illogical, unproved, and without merit.

Claim: Hundreds or thousands of animals are being killed in sacrifices to the devil.

Some people say that there is proof for this claim because there are frequent discoveries of mutilated animal carcasses. This should sound familiar to FATE readers as others have claimed that the mutilations are caused by UFOs. Unless we assume that satanic cultists come from UFOs, we must conclude that somebody is in error.

In fact, the usual error is that the majority of the carcasses are not investigated by veterinary pathologists. In almost every case investigated by such experts, the mutilations—which seem to have perfect, razor-like incisions—turn out to have been caused by animal predators. There is nothing satanic about the animal deaths, nor were UFOs involved.

However, sometimes a few self-styled satanists do kill an animal (since they have no true theology, calling it a “sacrifice” is inappropriate). Such killings, if the animal does not belong to the killers, may be criminal. If the animal suffered, the killing may be criminal. Law enforcement officials should have veterinary pathologists investigate suspected crimes and, if a crime did occur, find and prosecute the perpetrator(s).

To put this in perspective, however, it should be noted that there are very few such

killings each year. Compare this to the tens of thousands of chickens and cows killed each day for food as well as cats and dogs euthanized by various “humane” societies. I am not trying to justify a crime, but merely pointing out that others, such as farmers, ranchers and even ASPCAs kill animals each day. In our real world, the problem is not the crime itself so much as the possibility that an adolescent may become obsessed with killing and death. Parents need to be responsible for what their children are doing and offer alternatives if necessary.

Claim: 50,000–2,000,000 children are being sacrificed to the Devil every year.

First, these figures contradict FBI statistics of approximately 20,000 murders—adults and children—per year in the U.S. Let’s assume for a second, however, that the higher number is correct. It would mean that at least 10 per cent of all women between 18 and 45 are satanists, that each is fertile and that each produces 10 children from the time they are 18 to their mid-40s! If each alleged satanic group requires between four and eight sacrifices a year (claimed in an article by John Frattartola, “America’s Best Kept Secret”, in *Passport Magazine* and attributed to Mike Warnke), this means there are between 250,000 and 500,000 groups! It also means that one in six pregnant women sacrifice their children. Even if it is the lower number, it still contradicts FBI statistics.

According to the August 17, 1992 issue of *Christianity Today*, Mike Warnke’s claims of once being a satanist (and hence, his expertise in the subject) were a fraud.

Claim: The reason no bodies of the murder victims are found is because satanists have “portable crematoria.”

Even regular crematoria do not have enough heat to totally destroy a body. After regular cremation, identification in some cases is still possible. There is no evidence that such portable crematoria exist or are used by any group of people. Nor is there any proof that any such murders or cremations have ever occurred.

Claim: The reason evidence for murders is not found is because satanists are everywhere.

Proponents of the “vertical conspiracy theory” (e.g., that there is a vast, international satanic conspiracy to overthrow Christianity and take over the world) keep running into the same problem: not only is there no evidence that such a conspiracy exists, but the number of actual satanists is so small that it is insignificant. The conspiracy buffs’ response is to say that people higher up are satanists. Thus, even though I am anti-satanist, according to them, my views (which come from studying newspapers, books, interviews and through logic) unknowingly come from higher-up satanists. The reason there is no evidence for satanic crime, they say, is because it is being covered up by satanists in authority. To them, if an officer discovers evidence of an alleged satanic crime, it is covered up by him or her or by a superior. If that superior doesn’t cover it up, then someone higher up covers it up. Thus, there are always higher-ups who are satanists, to the very highest reaches of society. There is not one bit of proof that this conspiracy exists.

Claim: There are “generational satanic cults” that run in families or in towns.

I have personally interviewed people who claim to have been part of such groups. They claim that the cult has existed for some time and that parents, grandparents,

aunts and uncles and people of authority (doctors, lawyers, judges, law enforcement officials, etc.) are members. When asked for names, locations and documentation, the claimants become defensive and refuse to answer. As a result, there is no evidence for such claims.

So why do people believe it? There are two reasons. First, some people make their revelation to therapists. Such therapy can be polluted by contagion, described later in Part II of this article. Second, several such people have made the claims under Fundamentalist Christian auspices. Observers to such occasions are used to seeing witnessing—people relating their personal experience to show how a particular type of Christianity helped them. This supports the observers’ beliefs, and they are inclined to believe the claimant without getting corroborative evidence. In short, they have a predisposition to believe, without evidence, what they see on religious TV, hear on religious radio, or read in a book published by Fundamentalist Christian publishing companies.

To put it bluntly, there is no evidence that such generational satanic groups exist.

End of Part I. Part II will appear in the next issue of Mezlim.



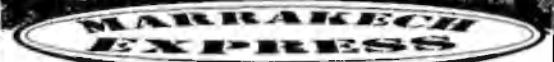
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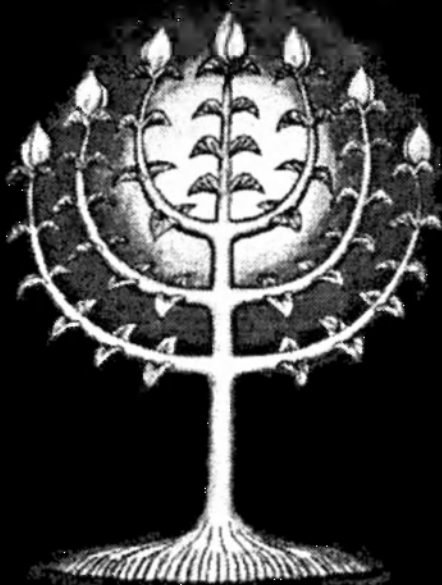
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Initiation Under The Guise of Entertainment

by Mishlen

Matter is composed of light, our physicists belatedly find, but without movement, there is no life. Such is the basis for the magickal transformation which can occur through the Dance.

This weekend I had the honor of seeing the Dance Brigade, a dance group from San Francisco, perform at the National Women's Music Festival in Bloomington, Indiana. Some of their dances portrayed joy and love, some were of feminist orientation, some of political events. Women pondered what they would say if they were free to speak to their men as they wished. Women dressed as men carefully imitated each other's movements until they began fighting one another in an effort to grapple their way to the top, where they beat their chests like apes. Then they danced the dance of El Salvador. Oh yes.

They danced the fighting, the death, the rape, the rise of the people, their strength and their weakness. "Oh America," a woman cried, "Don't ask me to forget what happened..." and beside her danced her memories.

You must understand, when symbolic movement becomes so close to what it portrays, it becomes the object symbolized. That is what happened in this dance. This was not a symbol, but rather, the Thing Itself. When El Salvador was danced, I felt, saw, touched, the entirety of the people's pain. But something more happened. I felt the pain and suffering man has inflicted upon humankind all over our world. I

experienced a total empathy as if it were a physical thing that I could touch. I could feel its boundary, where Mystery begins, and I could feel its soul, surrounded by pain. I touched its core, the deadening lack of empathy that begins with not caring about those around you and ends in rape and war. I felt the hate that mankind feels for itself. I was there. And "there" was "here" too, inside of me when I thoughtlessly avert my eyes from the street people because I'd rather not think about it. A small thread which creates the entire fabric. This dance was a dance of initiation.

Kali had cut me to the quick. This is a sacred wound, though, for nothing will look the same again. I "know" now, that the lack of compassion we feel for others is its birth; and its path extends to the market place, where we conventionalize it by giving it the name "competitive". It ends in rape and war. But even the smallest of these things is built of the same fabric of horror. We are a body devouring itself. When we close our hearts, we participate and add power to those who are perpetuating these cruelties.

Of Restriction and the True Will

The twin of this horror is timidity-fear. The majority of people respond to oppression by allowing it and being very careful to follow the rules of the dominant party. One state cannot exist without the other. The Dominators deny the personal will of the collective people, and the people deny it in themselves when they allow themselves to be dominated. It is only when personal will is suppressed that one

may be controlled by another.

Here, in our society, such behavior is insidiously reinforced. We are told what to do from before the time we are old enough to understand. Where our parents leave off, our government takes over. We find it easier and "better" for us not to question where "our" values come from; not to search for our real values. For our real values are an outgrowth of our real selves, our True Will, and what will happen if we find it is not in accordance with that of our oppressors? We will be locked up or destroyed by this demon monster. We will be come activists and suffer accordingly. So we still our own inner voice, for it is less painful and less dangerous not to be aware of it.

In the United States, we are told that we have created our government. But astrally, that which lives and breathes are two monstrous creatures, that of Separation, and that of Denial. These two are so much a part of our lives that we cannot see their existence, but we act in accordance with

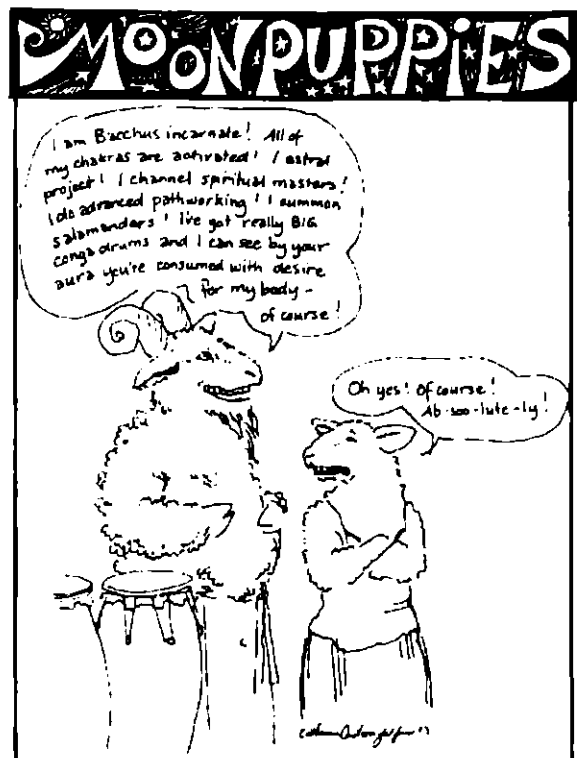
their wills every day.

My personal realization resulted from someone whispering "Nicaragua" into my shekere during a drum session. The shekere is a ritual gourd strung with beads or shells, which acts as a rattle when shaken. It is considered female by the Yoruba people of West Africa, and sacred. Its voice is the voice of creation. That which was whispered into its womb that night was expelled while I slept, in dreams and visions of understanding that I share with you now.

The Cup is also a womb. Go to your altar. Acknowledge the power of the cup in your heart, and whisper into it as the last thing you do before you go to sleep that night. Your own magickal womb may share its understanding with you. Mankind has created many beasts. May you meet one tonight.



Moonpuppies © Catherine Cartwright-Jones 1993



Get The Point

by Chic Cicero

After many years of working with Hermetic students, I have often found that the simplest and most overlooked rituals and meditations are among the most effective and beneficial. One of the most important of these exercises is the meditation given to the Neophyte of the Golden Dawn. In this short meditation, the student is encouraged to contemplate a point—a simple emblem of unity, the Origin and the Center, as well as the symbol of the principles of manifestation and emanation. The meditation is as follows:

Let the Neophyte consider a point as defined in mathematics—having position, but no magnitude—and let him note the ideas to which this gives rise. Concentrating his faculties on this, as a focus, let him endeavor to realize the Immanence of the Divine throughout Nature, in all her aspects.

Begin by finding a position, balanced, but sufficiently comfortable. Breath rhythmically until the body is still and the mind quiet. Keep this state for a few minutes at first—and for longer as you get more used to preventing the mind from wandering. Think now of the subject for meditation in a general way—then choose out one thought or image and follow that to its conclusion.

The simplest rhythm for the beginner is the Fourfold Breath. 1) Empty the lungs and remain thus while counting four. 2) Inhale, counting four so that you feel filled with breath to the throat. 3) Hold this breath while counting four. 4) Exhale, counting four till the lungs are empty.

This should be practiced, counting slowly or quickly till you obtain a rhythm that suits you—one that is comforting and stilling.

*Having attained this, count the breath thus for two or three minutes, till you feel quiet, and then proceed with the meditation.**

The objective of this is to teach the aspiring Magician how to eliminate the chatter in his/her mind and be able to maintain total focus on a given point or aspect of a meditation or ritual. The ability to focus is an essential component of successful ritual work. In working with the energies of the Tree of Life, the Magician concentrates upon the brilliant point of Light above the head which is Kether, the Crown; before bringing the energy down and focusing it in the Tiphareth or heart center, which is the seat of the Ruach or Intellect. The Magician can then control the flow of this energy and direct it toward a specific ritual end. However, like all else in Magick, this takes practice, will power and the ability to focus or maintain concentration for an extended period of time.

Today there is an enormous quantity of Magickal material for the aspiring Magician to purchase and read. There are hundreds more books on the subject today than there were twenty years ago. The student can easily become transfixed learning about various Magickal ideas, systems, techniques and Spiritual Paths. It is all too easy to become an armchair occultist, reading book after book, exploring system after system and never really performing any acts of Magick—never quite focusing on one point. An armchair occultist is a would-be Magician; someone who studies all Magickal systems, and is Master of none of them.

Whatever Magickal system, current or spiritual path the student decides to embark upon, whether it be Wicca, Neopaganism, Thelema, Golden Dawn, Shamanism or another, the key to success is the ability to focus the mind on the chosen system (or point) and stick with it, exploring it to its fullest potential. This means investigating every aspect of the system as it was originally intended to be experienced. Only after the system has been fully experienced can one seriously appreciate the complexities and nuances of other systems.

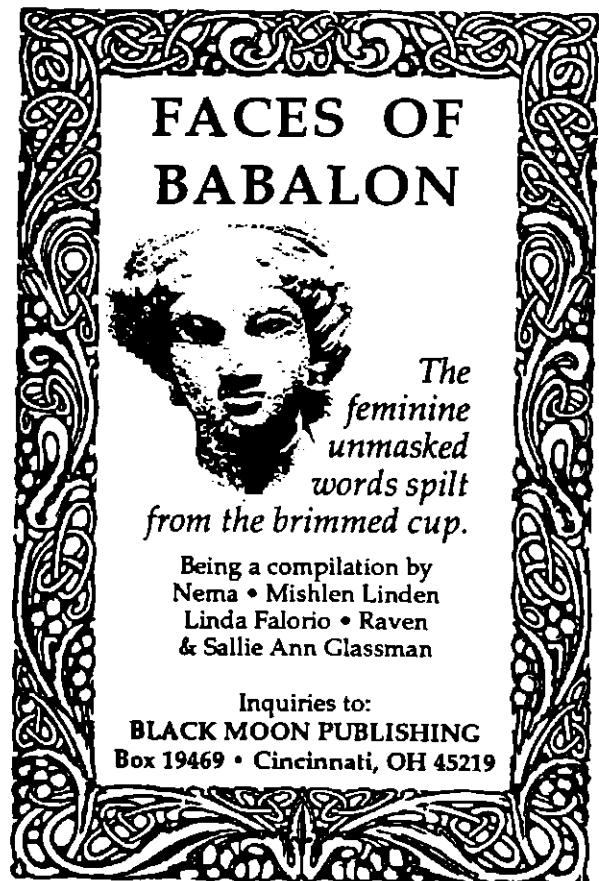
Does this mean that the student must only read and study books about one Magickal Path exclusively? Of course not. The study of Magick is the study of Knowledge in all its various forms. What I am suggesting is that the student who performs a Thelemic ritual, a Wiccan ritual, a Golden Dawn ritual, a Greek ritual and a Celtic ritual all in a two week period is perhaps not reaping all the benefits s/he could get by concentrating on one type of Magick for the same time period. It simply takes time and concentration to build up a working Magickal energy, and scattering one's Magickal focus, even with the best of all intentions, results in confusion, and is just not as effective as performing the same ritual or rituals repeatedly until proficiency is achieved.

I have seen many people first try one type of Magick then another, joining group after group and chasing guru after guru. Rarely do these students seriously commit themselves to one Spiritual Path long enough to gain any real benefits from any of them, and they usually continue on in their eternal quest for the one type of Magick that will suddenly transform their lives.

My advice to them would be to concentrate on one system for a substantial

period of time and take control through the Magickal use of Will. Stick to one Current and explore its many tributaries. Look beyond the stacks of books and visual chatter which divides and conquers the student's attention. Don't just read about it...DO IT! And do it to the best of your ability. Be thorough and not superficial in the study of your chosen system; in order to more fully "know thyself". Have the ability to focus. Get the Point.

*Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 6th Ed. (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1992), pp. 52-53.



DEFINITIONS OF DESIRE

by Julian Vayne

The maxim “be careful what you pray for—in case you get it” is one which is often used in the context of magickal philosophy.

Certainly there are many instances of magickal operations going awry because of poorly thought out intentions. For me, the natural caprice of magickal force is illustrated rather well by the following story.

It concerns the noted artist and intuitive magickian Austin Osman Spare. During his day, it was fashionable for spiritualist mediums to generate “apports”, objects such as cut flowers which materialised, literally, from the spirit realm. One day Spare was visited by a friend who asked him to demonstrate the power of his sigil magick system. Spare decided that he would produce freshly cut roses from thin air, the favourite spiritualist trick, to demonstrate his adeptship. Taking a scrap of paper Spare drew a sigil to represent his desire, spent a few moments concentrated intently on it, and then destroyed it in a candle flame.

A moment later there was a rumbling sound as the sewerage pipes, which had been blocked in the flat above for some time, began to resonate. Suddenly Spare and his companion were covered with the effluent which had built up in the waste pipes—they did indeed come up “smelling of roses” but not quite as intended!

Stories, such as that given above, conditioned me into holding the opinion that a clear intent was always necessary when performing a magickal operation.

Certainly I think that, over the years, I’ve gained much from learning to think through and express the intention or “desire” of my rites in the most succinct and lucid manner. Even so, there are certainly circumstances when trying to be accurate with the wording of one’s intention is not always possible or desirable.

Recently, I did a ritual to help me get a new job. In common with many people in the 90s, I needed more money. At the time, I was working for a University and wanted to stay in the environment. At the same time, I didn’t want to limit my magickal intention to saying “I want such-and-such a job”, to do so would have made the boundaries of the magickal work too narrow. Since magick often works in “mysterious ways” I couldn’t be sure that by trying for one particular job I might not overlook another, even better, possibility.

Eventually, after much cogitation and indecision (and after getting quite screwed-up by the whole business), I asked the Alexandrian coven with whom I work if I might use an Esbat as an opportunity to do some magick. The High Priestess agreed and so I had only a finite period of time before doing the ritual to get my statement of intent (the focus of my ritual) sorted out.

As the evening approached, it was suggested that I use the “Lame God”, a simple dance method of focusing attention, to perform the work. Before we started the High Priestess gave me a scrap of paper and a biro and said “write down what you want on here”.

Suddenly all the stories about badly considered wishes, from the children’s fable of the old man with the sausages on his nose, to the parable of Austin Spare came flooding back. How could I express such a complex of desires in one sentence? Or rather how could I express my desire

without limiting the routes through which the magickal power might manifest?

Not many weeks before this event, I had been reading one of the best books on magick published in the last few years, *Visual Magick* by Jan Fries.

In his book, Jan suggests that, in the end, it is impossible for our conscious minds to construct an expression of our desire perfectly. If nothing else, there are always “what ifs” and mental subclauses floating around. In my case, there was the bit of me that took the resigned attitude “if it’s meant to happen, it will”; then a bit that said “you don’t really need a new job, after all you’re not badly off”; then there was the sub-personality saying “who cares so long as there’s loads of money!”; and another part of me remembering “a job’s only okay if you can get along with those you work with”, etc., etc..

Jan suggests that all these “sub-personalities” which lie in the ego threshold between conscious and unconscious are the things that dilute magickal intentions down into impotence. So, instead of worrying about having a “clearly focused” intent, he suggests that, if the desire is in accordance with the True Will, then it will work out in the best way possible. We must, in effect, give up trying to clearly define (consciously) what we want and trust in the unconscious realms to cultivate the seeds of our intention in the right way.

“Not sure about that” mutters Pete Carroll—and me too.

For a start what about this “True Will” business? And, is it necessarily true that the “best way possible” for the desire to real-ise is the same for the conscious mind (or ego, for that matter) as it is for the unconscious?

To understand the True Will, the best metaphors seem to be those concerned with

natural action, “action which is not cramped” as modern Taoist texts put it. For example, when two musicians jam together and suddenly find the right form, they improvise a beautiful piece which could never be repeated.

My partner Catherine, who taught me the tarot, expresses the same idea in her explanation of how the cards should be spread during divination. She says that each reading exists, before it is ever done, as part of “The Pattern” (a similar, though not identical concept to the Anglo-Saxon “Wyrd”). The skillful tarot reader can feel The Pattern and lays the cards out within The Pattern. It is as though the spread exists inherently in the moment in time at which the reading takes place. What the reader must do is sense The Pattern and lay the cards out accordingly.

For me, the idea of the True Will, at one level, might be thought of as activity which flows rather than is forced. One cannot force inspiration, it either comes or it doesn’t. One might try to goad it into action by using techniques of relaxation, concentration or what-have-you. But, in the end, inspiration cannot be forced, it must flow through the individual.

In the incident above, where I was doing magickal work for a new job, I had a conscious plan. However, I was aware of all the “ifs” and “buts” which surrounded the idea of doing a ritual to that end. So, rather than formulating a desire (and quite possibly doing nothing, since formulating the desire to take account of all factors would have been impossible), I “cast my bread upon the waters” and gave up my conscious desire, trusting that my True Will, that is, the sense of appropriateness or “the flow of The Pattern” that resides in the unconscious, might have free reign. As things transpired, I simply wrote “I want a better job” on the paper and did the ritual.

The result was that within a week I had been offered the opportunity of doing an extra 48 hours per week working at the University. This extra work persisted for two months until the job I was really after was finally advertised. I applied and, despite having no formal qualifications in the field, was successful. Perhaps, most importantly, the job I've now got is also one I really enjoy, working with people I really like. All in all, a very successful bit of magick!

Most magickians have noticed that magick seems to work best when the conscious mind is least involved and certainly when the sense of "desire" (from the perspective of the ego) is absent. It is, in general, much easier to do magickal work for either a) clients for whom the outcome will not directly effect the magickian or b) in extreme circumstances (for example, when "reason"* cannot cloud the magickal act because the situation being worked in is so rapid or extreme: For instance in a battle field; when a mother heals her child; when a man casts a love spell upon his paramour; etc.). In both these situations, the ego/conscious mind cannot distract from the work in hand. These observations lead away from the idea that magick is something that the all-powerful magickian does by consciously manipulating forces in the unconscious realm. Instead, we have a much more symbiotic relationship emerging between the conscious conception of self (and the ego), the True Will, and the unconscious (The Pattern).

From the evidence I have to date, I would say that the ritual (or other) magickal act is designed not so much to manipulate forces or generate occult energies (though both these ideas are good models for describing magick). Instead, ritual is a way of opening channels of communication between different levels of the universe (that is "the universe" as a

whole, including other planes of being and/or psychological states). When I draw a sigil, what I am doing is opening a channel of communication from my conscious mind (the bit that creates the sigil) to my unconscious (the bit that gives the sigil power), and the channel which I open is called my True Will.

The True Will is the highway along which magick flows, the "intention" (desire) of the conscious mind flows into unconscious (where magickal power lives—or, from another point of view, where The Pattern holds the matrix of all changes in the universe which were, are and shall be). Magickal acts, which are channelled along the True Will, are acts which are appropriate—that is, the magick is not so much initiated by the consciousness and performed by the unconscious—rather, the whole system has a flow and rightness to it. As with an electric circuit, it is not the positive and negative poles of the battery which produce the flow of power, rather, it is the connection between the poles, made in the right way, which creates a whole, completed and flowing circuit.

Without getting too bogged down in the metaphysics of this theory, perhaps this idea of the True Will as the "right magickal pathway between conscious awareness and the The Pattern" may be extended.

Instances like those I've given above show how magickal effects can happen in the "right" (that is poetically right, ironic or perhaps "karmic") way, but not in the way intended by the magickian. There are other magickal acts which may be blocked entirely, usually because of "lust of result" or poor motivation. These failed magickal acts need not have flopped because of some arbitrary "spiritual morality" (magick to cure, to curse, to get money or stop an oil slick are all equally easy—there is no "better" or "worse"). Using the model of

the True Will as communication pathway, I would suggest that magickal acts which do not follow the True Will go instead via the ego. At the ego, some magickal desires will just endlessly play out a “loop” (an infinitely repeating process). Lust of Result in this respect means that, since the operation is not directed according to the True Will, it gets caught up as a looping desire within the ego. The ego is the bit of us that desires, but finds the letting go process difficult**. The classic analogy of “lust of result” is the man who, having planted a seed in his garden, digs it up every day to see how it is growing. Naturally the seed dies. So to, magickal desires which end up as loops in the ego either die (when the initial impetus that created them subsides into the “background desires” of the mind) or continue to loop on within the ego becoming an obsession or complex.

Using the same model, magickal desires which come to fruition, but in the “wrong way” (as in the case of the “make it quick” chant), are desires which go to the ego, but eventually do trickle down to the unconscious mind. However, although much of their original intention has been distorted by the ego, when they finally manifest, they come clothed appropriately. All magickal desires manifesting do so by flowing along the True Will from unconscious towards consciousness. Thus, in a warped desire, the required magickal effect happens and with a certain sense of “rightness” about it, since it has come via the True Will communication channel. However, having been damaged by the ego, it is an abortive manifestation. A result like, but not the same as, the intended one.

So, what does this mean in practice?

To begin with, this theory suggests that the True Will is simply an internal communication channel between consciousness and the unconscious. As

such, magickal work must be “in accordance with the True Will” if it is to flow properly. Magickal work which does not follow this route becomes absorbed in the ego, where it loops and eventually disperses; becomes an obsession; or manifests, but in a mutated form.

For the magickian, this model provides a mechanism for describing what is going on when a desire is “cast upon the waters”, and supports Jan Fries’ notion that the “True Will” is what matters, not getting one’s desire formulated exactly at a conscious level.

Finally, this model shows that the morality of magickal acts (and their effects, often thought of as the poorly understood force of karma) is referable in a positive way. It’s not a question of what you’re doing in a culturally determined moral sense, nor even of how you’re doing it in terms of technique—what matters is that the magickal rite is tapping into the pathway of the True Will and not the forest of ego-centric frustration.

* The idea of “reason” and “because” stifling the magickal act is dealt with in much of Crowley’s later work and poetically in *The Book of The Law*.

** The ego cannot easily let go, since it acts as the guardian of the conscious mind’s integrity. As such, it goes into defensive mode when the process of “giving up” (to the unconscious) occurs.



VOICE OF THE SHEYA

An Interactive Magickal Forum

Relationships in Sheya

The theme of this issue provides a wonderful opportunity to outline some of the fundamental elements of the Sheya philosophy – how could I pass up a chance like this?

From the mythic perspective, all of reality/existence as we know it is based upon the primordial relationship between the Self and the Other. The basis of this relationship is illusion, the illusion that the Self is separate from the Other, and it is just this illusion which forms the basis of our own Time/Space continuum.

Within Sheya, we view this relationship as reflected within all relationships, both Microcosmically and Macrocosmically. And further, we break this relationship down into various Aspects and Attributes, which allow us to understand the primal patterns from which our own existence is woven, and how these same patterns manifest in our daily lives. From the relationship of planets and stars through gravitational forces, to the relationships of women and men, parents and children, friends and lovers, we are all manifesting the same patterns of interaction.

We begin with the One/none point from which all else arises. This single point of existence contains All in potential; Nothing in actuality. It is the Ain Soph, the Void and the spring from which the Tao emerges. We call this divine point of origin Enochi.

Our story goes that, at some point, the One looked into the void and saw its reflection there and, perhaps due to a startle

reflex, distanced itself from its reflection, thus creating space, time, etc. Of course, this would be impossible, because, being prior to duration, there would be no point separate from the whole where this action could have taken place. Therefore, we may assume that the One exists both in its wholeness, outside of time and space, as well as in a state of illusion/disunion, within the created universe. This paradox of simultaneous being may be difficult to grasp from our vantage point, but then, we are where we are.

In any case, in the state in which it reflects upon itself, thus creating the Other, the One is separated into an illusory two, which stands as the primal pattern of duality. The two Aspects of this duality relate in a great many ways, thus creating the patterns through which all else is manifested. They relate as matter and energy, male and female, receptive and active, up and down, and in every other binary composition that you can imagine.

The advent of form and duration is not a matter of some primordial event which, if we could only look far enough back through time, we might encounter. Rather, the nature of our reality emerges from the ground of infinity, beyond time and space, much as a rosebush emerges from the earth. All time is contained within the context of our continuum, and is thus bound by infinity. (Our linear and limited experience of our cosmos has more to say about us than it does about that which we observe.) In short, though we are all creatures of time and space, we are grounded in infinity and therefore, we are also infinite.

In any case, as our cosmos emerges into

this particular state of being, there are a few givens that come along for the ride, like roses on the rosebush.

One such given is that there is a certain dynamic tension set up between the apparent opposites of the dual expression of existence. This tension is a result, mythically speaking, of the tendency of the Self to simultaneously seek both reunion and separation with its shadow self, its illusory reflection. Hence, the forces of magnetism, which simultaneously attract and repel.

Another given is that, although there is an apparent opposition of the Self and the Other, in reality, they form the ends of a single continuum. Thus, we recognize that matter and energy are two ways of looking at the same thing.

In Sheya, we refer to this pair as Dhyanna (matter) and Maggah (energy). And, much of our magick arises from the relationship between these two. Another manifestation that arises from their relationship is that magickal child, consciousness, which we call Khiyatta.

It is the nature of such pairings to destroy, to create, or to recombine to become something that is not the same as it was before the split. After all, the original divorce of Self took place outside of our continuum, and now that we have the time and space, there's nowhere else for "us" to get together. However, a reunion under these circumstances is rather problematic. After all, there is nothing that was not born of this case of mistaken identity. How is all this to be squeezed back into the narrow confines of the cosmic egg? I submit that it cannot happen. (Or perhaps I'd just rather that it didn't.)

The four Aspects mentioned (Enochi, Dhyanna, Maggah and Khiyatta) form our basic model of the cosmos, and the

relationships between them are what make the cosmos tick.

Let's bring you, the Magus or Sheya, into the model. Imagine yourself floating in space. There is a sphere of golden laticework surrounding you. Directly in front of you is the blazing red pentagram of Maggah. To your left and right are the equally brilliant green and yellow pentagrams of Dhyanna and Khiyatta, respectively; and, behind you shines the neon blue pentagram of Enochi. Your body forms the axis of this sphere, and through you passes a constant fountain of energy and matter, linking you into the continuum of existence itself.

From this center, you relate to the cosmos, in all its many forms of expression and manifestation. And, in return, the cosmos relates to you.

There is no scale. You are at once immensely huge and infinitely small, with neither having any real meaning other than to provide you with a sense of duration and distance.

This is how you fit into the universe: From the center. Your very existence is a reflection of that singularity, that primal point of potential from which All eternally springs forth. The relationships you weave with those around you are based upon this perspective; the recognition that each of us stands at the epicenter of our own personal cosmos.

The awakening to this realization of sovereignty – both within yourself, and mirrored in all others – is one of the primary goals of Mystics, Magi and Sheya alike. And, it is only after this awakening that we truly begin to work Magick!

ΔBarak
Temple Enochi, Lughnasadh 1993

EFFECTIVE MAGICKAL GROUPS: An Endangered Species

by Frater Omnis Amare

How much of a difference do you really think there is between a sophomore in high school and your average occultist or magickian these days? Okay, age, income, and sexual prowess are obvious (we hope), but what about personality? It seems that a large portion of magickal groups these days are composed of nothing more than grown men and women regressing to their days in high school, where one's image came before real work, and bickering and gossip were the hallmarks of communication. How much progress do you actually think can come out of such infantile social circles? I'd venture to say none whatsoever. That is why these groups must pull themselves together. And, the only way that will happen is if each member starts to make the changes within themselves.

Balance is probably the most important factor for a successful and dynamic magickal group

In order for a group to work efficiently, there must be a natural harmony amongst the members. To put it simply, everybody has to get along with each other. There are lots of ways this harmony can be broken, but it usually boils down to the fact that one individual assumes himself to be better than the rest. When the members of a group are

all equal and balanced with one another, there is less friction and interference with the expression of the group's Will. The first words of *Liber Librae*, by Aleister Crowley, echo this need for balance quite well.

"Learn first—Oh thou who aspirest unto our ancient Order!—that Equilibrium is the basis of the Work. If thou thyself hast not a sure foundation, whereon wilt thou stand to direct the forces of Nature?"

This equilibrium is essential for a group to be successful. Without it, the group is vulnerable to a variety of problems. If these problems are to be prevented, the effort must begin with each and every member of the group. Hopefully, the following advice will help the members of these groups to either regain what harmony has been lost or to prevent it from slipping away.

A magickal group's organization is very similar in structure to that of the human body. The group, just like the body, has its own purpose, direction, or Will. But, this Will is dependent on the proper functioning of the subunits, or members, of the group. If an organ in the body is not functioning properly, then the proficiency of the body to carry out its Will is dramatically reduced. Likewise, in a group, if there is a problem with one of the members, then the effectiveness of the group Will is decreased.

Theoretically, each member of the group is drawn to a certain area of expertise which is in harmony with their own nature. The members of the group should strive to identify this tendency in themselves, and

cultivate whatever natural abilities they might have. Therefore, each member of the group will specialize in a certain branch of knowledge, or a certain skill, and will act as the relative expert on that area within the group. In this way, each member will be highly proficient in only one area, but together the members will form an effective and balanced whole.

Every one of us goes about life wearing a mask over our true self

Balance is probably the most important factor for a successful and dynamic magickal group, and the composition of the group should reflect this. First of all, there should be enough people to cover a wide variety of areas of interest. For example, there might be one person who is naturally good at working with the Tarot. Another member could be very well skilled in skrying and other similar practices. Someone else might be good at organizing rituals and ceremonies; another with invocations. The rest of the members would be likewise talented, but in other areas to fill in the gaps. Secondly, there should be balance in the nature or temperament of the members of the group. You don't want a group composed solely of fiery people, but want to balance them out with watery people. There should be just as many passive natures as there are active ones. If this is implemented correctly, there will be less of a tendency for the group to be carried away in one direction due to an imbalance in their composition.

When a person begins to work with a group, the one thing that they have to constantly check and keep an eye on is their

ego. We all have an ego; it's our sense of identity and what distinguishes "I" from "Not I". But, problems occur when the ego gets overinflated and people begin to have false perceptions of themselves. In a group of this sort, all members are considered to be equal with one another. "Every man and every woman is a star." (*Liber Al vel Legis*, Chapter I, verse 3.) If one member purposefully raises himself above the others, disrupting this equality, then harmony is lost. The other members will be irritated by this person and their opinion of that person will drop dramatically. There is nothing wrong with being proud of oneself and realizing how unique and different we all are, but just because we're different doesn't mean one person is inherently better than another. In order to maintain group harmony, you must watch out for these slips of the ego and avoid getting carried away by delusions of grandeur.

Every one of us goes about life wearing a mask over our true self; essentially hiding who we really are inside. We wear these masks so that we'll be perceived in a certain way, depending on the situation we're in. Sometimes it's a good idea to put on a mask, since it can help us in dealing with the hordes of tricky situations which we encounter in life. But, in a magickal group, the last thing that is needed is a battalion of false fronts. How can a hammer express its nature properly if it keeps pretending it's a saw and trying to cut wood? These false perceptions, which we all have, need to be dropped in order for a group to function properly. If the members of the group really don't know each other, then it will be nearly impossible for any harmony to be established, and no work will be done. Every member must be truthful and honest with their inner self, and reflect themselves truthfully to the rest of the members.

All the members of the group should be constantly seeking out their True Will, or their personal path or orbit in life. Theoretically, since these members are working together in a group, their individual Wills have aligned themselves with the Group Will. In such a situation, every member must figure out what purpose they serve in being a part of the group, But, to do this, each member must "know thyself" first. Each member should look at the other members of the group and see how each of them fit in. Then discover what makes you different from the rest and figure out what role you're going to play. Everyone has certain skills, talents, and abilities which come naturally to them, so discover what these are and develop them so that you can use them to enhance the group's potential.

With everyone begin so specialized in a group like this, a common problem which arises is the "know it all" attitude, which can be quite irritating. Some of us may have more knowledge than others in various areas, but we're always learning and will never know everything—we won't even come close. There will be a bunch of relative experts in the group, but just because they know so much about an area doesn't make them better than the rest of the members. When in a group setting like this, each member should strive to learn from the others in the group and be ready to help those who are having difficulties with areas they specialize in. Although each member is focused on one area, they shouldn't neglect other realms of study or their view will become too narrow and they will loose their balance. Just as the group is a mirror of the universe, so is each individual a mirror of the group; everything must be balanced, on all three levels.

If these ideas are taken to heart by every

member of the group, and are followed through by action, then hopefully a new level of harmony and consonance will manifest itself amongst the members. But, if even one person decides to ignore them, the other members' work will have been in vain. This is a task which needs the complete cooperation of every person involved, for the basis of the group is the individual. If something goes wrong with the individual, then it's reflected in the group. A magickal group can be a very dynamic and rewarding experience, yet it can also easily turn into ruin and disaster. Hopefully, this can be prevented, but it will take the effort of everyone in the group—everyone working together.



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MAGIC AND MORALITY

by Annette Hinshaw

Pagan bashing by pagans has been a big thing recently. Letter columns in pagan magazines sometimes sound a lot like hellfire and brimstone diatribes with pagan labels. Do we just file off the serial numbers on old hates and give them pagan labels? Is our indulgence in moral outrage a reflection of our current path or the culture in which we live?

Most pagans believe in magic, that their acts and their desires can influence or change what happens around them. Non-pagans, by contrast, often believe they are at the mercy of outside forces. If "the Devil made them do it," they are not fully responsible for the consequences. Their moral outrage is a magic spell to exorcise their own sense of powerlessness. Their pleasure in lording it over their supposed moral inferiors is in direct proportion to their own sense of worthlessness. Only those who feel helpless to change their own positions derive pleasure from the superiority of those positions, as though their positions come by special favor of the Goddess. Those who perceive themselves as making their positions don't need that kind of validation to have self-worth.

Magic, even very good magic, doesn't guarantee that we can make things come out exactly the way we want them to. Our success is proportional to knowledge and skill and is also influenced by actual circumstances when we choose to act.

In the magical model of the world, we

always have choices. We may not know what to do. We may hate our available choices. We may make mistakes. But, we can change what happens by what we do. We have the power to make life different, if not always the wisdom to make it better. Our choices, or refusals to choose, make us responsible for what happens around us.

When I first considered this responsibility, I felt overwhelmed. Our society, which is essentially platonic, behaves as though the norm for human behavior is perfection (in the sense of flawlessness). By platonic protocols, every lapse from the norm comes from wrongdoing. As pagans, when we make sweeping moral judgments of other pagans, we foster the same judgment, that whatever we disagree with, or judge ineffective, must be "wrong."

Under our culture's norms, when I accept responsibility for making a mistake, I also imply that I am flawed, sinful, morally declassée'. It is much more comfortable to believe I am compelled by forces beyond my control, whether I name those forces "the Devil," "emotional problems," or "a sick society."

The magical worldview reverses the platonic model of perfection. The magical model sees the universe as process, an upward spiral of growth and change, birth and death. What happens does not derive from an ideal form which exists "out there." Events proceed from the Order in a glory of infinite variation.

All possible points on the spectrum have their rightful places, whether I, in my local purview, call those points beautiful or ugly, white or black, good or bad. Even the notes I consider sour have their place in the universal song. Since everything flows from

the law of the Order, no act, however vile in my eyes, can be truly "unnatural."

I have the right to pursue my own moral aesthetic. I have the right to try to prevent any act I do not want perpetrated in my sphere of influence. Others have the same right to prevent me. Morality is a personal issue, of my freedom to act relative to your freedom to act.

I am free to interpret what impinges on me as widely as I like and work passionately for my moral aesthetic. I can use any means available if I want to, including threats and violence. What I am not free to do is to assume that my moral aesthetic makes me intrinsically superior to those who do not share it.

Relative to the universe, what happens is never a moral issue. Morality refers to how specific points relate, and is always a local matter. From a practical standpoint, we only affect the portion of the universe in which we reside. Those changes theoretically ripple through the whole system, but few changes are significant to the system as a whole.

In the magical model, we actively work to make changes we prefer or participate by omission in the changes that others prefer by not acting to counter the changes. The degree to which our personal actions affect the world is proportional to our skills and determination as well as to our wisdom in choosing where to put our energies. The idea is to balance between not acting for fear we can't do any good (cowardice) and assuming that it's our responsibility to order the universe to our vision (hubris).

Surprisingly, if we consider both karmic cost and effectiveness, the most efficient actions are almost always within the bounds

of conventional morality. Where conventional morality does not coincide with what works, that morality is only honored in words, and not in the deeds of the people who claim it. Generally, if we resist the temptation to assume our personal moral aesthetics are superior, we find that "moral" actions are effective and useful, and the "immoral" actions have poor cost/benefit ratios.

For example, no matter how intensely I object to rape, there are a limited number of effective actions I can take to counter rapists. I can learn how to protect myself and teach my family and friends. I can support community programs for preventing rape and for helping rape victims. I can add whatever force my voice and my vote have to promoting laws to control people who rape. Consider the range of "immoral" actions. Is cursing all rapists effective? How much time and energy will you spend cursing individual rapists? How many rapists will remain? Will levying reprisals on the family and loved ones of rapists help? How about organizing a gang of vigilantes to castrate any rapist they can catch? Are the risks of these actions, relative to the positive effects, worth it? The karmic costs of harming others, whatever they've done, is enough to deter those in the know.

From a moral point of view, we are responsible for the consequences of our choices, and the most effective way to control anyone's moral actions is to allow them to bear those consequences. That's as true for magic as anything else humans do.

If the consequences of our actions, magical or mundane, are undesirable, we learn better or bear those consequences again. This "punishment" for our "sins" makes no statement about personal worth (morality). Nor are we tainted forever by


wrong decisions. When we make better choices, the consequences are also more desirable. The universe doesn't care what we do. The system of the Order is self-regulating. Relative to the Order, we are none of us more guilty than the puppy that gets its nose thumped when it wets the carpet.

I'm tired of hearing how immoral a person is because of unwise business decisions or adherence to a particular style of magic. I can't believe that someone is morally superior just because he or she happens to choose vegetarianism, animal rights, or recycling over the alternatives. My personal aesthetic finds Satanism and fundamentalist wicca about equally repugnant, and I happen to approve of both recycling and hunting.

I know people I consider good who adhere to different beliefs than I do, and people I consider bad who agree with much of what I think is true. My personal moral struggles are all I have energy for. If I'm ignorant, malicious, or just make a bad judgment, natural law will sort it out. Let's start focusing on what we as individuals need to do, and not on what others whom we cannot control did or did not do.



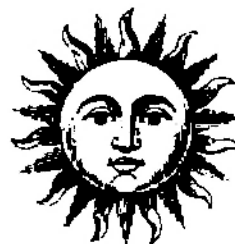
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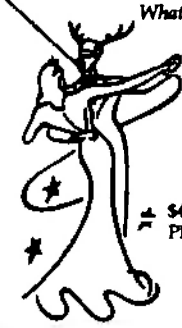
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Letters

Dear Editor,

—93 etc.—

To my colleagues promoting the notion of a paid Pagan clergy—think and think again lest you call a dread curse on yourselves and the rest of us!

An increase in number does not generate a need for a “professional” priesthood; rather, it speaks to the idea of teachers teaching teachers, of leading beginners into self-development so they can assist the beginners following the Path after them.

There are countless books available with basic information on theory and practice—a good bibliography is all that a neophyte needs for the essentials on ritual and philosophy. The more experienced of us can answer specific questions and, more importantly, ask specific questions in the Socratic mode of inquiry. Spoon-feeding anyone is cheating them of the necessary effort & investment involved in acquiring understanding & wisdom.

Counseling is a matter of wisdom and experience, imparting what one can, and referring people on to doctors, lawyers and other secular professionals where the need exists. The greenest beginner on the path of Initiation is a colleague, not a congregant.

“Recognition” by mainstream religionists isn’t anything to strive for; the wise recognize each other without official paperwork. Why ape those who consider us among the damned? What’s the point in

joining the same club that has/had among its members Jerry Fallwell, Jim & Tammy, Jim Jones, and David Koresh?

For custody battles, a competent lawyer beats any piece of paper, and personal good character speaks louder than societal acceptance. Being discrete in your living arrangements counts more in the eyes of a court-appointed social worker than your religion—I’ve been there.

Sam, I’m sorry you blew \$25K, but some Ordeals are damned expensive (I’ve been there too). You could rent a store-front & start your own church, but do you really want to run a home for the spiritually dependent?

Part of the joy of Neopaganism is its lack of clergy. The Big Name Pagans gained their fame through their writings or services; they provide(d) information, festival sponsorship, natural settings for communing with nature, etc. Neopaganism is a do-it-yourself proposition; those who attain Tiphereth radiate a charisma that draws others to them for mutual benefit & Initiation. No diploma or lack of it has anything to do with it.

The establishment of a professional clergy is the beginning of authoritarianism/hierarchy even within small groups. We shouldn’t need to spend all of our time “doing” for others when they should be doing most of it for themselves. Digging and rooting things out for oneself screens the sincere seekers from the starry-eyed but lazy “wannabees”.

Please think it over again.

93/696

Maggie/Nema

Dear Editor:

When I saw the cover of your Beltane 1993 issue (Priest and Priestesses), I had reservations about how useful and enjoyable I'd find that particular issue. Maybe I was so buoyed by the wonderful preceding issue, Initiation, that I was bracing myself to be let down. Okay, I think the subject is a worthy one. But for a magazine that positions itself as being for the practicing magickian, to tackle a subject probably of interest to only a minority is a mistake. I doubt that the majority of your readers are neopagans in the Wiccan tradition, which is where most of the articles in this issue seemed to focus.

As for the concept of a priesthood and clergy for pagans, I for one would neither support it nor expect to see it within this or many other lifetimes. To try to establish a priesthood would set us on a course of hierarchy, bureaucracy, dogma and exclusionism—things that alienate many people from organized religion and push them to seek elsewhere—including within themselves. Yes, it would be wonderful to have teachers among us who don't have to justify charging fees, or who don't have to pursue other careers because their calling doesn't seem to be able to offer a livelihood. Or, to have a mechanism to screen out the flakes. But, who decides who the flakes are? For those who say, "Well, of course we'd accept wide differences in philosophy and practice," I recommend a basic reality check. In short, when we start setting up structure, we start limiting our own freedom.

For me, the practice of magick is intensely personal and its practitioners are resistant to generalizations. Those are both our strengths and weaknesses, but as strengths they're wonderful and not to be underestimated: What we lack in

organization and homogeneity we make up for in energy. We shouldn't just embrace diversity—we should revel in it. We're impossible to categorize, defiantly eclectic, infuriatingly but cheerfully self-contradictory, frequently subversive and antiauthoritarian, of debatable rationality, and powerful and free. And when it comes to guiding me toward or away from teachers, priest/esses and companions on my chosen path, I'll bet on my own healthy instincts over a hierarchy-based and sanctioned system, however well intentioned, any day.

Sincerely,

Tom Morris

Dear Mr. Editor,

Don Michael Kraig's article in your last issue, "An Open Letter to the Priests and Priestesses of the Future", definitely hit one (or two) of my nerves. Although I realize Mr. Kraig's intention was to appeal to the next generation of Pagan leaders, I feel I must voice my difference of opinion on two major points.

AIDS. Wake-up ye deaf Pagans! This very serious disease is not just going to go away. As I'm writing this, it is true that an experimental vaccine is being tested. BUT, it is also true that recently several mutant strains of the HIV virus have been discovered and even some AIDS cases where HIV was not even detected. I'm not trying to be the voice of doom and gloom. I'm just tired of the blasé attitude this community as a whole takes on this issue. The truly frightening statistic is that 6 out of every 11 new HIV cases are women. And folks, the condom is NOT 100% effective - better than nothing, but not a

guarantee. We have already lost several members of our community to this disease, so WAKE-UP! Take responsibility - the life you save may be your own - or your significant other's - or your child's.

I am not a "neo-conservative", but I believe we need to look at this epidemic and look at what we can be learning from it. At the risk of sounding "New Age-ish", we need to see what a shift in sexual permissiveness has to do with our spiritual growth. I agree with Mr. Kraig on one point. We will experience another sexual revolution. But, instead of viewing AIDS as an inhibiting factor, I feel it is the catalyst. Instead of blithely jumping from bed to bed, some people are pausing to weigh the risks. In this pause, a little monogamy sneaks in. Hmmm - not so bad. Maybe some form of communication develops between the partners, the beginnings of true intimacy. After all possible forms of physical love are explored, the spiritual realm opens up. Tantra, Kundalini, other sexual gnosis.

I agree, we need qualified leaders - but the revolution is happening NOW. It is not a far-off vision of the future. And, again risking sounding like a neo-conservative, the basis for this sexual spiritual growth - far different than the wild adolescent abandon of the '60's - is COMMITMENT. The dreaded "C" word is essential to sexual spirituality. You can not fully explore this method of spiritual growth with a stranger or an acquaintance. I'm sure not everyone will agree with this view. I am not advocating one mate for life. That is not a very realistic choice. But, instead, commit totally to the person (or group) you are with for now - today. Then sexual spirituality can flourish and the revolution will quietly change our way of living and relating and growing spiritually/magically.

So I do agree somewhat with Mr. Kraig. But we need to recognize AIDS and our responsibilities regarding it. And we need to value commitment in sexual relationships as a step toward the "next" sexual revolution. It is happening, wake up and enjoy!

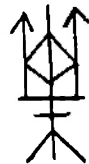
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Please address all submissions to the Editor.

Reviews

To Ride A Silver

Broomstick

Silver Ravenwolf

\$14.95

Llewellyn Publishing

St. Paul, MN 55164-0383

reviewed by Moonflower

I was enthralled when I began reading Silver Ravenwolf's first book. I thought, "Great! Someone has finally articulated what I've felt and known all these years!". Many aspects of the first two sections appeal to me, but I especially like the "Charge of the Goddess". I feel it is a great way to begin, because its power holds the interest and arouses the curiosity of the beginner. I know if it had been the first thing I read, I would have gotten involved with the Craft even sooner than I did!

From the introduction, this book speaks plainly and simply about living as a witch, rather than just practising ritual or working spells on Tuesday or Thursday (or whenever). "Plainly and simply" are the key words. Now, I can answer those questions sincere seekers ask me - and they will understand what I'm saying!

Then we get to sections Three and Four. "Performing Shadows, Challenging Shadows, Webweaving, Divination vs. Fortune Telling, etc., etc.." I think all of this comes with years of practice, if ever. In my experience, not all (not most!) witches do all these different kinds of magick: Spells, rocks, gems, herbs, healing, telepathy, psychometry, mind power, astral projection, bi-location, and power animals.

Some very good and powerful witches that I know, use only one or two of these tools. It would probably take many lifetimes to learn them all well enough to use them effectively. To know about them is one thing - to make them viable for yourself is quite another! These matters require in-depth study and practice. They don't belong in a beginner's book.

I do like the suggested reading list at the end of each chapter, though I'm not enthusiastic about the work sheets. They are limiting, and may be over-involved for some students. They could be included in a separate workbook - or not at all.

I also have some objections to the section on stocking a magical cabinet. So many items! A beginner will want all of them and A.S.A.P! Let us remember, the Magick is in the Witch!

I would have preferred this book to have been divided into two separate volumes - one for beginners and the second for the advanced student. Or perhaps, with a more clear-cut explanation that sections three and four are for the more advanced student. Along with a paragraph or two speaking realistically about which tools a "real" witch really needs.

I have to admit that overall I was somewhat disappointed with this book, even though I was initially so excited about it. I thought I had found the perfect text for my students. Alas, though it takes many steps in the right direction, *To Ride a Silver Broomstick*, isn't it.

What it is, however, is a reference for those people who are already more than a few steps along their path, tacked onto a fine beginner's manual for the student witch.

Celebrating Life

Rites of Passage

Tzipora Klein

\$14.95

Delphi Press

Oak Park, IL 60304

reviewed by Moonflower

This is the most comprehensive work I have ever read on rites of passage. From conception to death, Tzipora has written a ritual for each stage of our life on this plane. She leaves enough leeway to incorporate your own ideas and needs into the rituals. There is no hard and fast rules - no "it must be done this way!" Every person needs to express their own inner self in ritual. Tzipora recognizes this.

Included are rites for miscarriage and abortion. Events in a "woe-man's" life that are too often ignored and not talked about. The consensus being that it is better not to remind the woe-man of these events (as if she could possibly forget). At these times, a woe-man needs all the understanding and love that she can get, and these beautiful supportive rites help to provide such an environment.

The puberty rites are also impressive. I've seen these done. The teenagers who participated were quite sincere as they talked openly with their mentor about gay vs. straight sexuality, maintaining (or not) their virginity, safe sex and contraception. It wasn't that way when I was growing up! Because, I got pregnant at fifteen and know the years of suffering which ignorance can cause. This chapter really hit home with me. So did the next chapter: "Assuming Responsibility". This was another thing I wasn't taught. I thought I was supposed to be taken care of - first by my father, then my husband ('till DEATH!).

In the mundane world, seniors are looked on as useless and passed over by time. "Well, they're almost dead and their mind isn't what it used to be." In contrast, the croning and eldery rituals presented here are beautiful. They are drawn from the Native American path in which all elders - with or without children - are considered Grandparents. They are valued as people of wisdom and experience.

Becoming a Grandparent is an expression of belief in the future. This is a time when grandchildren are given the opportunity to see the world through the eyes of experience. If you are a grandparent (as I am) or if you have been given the opportunity to enjoy and be enjoyed by small children, you know how open to the knowledge of earth and sky they are, and what a help to teenagers you can be, just by being there. (No, you don't need to stuff your bra with kleenex just because a cute boy is around!) Your grandchildren place great value on your words, and trust that what you tell them is the truth. It is a wonderful feeling - for all of you!

The final rite - Death - is thoughtfully covered. Included are methods of explaining death - and other "tears" - to children. This is one passage we all must go through, and all too often we do it alone and in fear. Another difficult subject adeptly covered by this remarkable book.

"Every day is a rite of passage," Tzipora states in conclusion. But, at least for myself, on some of the not-so-good days, it's kind of hard to think about the magick. This book shows us how to shift perspective to keep our awareness of how magick is always around us.

Each morning is a new circle - a new beginning. Try starting yours with a copy of this wonderful book.

Jude's Herbal Home Remedies

Jude C. Williams, M.H.

\$9.95

Llewellyn Publishing

St. Paul, MN 55164-0383

reviewed by Grendle

As a healer, I use many herbal remedies, and have read many an "herbal guide" as well. Although I've been disappointed by most of the offerings on the market recently, this one stands out as a truly excellent reference manual on the preparation, application and properties of herbs.

Unlike many herbals, this one does more than just tell you what plant to use for what symptom and how to prepare it for medicinal use. Jude takes you through the history of herbalism, how to plan and plant an herb garden, detailed preparations of salves, tinctures, syrups and more.

The recipes also extend beyond health remedies to hair and skin care, pet care, gardening tips and instructions on harvesting your herbs and preparing your own medicine chest with your herbal preparations. She even has a recipe for furniture polish.

Through it all, from treatments of insect bites and colic to lip gloss and flavored coffee, runs the no-nonsense wisdom and genuine caring of Jude Williams.

I think that this is what really makes *Jude's Herbal* a different experience from all the rest. This is no dry, pseudo-scientific catalogue of tonics, but rather, good, down-to-earth folk medicine.

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Deadline for submissions: **September 1, 1993.**

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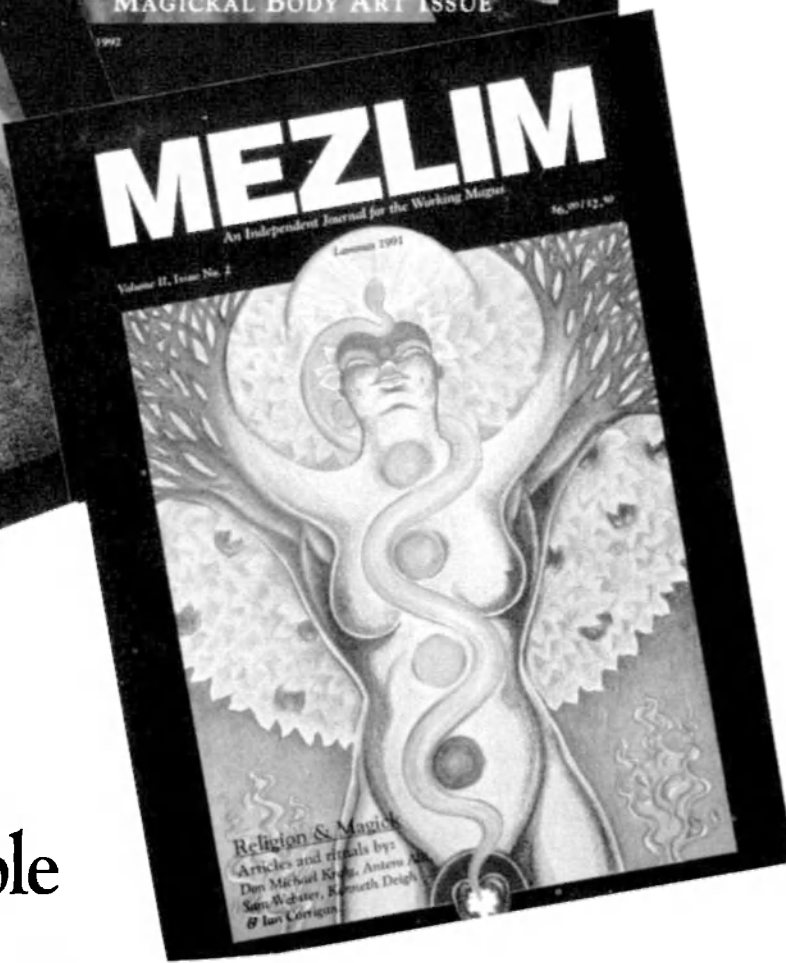
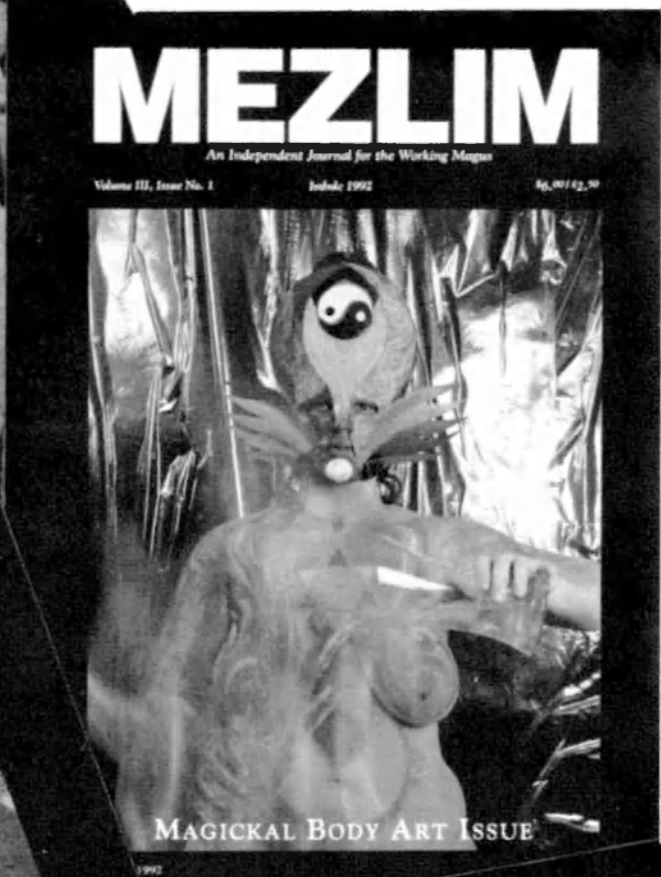
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