

GORDON WHITE

PIECES OF EIGHT

CHAOS MAGIC ESSAYS
AND ENCHANTMENTS



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Also by Gordon White

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ALSO BY GORDON WHITE

The Chaos Protocols: Magical Techniques for Navigating the New Economic Reality

Star.*Ships*: A Prehistory of the Spirits

INTRODUCTION

DOES CHAOS MAGIC STILL EXIST?

EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT CHAOS MAGIC IS. IT SEEMS EVEN TREND FORECASTERS KNOW what it is. Chaos magic is that phase you grow out of where you invoke Superman and believe whatever you like and mess about with the Necronomicon in your parents' basement and start a tumblr blog of Austin Osman Spare quotes. What could possibly be served via the publication of another chaos magic book?

Perhaps nothing.

Answering the question properly requires beginning, inevitably, at the beginning. The common conception of chaos magic –note the spelling and lack of capital letters- formed during what we may call its ‘escape velocity’ phase. This coincided with the heady days of the early internet, Grant Morrison’s *Invisibles* and the last gasp of progressive trance music. However chaos magic is older than this phase, if only a little.

Technically you can –and I do- trace any magical school right back to the emergence of conceptual thinking in humans, the evidence of which is to be found painted in caves and carved on mammoth bones. In such a scenario, pinpointing origins becomes something of an academic pastime. That being said, chaos magic first emerged in 1980s Britain as a reaction against the moribund state of occultism in general, having staggered out of the seventies

with malodorous coatings of Castaneda and Ascended Masters layered atop a long-stagnant core of Victorian magical order nonsense and tawdry in-fighting.

Even its name –as given by the movement's creator, Peter J Carroll- says something about it that most people have missed. Chaos magic was named for James Gleick's book, *Chaos*, popular at the time, that explored the ontological implications of chaos mathematics, fractals, strange attractors and what they might mean for our experience of the universe. It was among the first books to explore specifically data-driven descriptions of reality in the public arena.

'Chaos' positively defines today's global geopolitics. Trust in politicians and academics is at an historic low. Economies are undergoing transitions more significant than the industrial revolution. Genetically modified seeds escape into the wild and billionaires announce their intention to die on other planets. These are the conditions of reality that present themselves to the singular human. The singular human who, for better or for worse –mostly worse, it turns out- trusts and values his own self-centricity above all else. There is an expectation of immediacy or ease in the spiritual question that has no precedent in the last 30,000 years of mankind's journey. Today, nobody toddles off to India to sit at the feet of gurus. Or if they do, it is not without a selfie stick so that every one else knows that it happened.

Let us ask a serious question then. Can a radical opposition to grand narratives and fixed points of truth still exist in a world where they are largely absent? Are we fighting a long-won war? Perhaps. Or perhaps we were too hasty in assuming that the opposite of a monoculture was an individualistic one? The number of monthly active users on the top social platforms is measured in the billions –all expressing their breathless personal opinions of singing programmes or mass shootings- and yet there is no vision quite so *monolithic* as that of the Facebook newsfeed. We thought that replacing the singular, authoritative voice of the twentieth century newscaster with the digitally-enabled *vox populi* of the internet would forever change the narrative. All it did was ruin the spelling. Where is chaos magic in the midst of this?

As it got away from its founders, chaos magic came to mean 'doing whatever you want' in popular parlance, which is probably close to the opposite of its original formulation. In the modern world, 'doing whatever you want' leads to Type II diabetes and very public bankruptcies. But the supposed

freedom that chaos magic offers -the apple in its garden- is a stark one. Chaos magic is not 'doing whatever you want', it is 'trialling a lot of things and retaining those that work'. It is entirely unforgiving of failure or -more specifically- *excuses* for failure. Chaos magic lacks any certificates of participation. You achieve what you set out to do or you have failed. Success could be lasting apotheosis or it could be bedding your secretary. This only looks like elitism to failures. To scientists, it looks like science.

Here we find, then, chaos magic's true iconoclasm. Not in the destruction of sacred images but in the destruction of excuses, of fudges and self-delusions. It attacks the column of esoterism at its unseemly weak spots. Chaos magic is always the pirates to the Victorian orders' Royal Navy. And like the pirates of the Golden Age, its existence improves both itself and those it preys upon. Freedom came faster to the fringes of the Caribbean because of piracy and, at the same time, the Royal Navy was forced into centuries-long martial untouchability in order to counter it. Even today's modern shipping lanes trace the path that was formed as a result of Golden Age piracy. The western tradition is similarly vastly improved for its tangle with vigorous iconoclasm.

The formation of the Golden Dawn occurred in the city that led the world in scientific discovery, culture, technology and mysticism just as London's global power was peaking. As best it could, the order amalgamated the cutting edge of each of these fields and packaged it in such a way that appealed to the right sort of people and made the wrong sort clutch their pearls and gasp. Chaos magic formed in the same city just as that global power was completing its unwinding, just as the last few drops were being shaken from the bottle. But it did, and does, retain a similar coalescence of culture, science, technology and mysticism that was so crucial to the creation of its Victorian predecessor. The mistake too many make is to assume that the mid-eighties/early-nineties amalgam was definitive. It isn't. Just as the Golden Dawn required updating – better seventy years late than never- so it is that chaos magic requires a reformulation, an update, lest it relegate itself to the same fate as the orders; weekend 'open rituals' in rented scout halls on the outskirts of faded, post-industrial, Midlands towns.

To the opening question, then. Does chaos magic still exist? I believe it does. But I also believe it is in need of a minor correction, or at least, a mischievous

warp to bring it into alignment with the twenty first century. There would be little served by going over the core principles of previous decades as these are largely known or readily accessible online. For brevity and convenience, they are listed below:

1. A preference for observed magical results over unfounded claims of mystical insight.
2. An awareness of the capacity of personal beliefs to shape the experiences of those that hold them.
3. A virulent suspicion of mystical, political and scientific authority.
4. Probabilistic or random interpretations of events are prioritised over mystical or spiritual ones.
5. A fierce iconoclasm when it comes to the rules and taboos of western magic.
6. A realisation that quality fiction sometimes provides equal or better interpretive models given that artists have proved to be more reliable narrators than either scientists or wizards.
7. A lifelong dedication to the study of the history of ideas and magic and a recognition that this study is one of the most expedient routes to apotheosis.
8. Having money is generally better than not having money, particularly for those who claim to command the forces of the universe, and so economic literacy is also valued.

Instead of rehashing them, we reassert them here. Chaos magic does not need *new things* added to it. It does not need a 'Reformation'. What it needs is a *Counter-Reformation* -a return to core principles and an examination of what they might look like in the modern era. *Pieces of Eight* presents a series of brief essays in chaos magic apologetics, followed by an only-seemingly random collection of practical magical rituals and enchantments, all in a probably-futile attempt to dropkick the discourse into the twenty first century.

As a youngster I was terribly struck by Crowley's comment that the magician's 'true' magical circle, built over time, is his or her aura. To my inexperienced mind, I assumed this meant we would all gradually form invisible soap bubbles of power around our bodies through which no harm could pass. If we may begin the work of counter-reformation with this very

turn of phrase –whilst also casting aside the unhelpful term ‘aura’- then both the practice and goal of magic is the building (rediscovery?) of metaphoric pan-dimensional sense organs that allow you to perceive and participate in a much larger world: A world you gradually come to consider home. A world of wonders. A ‘true’ magic circle is the growing of ears to hear the stars and voices to speak the language of the dead. It is building nerve endings that let you caress the spines of demons. It is opening eyes that can see angels dancing between subatomic particles. It is having a portable research lab and postal address in this world and the next. Divination, enchantment, malefica, prayer. These all blur into *the right action in the opportune moment*.

This book intentionally runs lean, shallower on the draft, if you will. It should not be the first book you read on magic but anything between second and final is fine. It is not a beginner’s book, it is a *minimalist*’s book. It contains the minimum viable amount of content to begin perceiving and participating in this larger world. This is in keeping with an updated definition of chaos magic. It is a worldview optimised for optimisation.

A worldview optimised for performance.

PART ONE
CHAOS MAGIC APOLOGETICS

ONE
ON SCIENCE

A HEADLINE FROM A RECENT ARTICLE IN *THE ONION* READS ‘SEEK FUNDING’ STEP *Added to Scientific Method*. As with so many statements said in jest, this one conceals an important truth. With the developed and emerging worlds now approaching economic parity, there are no longer the unlimited funds for pure scientific discovery that were to be had during the postwar period. The business of science is now largely devoted to keeping science in business.

And business is tough. Across the board, science is experiencing a replicability crisis where even the most basic of experimental results are successfully replicated a little over 25% of the time. The wider world has become aware of the decades-long manipulation of experimental results by military contractors and Big Pharma for profit motives. Throw in academia’s absurdly primitive idea of ‘discrediting by fiat’ and the western world’s official reality producing mechanism is revealed to be a totalitarian cult of intolerance, conspiracy, fraud and incompetence that exceeds even Terry Pratchett’s wildest imaginings of how schools of wizardry might operate.

The situation in physics is, if anything, even worse. We can legitimately say that physics is in crisis. Dark energy and dark matter are placeholder ideas that violate physicists’ own laws about conservation of energy; around 80% of theoretical physics is based on string theory that yields no observable or

testable results; distant observations of changes in redshift don't match the purported timelines of the Big Bang; and –in a supreme violation of Ockham's Razor- quadrillions of universes are invented out of thin air to banish the very possibility that subatomic particles only appear when we *look at them*.

The Big Bang hypothesis itself was first proposed by a Catholic priest, George Lemaître, which he described as 'a Creation-like event', specifically referencing previous myths of the Cosmic Egg. The Pope at the time went on to declare he had 'proved' Catholicism. But even this 'scientific' hypothesis did not last long before the mathematics had to be fudged to get the priest-created article of faith to 'work': in 1979, it was suggested that the universe underwent a period of exponential growth known as 'inflation' before slowing back down to its apparent, currently expanding state. The physics behind how this might work are entirely unknown because –stay with me now- they violate everything we *do* know about physics. Terence McKenna once famously said that science asks "Give us one free miracle and we'll explain the rest." That miracle is the instantaneous arrival of all the laws of nature and all the matter and energy in the universe, appearing out of nowhere at the moment of the Big Bang, before going on to expand in uneven and unexplained ways.

Quite the miracle. Sounds like magic. *Bad* magic.

The whole circus has been utterly broken since the 1930s when the discovery of quantum mechanics threw a wand-shaped spanner in the workings of science's holy grail; a Theory of Everything. A credit to those early quantum theorists is that they quickly saw that any such theory would have to rely on consciousness as a fundamental component of the universe. The rest of physics operated along the 'shut up and calculate' path: As long as no one asks us to stop and consider the metaphysical implications of this, we can go on using these formulae to build academic careers and the occasional piece of useful entertainment technology. Or at least, the rest of *public* physics worked this way. Science in the twentieth century is largely the story of stealing ideas that may have some strategic military value and whisking them away into black projects where they are then fed on unlimited funding for decades, the results of which occasionally show up in the real world as buildings turning to dust mid-air, gnomic pronouncements from Russian prime ministers, planet-wide surveillance systems running off your own phone's

battery or Raytheon-branded flying saucers buzzing hiking groups in national parks.

For the magician, competence is required not only in science's theories or belief systems but also in its inextricably entwined politics. It is the only competing school of wizardry you need have any concern over. Here then, is the 'school' as described by Rupert Sheldrake in his excellent *The Science Delusion*:

Contemporary science is based on the claim that all reality is material or physical. There is no reality but material reality. Consciousness is a by-product of the physical activity of the brain. Matter is unconscious. Evolution is purposeless. God exists only as an idea in human minds, and hence in human heads. These beliefs are powerful, not because most scientists think about them critically but because they don't. The facts of science are real enough; so are the techniques that scientists use, and the technologies based on them. But the belief system that governs conventional scientific thinking is an act of faith, grounded in a nineteenth-century ideology.

Rather than re-admit the *wyrd*, the last fifty or so years of science have seen an unprecedented doubling down on unverified beliefs and evidence-free assumptions. Materialism, it must be understood, is a *premise* of science, not a *finding*. That premise is defended above all else. Science as a method of enquiry has been captured by this embarrassingly naïve belief system. It deserves better and so do we. And there are indeed fresh reasons for hope. Like the subatomic particles that so disrupt the model, science's ideology is only really 'there' if you look at it. Look away and it smears back into thousands of individual scientists. Scientists who, if you get them one-on-one, invariably have much more sophisticated and –dare I say it- *scientific* cosmologies than you are likely to find in popular Facebook groups. Materialism's premises are so absurd that its only true believers are bow-tie-wearing former defence

contractors trotted out on television to tell you how amazing they are.

Particularly in physics, science's fifty-year drift into the unscientific has recently reached a surreal apogee. String theory is widely considered 'the only game in town' when it comes to cosmology yet it has not made a single testable prediction about the universe. Ever. This has led some string theorists to suggest that if a theory is 'elegant' and 'explanatory' enough, it need not be tested experimentally! To put it another way, scientists' science no longer needs to be scientific but you should still listen to them when they tell you what is true and what is not. And these are the guys telling us magic is irrational?

It used to be that magicians would play a defensive game against Scientific Materialism, scurrying away from the Sauron eye-beams of supposed Rationalism. We hid first with the priests, claiming that science only explains the physical while magic is of God. Then we hid in the truth of science's adolescence: it had yet to explain magic. Then we hid in the mind, claiming 'it's just psychology' as our cover. The time has come to play an offensive game. Turn and face these fools. Magic is real and Materialism is fraud. We must crush the material of Materialism into dust for our philtres and phylacteries. We must never cede the ground of truth to these clowns. NASA's EmDrive violates the Second Law of Motion, nevertheless it is being built and the Second Law is still being taught. This is the kind of idiocy that stands opposed to us. You could knock it over with one breath, even if the mallet is far more satisfying.

As is clear, the collapse in the credibility of Materialism is no excuse to neglect your personal scientific education. Uninformed magicians will often point to their propensity to occasionally use commercial air travel or their ownership of a mobile phone contract as some sort of evidence they are 'pro' science (when in both cases this actually means they are 'pro' black budget military spending). This is to confuse consumer technology with cosmology. Every wizard needs to build rather than rent a metaphysics. And such a metaphysics needs to not only improve the success of your practical enchantments but also allow you to interrogate reality in an increasingly sophisticated way. This is the prize beyond price held out at the end of chaos magic's trademark method of belief shifting. One must goldilocks one's way to the optimal, personal metaphysics. An understanding of genuine science is a cornerstone of this process.

Perhaps the greatest pivot point in western magic's story occurred during the Renaissance. It was then that Italian artists, using banker financing, took advantage of the collapse of Byzantium to regain access to some of the most important texts of the classical world. This callous opportunism must rank as one of the most profitable ever acts of war salvage. In the courts and libraries of Florence and Venice, science and magic were inextricable, united in the one ontological goal: the description of the true functioning of the natural universe and how we may participate and find meaning in it. With the benefit of hindsight, this marriage was probably a few centuries before its time, arriving as it did before empiricism and data-backed observations properly came of age.

The noble goal of unifying observations of the universe with an improved view of spirit's role within it needs to be reinvigorated. It is only an accident of history that split these two camps, and one that favours Scientific Materialism a lot more than it deserves. Several fruitful lines of enquiry for doing precisely that will be explored in subsequent chapters.

Do not neglect science. It is no exaggeration to say that the fate of the universe rests on your scientific literacy. Chaos magic lost its founder to the world of theoretical physics for almost two decades. That tells you everything regarding its importance.

TWO

ON SELFHOOD

IF CHAOS MAGIC IS IN A MIND WAR WITH MATERIALISM, THE MOST IMPORTANT FRONT IN the conflict is on the mine-riddled beaches of consciousness. And the siege engines we bring to this front are quite out of date. Recourse to millennia-old sacred texts from the other side of the world is an especially Victorian approach, one aimed more at re-enchanting existing modes of western spirituality than demolishing Materialism, which is today's urgent goal.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the world has given Materialism a couple of centuries to come up with some form of coherence that would necessitate us taking it seriously and it has utterly failed. So, rather than taking the tired, racially-problematic road of marshalling the 'wisdom' of the 'enlightened Easterner' in our defence, it is deemed more effective to use science's actual findings against its lack of them. And so we shall make our way through the various extant models that purport to explain consciousness before suggesting (at least) one that is most suitable for further interrogation by chaos magicians. This is where the rubber meets the road. Get it right and you will live a life filled with miracles and wonder.

Initial Postulates

These are drawn from a recent paper published by Dr Bernardo Kastrup, one

of the leading modern lights of the Idealist worldview, entitled *On why Idealism is superior to Physicalism and Micropsychism*:

1. There is subjective experience. This is the primary and incontrovertible datum of existence.
2. From [1], there is *that which experiences*, since experience entails an experiencer.
3. A person's experiences are private, in the sense that other people do not have direct access to them (under non-magical circumstances).
4. Measurable electrochemical activity in a person's nervous system correlates with the person's private experiences.
5. Nervous systems have the same essential nature -that is, they belong to the same ontological class- as the rest of the physical universe. After all, nervous systems are physical systems. They are composed of the same types of fundamental subatomic particles and force fields that make up the universe as a whole.
6. We all inhabit the same universe, despite the different points-of-view from which each person observes it and the different ways in which each person interacts with it.
7. The universe unfolds according to patterns and regularities independent of our personal volition. In other words, human beings cannot change the laws of nature by wishing them to be different. Or at least not commonly or in predictable ways. (Pro tip: Always leave the door open for a once-every-five-millennia appearance of a superhuman or demi-god.)

Additional Postulates

The initial postulates are useful for beginning a debate in philosophy class but this is not a philosophy book, it's a chaos magic book. As such, there are additional phenomena –often verified in laboratory settings or via more than a century's worth of meta analysed data- that must be folded into an improved model of consciousness. These would include:

1. The reality of telepathy: Telepathy is not only regularly demonstrated, it is actually on the increase in the modern world as more and more people are using phones. More specifically *verified*

instances of telepathy are on the increase. In previous centuries you would have no way of knowing if someone was writing you a letter at the very moment you thought of them. (Although there are dozens of famous accounts of letter telepathy, such as those experienced by Mark Twain.)

2. Mentally seeing things separated from you by distance and/or time is both possible and commonly achieved. Again, these have been regularly and convincingly demonstrated under laboratory conditions. In the case of remote viewing, accuracy is improved when 'feedback'—which is the subsequent confirmation of the viewing target—is received. This needs to be modelled.
3. NDEs and UFO phenomena have some sort of discrete reality: It is no longer worth anyone's time to debate the 'reality' of these phenomena. Buy any would-be detractors a bottle of wine, sit them down in front of the internet and go out for the evening. As far as postulates go, the reality of these phenomena needs to be incorporated into a consciousness model, particularly as those who experience them very often also experience long-term paranormal or psi effects.

Materialism

Materialism isn't even very good at describing the material world. When you stop to think about it that really is quite embarrassing. Most of the physical universe is still currently MIA. That would be dark matter and dark energy, which allegedly make up 96% of the whole shebang. But even the 4% that Materialists are extremely confident about has no discernible material reality without human intervention. Light, for instance, has no brightness until it interacts with a retina and triggers reactions in the visual cortex. Similarly there is no sound, no colour, no taste and no smell without this conscious interaction. And this is before we get to the oft-used example of quantum observer effects where *no* observation of reality is complete until a human is involved in the results.

As for the contention that the brain "creates" these experiences—and somehow emanates consciousness itself—this is entirely without proof. The brain is a dark place. It contains no sounds or colours. When viewed with high-

end medical devices, the human brain will treat us to a largely unpredictable fireworks show of electrochemical reactions. But so will dead salmon when you put them in an MRI. To say these electrical signals are creating experience is to say that Rihanna lives in your radio. She doesn't.

Few people outside those who work in bars near philosophy faculties realise just how close to death Materialism really is as a viable worldview. The latest EEG signal to be held up as 'the signal that creates consciousness inside the brain', P3b, has since been detected during unconscious processing. The clue is in the name there. If it is involved in *unconscious* activity, it cannot be the neural correlate to consciousness.

But this has always been Materialism's problem. It cannot, even just on a chalkboard, explain how arrangements of physical molecules can generate *subjective* experience. This is the classic 'hard problem of consciousness' that is so completely unsolvable in a Materialist paradigm that several of its leading exponents have resorted to declaring that consciousness –which is provably the only way to experience reality in the first place- does not even exist.

Understanding Materialism's many failings becomes important not because it is a valid metaphysical school –it isn't- but because it is this very flimsy premise that underpins how modern culture determines and assigns value. Which is probably why they came up with the next model we will examine.

Panpsychism. Materialism's last stand. Now with added sparkle power.

Panpsychism

If Materialism can be described as 'molecules somehow learned to think', then Panpsychism can be described as 'thinking is a property of matter similar to mass or charge and if you Lego block them together they somehow learn to think.'

What may look at first glance like science's attempt to re-enchant the world by granting it the same sort of magical status the human mind enjoys is in fact the exact opposite. Once again with zero supporting evidence, it is a smearing of the miracle of the human mind out over the physical universe until neither look miraculous. But it is like trying to spread restaurant butter. All you do is

mess up the bread. The butter remains undamaged and inexplicable. (Science's other hard problem.)

The shortcomings of Panpsychism are essentially the same shortcomings as materialism, just phrased slightly differently. It is a rear-guard action hastily assembled to defend the dominant paradigm. Dr Kastrup points out in the paper referenced above that there are actually two versions of Panpsychism its proponents like to shift between:

1. Consciousness is just another irreducible property of subatomic particles, similar to spin or charge. *OR*
2. Consciousness is matter's *intrinsic* property. Each particle is a tiny fragment of consciousness and if you compile enough of them together you will get 'human' or 'octopus' or 'camel' consciousness. More complex combinations of particles lead to higher orders of subjective experience such as *fremdschämen*, anxiety over public speaking or the desire to watch uncommon and very specific pornography.

Both of these variants have the same problems. Firstly, smearing consciousness out is not so much an explanation but a fudge to allow the spotlight to remain on the physical. You are still left with the challenge of molecules having inner experiences except that this time it is saying that the complexity of their arrangement somehow magically creates them. There is no evidence for this. From the perspective of a philosophical debate, you can go so far as to say there is zero evidence of consciousness in inanimate objects *at any scale*. From a magical perspective this is somewhat arguable –most magicians would concede that inanimate objects at least *can* be 'ensouled'. But that 'ensoulment' speaks to a wider worldview failure in Panpsychism: an inability to model paranormal phenomena that are devoid of complex arrangements of molecules –such as spirit encounters and after death communication.

Panpsychism appears designed to kick the Materialist physics can down the road a bit further, presumably until such time as its current exponents have retired on full salary from their tenured positions. The hard problem remains.

Idealism

If Panpsy chism is ‘matter generates consciousness’ then Idealism, grossly simplifying down its myriad forms, is ‘consciousness generates matter’. This is commonly and sometimes deliberately misunderstood as meaning *your* consciousness creates the entire universe. In its most erudite form, Idealism says *a* consciousness or consciousness field –of which *your* own consciousness is a tiny, often temporary fragment- creates the entire universe.

It is a much more defensible position than either Materialism or Panpsy chism because it ‘solves’ the hard problem of consciousness by declaring both its existence and its *primacy*. Conscious experience is the only way reality can be known. Whereas the previous worldviews have zero pieces of evidence going for it, Idealism has one. It also at least leaves the door open for some of those psi effects described in the additional postulates.

Reality –both inner and physical- can be likened to vibrations on a single membrane of consciousness. You, Kazakhstan, the Pleiades, the French accent, coral reefs, Korean pop music and whatever damn thing *your* cat always seems to be dreaming about. These are all thoughts in a universal mind.

There are reasons to like Idealism without becoming an adherent. The fact that it can so easily disarm and dismantle Materialist paradigms is more than sufficient to know about it in detail. Not only does Idealism have the all-important *one* piece of evidence -the reality of *your* consciousness- but it can also win the argument based solely on Ockham’s Razor: Do not multiply unnecessarily. Technically, Materialism posits an entire universe for which it has no evidence and can never derive any: *the physical world outside of your conscious experience*. Quite the violation when you stop to think about it.

Inevitably, Idealism has some shortcomings or else the chapter would stop right here. These are particularly apparent when viewed from a magical perspective. Many of them are not necessarily the shortcomings of Idealism *per se* as much as they are shortcomings in human language –in this case English. It is a poor tool for the job we give it but it is the only one to hand. (You really do not want me to try and speak Franglais at you. Be assured, not even a Materialist deserves that.)

Firstly, there has been a recent trend to frame the human mind’s

relationship with Mind in medicalised terms. Our inability to consciously experience this distributed universal mind is likened to Dissociative Identity Disorder. This is a westernised version of an eastern Idealist perspective that the illusion of reality needs to be overcome with some sort of dissolution or enlightenment. It is a reasonable allegory but a 'disordered by design' universe does not have a lot of currency in western magical traditions. Viewed from a strictly utilitarian analysis, Near Eastern and European religions accomplish social control through tribal rules around sin and taboo by *internalising* the universe's error (Eve's sin, for instance) and exclusively offering the cure. A more South Asian manifestation of religion-based social control requires pathologising individuality and promoting its dissolution. One is no better than the other –a plague on both their houses, frankly - but there is an increased risk of unbalancing your metaphysics if the rest of it otherwise runs along western lines.

Secondly 'All is Mind' also increases the risk of falling into an intellectually lazy Monism. The reality is Idealism is probably 'true' in some kind of super-metaphysical, 10,000 foot view of the cosmos and we and everything else are just eddies or oscillations in the one consciousness field. But this is sort of like saying the universe explains the universe, and the proposed unity of this consciousness field struggles to model lived personal experience on a daily basis. It is very useful when thinking about the entire universe or the individual human but it lacks the nuance required for a magical engagement with anything in between. The famous 'nitrous oxide philosopher', William James, wrote of the 'indifferentism' that accompanied his drug-induced feelings of universal unity. Witness its inability to encapsulate the life of objects that lack a scientific definition of 'life' which, for the magician, includes spirits and holy objects. You *can* technically model them with Idealism but you can also technically grow carrots in your car. Approaching these concepts from an idealist perspective voids the universe's warranty.

Moving from the whole universe down to the individual, when you say that 'all is Mind' in English or Franglais, even when you include every atom in the universe in that statement, you imply a prioritisation of the mental over the physical that also risks unbalancing the more western drive toward (or need for) mind/body integration. Idealists will tell you that is not at all what they mean when they say 'all is Mind' –and they would be right- but it does not get

us around the realisation that there are probably more effective descriptions. Indeed, none other than Deepak Chopra recently observed that we probably need a new term that encompasses mind/matter to not only leapfrog these linguistic shortcomings but also revivify the exploration for just how the quantum observer effect actually *works*. Let's all keep our fingers crossed for Dr Chopra then.

Many, although not all, of these shortcomings resolve themselves when you simply replace the word 'consciousness' with 'spirit'. Which brings us to our final bowl of porridge. And it is just right.

Animism

If the western esoteric tradition can be said to have an underlying belief system it is a form of Animism; that the world or the universe is in some sense a living thing. It is found in the original Hermetic texts, it is found in the work of Renaissance sorcerers such as Campanella and Bruno and it is also found in some of the pivotal esotericists of the last one hundred and fifty years, such as Rudolph Steiner and Carl Jung. This particular form of Animism often requires the presence of a human consciousness to 'complete' or 'ensoul' Creation. Writing on Goethe's worldview, Steiner would say "Man is not there in order to form for himself a picture of the finished world; nay, he himself cooperates in bringing the world into existence." Standing opposed to the Idealist notion that human perception of the universe is *in error*, Animism requires bringing our *clear* perception and imagination to the living, physical world to enrich and more fully experience it.

Going further, it was this very process that ultimately secured human immortality for mystics such as Gurdjieff and Jung; it was a process of discovering the immortal self through interaction with the universe, not the realisation that the true self was an error that needed to be dissolved back into the ultimate consciousness field. Such a cosmology emerges from the incorporation of underlying 'shamanic' techniques of active imagination into the particularly western current of Platonic/Logo-istic/Jesus-ish notion of restoration or redemption of the physical via the 'installation' of something non-physical.

Again, one can make the case that in some sort of ‘ultimate truth’ sense the spirit world and the universal consciousness field are human descriptions of the One Thing. That may well be correct but ultimate truths sit uneasily within chaos magic. Models with more operative utility are generally preferred.

Perhaps due to its current –and probably doomed- attempts to achieve a level of respectability within monoculture, Idealism has no small amount of squeamishness regarding the reality of spirits, sacred objects and the dead. This makes it considerably less useful to magicians than Animism. However you conceive of their ‘true’ nature, magic requires full engagement with fetishes and sacred ground and window areas such as crossroads. It also works best when you grant agency to objects or entities beyond human consciousness, and particularly so with living systems. A good example would be the rise to prominence of ayahuasca outside its natural habitat over the last couple of decades. From an Animist perspective she very much looks like a spirit on a mission. It is just such an attitude that underpins the totemic relationship with plants, stones and animals found in folk magic and witchcraft. Idealism contends that ayahuasca –to continue the example- is *in* mind, but stops short of granting it a subjective or inner life. It is more useful for the magician to consider living systems not as some unaware little eddies in a universal consciousness field, but as ‘outposts’ of the spirit world. Such a perspective has the pleasing side effect of making the experience of day-to-day life much richer. Returning to Steiner, Jung and ultimately Hermes Trismegistus, it also makes it easier to achieve ‘imaginal co-creation’.

The difference in operative utility between Idealism and Animism is at its most stark when considering psi effects, after death communication and UFO phenomena. Or really any of the things between heaven and earth that are not often dreamt of in Idealist philosophy. The magician’s world resists singular, macro explanations. An element of Mystery always remains.

But what of the magician herself? What remains of her?

Revisiting the Multiself

Historically, chaos magic’s suspicion of meta-narratives also extended to a suspicion of the ‘narrative’ of the singular self. Given the climate in which it

arose –occultists and seekers searching for their ‘true self’ or their ‘true will’- this was probably a necessary step to take. However the intervening decades of psychological and biomedical findings invite a revision, if not of the initial contention, then certainly of some of its practical implications for the individual magician.

Either by nefarious design or just as a symptom of living in the last days of late capitalist western culture –and probably both scenarios are in play- monoculture is going out of its way to *de-cohere* us when all available psychological evidence suggests *coherence* is the way to lasting health and happiness. From the diktats issued from the precisely six owners of all mainstream media to the borderline genocidal ontologies vomited from the ivory tower all over impressionable college minds, to the disordered electromagnetic landscape of the domestic dwelling, attacks on the ‘essential you’ are as constant as they are effective.

What has emerged in the last decade or so is how vigorously these decohering and depatterning strategies were used by both the Nazis and the Anglo-American shadow state precisely because they were and *are so* effective in embedding fear, compliance and submission. None of these are qualities the chaos magician would wish to cultivate. A careful examination of the history of these appalling procedures leads to the inevitable conclusion that -on a psychological basis- one is the healthiest number.

Over the same intervening time period it has become clear that the opposite is true on a purely biological basis. Each passing year the *human-as-biome* grows ever more prominent. Poor gut bacteria looks like it underlies everything from the obesity crisis to chronic depression, which goes some way to explaining why there are no silver bullets for any of these conditions. The combination of antibiotics in the food supply, fast food diets, electromagnetic radiation, carbonated drinks, artificial lighting, environmental pollutants and every other hallmark of the modern world debases your physical existence by reducing its diversity, its *multiplicity*.

And so we suggest updating the chaos magic concept of the multiseif with the *ecosystemic self*. At the macro level, an ecosystem is ‘one’thing, on the micro level it is reliant on the robust operation of countless smaller systems whose interactions contribute to the coherence of the whole. The ecosystemic

self not only better aligns with an Animist worldview it also allows you to model many aspects of 'distributed consciousness psi effects' associated with the digital world. For instance –insane as this sounds (even for a chaos magic book!)- I am pretty sure I can 'sense' tweets. This appears to be a variant of the commonly observed telephone telepathy. So it is an example of the 'you' that is distributed locally and non-locally.

The ecosy stemic self also offers an improved or deeper method of thinking about human/plant interactions, particularly when it comes to entheogens. It also necessarily suggests magical visualisation exercises to deploy in different spaces you occupy such as the home and workplace. Just watch *Jumanji* and learn to compartmentalise.

THREE

OWNING OUR STORY

PERHAPS UNSURPRISINGLY FOR A CHAOS MAGICIAN WHO WROTE A WHOLE BOOK ON THE Palaeolithic origins of western magic, I consider historical literacy to be a sacred and mandatory duty. For at least fifty thousand years it was the role of the shaman to keep the stories a tribe told itself about its place and its role in the universe. Viewed over a long enough timeline, the previous two centuries of letting materialist 'experts' specialise in telling us the origins of things they don't actually believe exist has been a disaster. Fortunately, it is an easily reversible one.

Although you would not know it from a casual glance as the cable television landscape, we are not entering an anti-academic age, nor should we cheer for one. We are entering an age where the ivory tower no longer has a monopoly on interpretation. The time when a faintly ludicrous, medieval club took taxpayer and corporate money to swap articles with each other behind unaffordable paywalls is ending. One of the few upsides –perhaps the greatest upside- of the digital age is the democratisation of access to specialist data. This began the process of narrative decentralisation. We may consider the process complete following the imminent, total collapse of the academic publishing cartel revenue model. At that point, 'history telling' should become entirely meritocratic, if a little chaotic in the short term. Zeroes and ones lap like hydrochloric acid at the base of the ivory tower. It is an exciting time for the

intellectually greedy.

Where archaeology is concerned, it would be an error to mistake the need for meticulousness with complexity. Specialists are certainly needed to crawl through scorpion-infested deserts looking for potsherds and desiccated dung piles but these are data gathering exercises, and quite menial ones at that. Whether the data gathering is specialist or not, the *interpretation* of these data remains open to any one with an informed opinion on the subject, which is a skill that is entirely unrelated to competent use of the box grid excavation method. Similarly, you would not necessarily ask the carpenter who built the roulette wheel for gambling advice.

Specifically regarding 'our' story, the century of western occultism that preceded chaos magic relies on a history that is approaching 100% false. It is amazing to see long-abandoned ideas such as modern survivals of Neolithic goddess worship or pagan secret societies still have some currency on witchily over-decorated tumblr pages. In grimoiric circles, it is astounding to me that some magicians cannot even locate Alexandria on a map. You should know its street names!

Historical inaccuracy borne of laziness or ignorance is a modern phenomenon and an unforgivable one at that. The magicians of the Golden Dawn built a history that now *appears* inaccurate but was cutting edge for its time. They haunted the British Museum like the ghosts in the spirit masks they peered at from behind glass. Emulate them. From a chaos magic perspective, the hypothesis that historical accuracy improves the effectiveness of sorcery over historical inaccuracy is solid. The difference in your results will be night and day. That is your 'optimisation' reason right there. But there is perhaps an even more important one.

Learn and tell your history or lesser people will tell it for you. This is your lore. Keep it.

FOUR

WIZARD, HEAL THYSELF

OF ALL THE TRIBAL ROLES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SHAMAN OR THE WITCH, THE dispensation of healing (or poisonous) concoctions seems pre-eminent. This traditional role assumes extra layers of urgency in a world overrun with Big Pharma and monocultural food supply systems. We are now sick in alarming and unprecedented ways.

The United States has 5% of the world's population and consumes 80% of the world's prescription painkillers. It is also a country in which the single biggest cause of personal bankruptcy is a bad health diagnosis. It is *also* a country with pharmaceutical advertising rules that are spectacularly illegal in other countries where it is slightly more difficult to bribe politicians, such as Nigeria. These interrelated issues, combined with a food supply system that is federally incentivised to grow low quality food as a side effect of producing unnecessary fuel additives, make for a singularly unique and uniquely *singular* challenge: And this 'new' challenge is one that will not be solved *en masse*. The most important issues never are.

We must reclaim the role of healer. This is not simply a matter of rolling back the clock to simpler times. It is not replacing aspirin with willow bark tea and then hitting the drive-thru window. If you are dispensing leeches in the twenty first century you are LARPing, not practicing herb lore. If you think

midwives in Early Modern England would not have leapt at the chance to use an ultrasound then you are equally mistaken. The very best magicians are scavengers of the useful and banishers of the useless.

The current state of the health industry is no mere side effect of capitalism run amok. Much of the dangers in the western food/health system are there *by design*. Across the world, official bodies are little more than rubber stamps and kickback depositories for whatever deranged chemical concoction Pharma companies want to put in your children next. The loop is closing with the introduction of laws that not only make such treatments mandatory but also criminalise people who wish to grow food or catch rainwater on their own land. Since World War II, the story of food and medicine in the west is one of such breathtaking corruption and organised crime it would be deemed unbelievable if it were fiction.

In an odd sort of way, it is not all bad news. The disparity between Materialist allopathic treatment and the last few decades of scientific research has long past absurd. There is the rise of corporate Mindfulness meditation, which is cheerily offered to Silicon Valley princelings by their overlords without the slightest realisation of just *why* it might be so systemically effective. It is free and unregulated. There are the miraculous effects of intermittent fasting, which similarly produce results over and above what would be expected from a Materialist model. There is the gradual, selective legalisation of naturally-occurring 'drugs' such as marijuana, psilocybin fungi and DMT analogues which may even be flat-out *cures* for many of the 'lifestyle diseases' of the west. It is interesting to me how much the 'best practices' emerging from behind the disaster of modern medicine so closely resemble the guidelines of the ancient Mystery Schools (particularly the Pythagoreans): meditation, fasting, entheogens and a largely plant-based diet. Funny how that works.

Even though we see the pieces of a much better system staggering out from the plane crash of Big Pharma's allopathic medicine, it would be naïve in the extreme to sit around and wait for them. There is simply too much money involved in selling us pills that sometimes –such as was proved with Prozac- do *nothing* except give us side effects and make us poorer. This is particularly the case with the roll out of entheogens in a clinical setting. If you are familiar with

the story of murdered journalist Gary Webb, from *Dark Alliance*, you will know the CIA has been the world's largest drug dealer for decades and it appears unlikely they will give up their source of off-book revenue any time soon. We are on our own but that is fine. Magic is a solitary craft.

The Macro View of the Micro

There is something perversely comedic about living in a world where it is illegal to dispense medical advice so as to protect Big Pharma, which blatantly lies in its own medical advice. Nevertheless, that is our world and I am not a medical practitioner of any form so this is not medical advice. What it is instead is a personal 'spell' for 'longevity'. It is magical advice. Because spells – like Prozac- do not work. Everyone knows that. So read on, lawyers and clients.

It is clear we are a long way off from definitive health advice –indeed we may never get there. But today we are actually getting cooler rather than warmer in this unavoidable game of Marco Polo, largely thanks to modern medicine's obsession with silly transhumanist nonsense that itself rests on entirely unproven assumptions about our bodies' and brains' similarities to machines. We continue to treat symptoms rather than causes when we view the body as a machine, even cutting it up to replace parts. Scarily combining the twin mistakes of over-medication and 'body as parts sack', the Harvard Gazette reported in October 2015 that medication errors are now found in one in every *two* surgeries. These would be medications that more likely than not are based on fraudulent science designed to get more products out into the market and down your neck. In 2009, the then-editor-in-chief of the New England Journal of Medicine announced "it is simply no longer possible to believe much of the clinical research that is published." Go ahead and let that sink in.

Three macro trends nevertheless appear to be emerging from behind all this insanity and the good news is they are largely under personal control.

1. *Inflammation.* Do everything you can to *minimise* it on an ongoing basis. Food regimes high in natural anti-inflammatories appear to be the largest correlate across all the 'good' diets of the world: The Mediterranean, the Osakan and the Ayurvedic. Fats, proteins,

vegetables and minerals otherwise vary enormously. If you are successfully minimising inflammation it means you are successfully minimising the causes of inflammation... and they eventually kill you.

2. *Immunity.* Do everything you can to *maximise* it on an ongoing basis. If you live in the modern world you are immunocompromised. It is as simple as that. The miracle powers of medicinal cannabis appear to 'work' by dramatically improving the endocannabinoid system which itself regulates the human immune system. This is probably why it appears to 'cure' everything from cancer to epilepsy. There are any number of immune-boosting foods you should bump into high rotation on your plates and in your vegetable patches.
3. *Nutrition.* Where the first and the second point collide. Repeat after me: *I am never not on a detox.* Disease is a subtraction from a perfect health state. It is best overcome or prevented via taking control of your nutrition.

If you correct for or optimise toward these three indicators, then whatever your situation or location on the earth, you will be heading in the right direction. Here endeth the spell. I assure you, there is Big Magic in it.

And Medicine thy Food

In the centuries to come, our descendants will laugh at our medical and nutritional advice the way we laughed at the advice given to Henry VIII, who died morbidly obese. High carbohydrate diets were a disaster. Low fat/artificial sweetener diets were a disaster. High protein high fat diets were less of a disaster but still no magic bullet. Now we find ourselves in a situation where organisations such as the Mayo Clinic and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics assert that saturated fats are not in any way the cause of weight gain or poor heart health. Nevertheless, whole milk is still banned in most schools, in favour of high sugar 'low fat' alternatives. All those 'this food linked to that' studies are probably completely wrong. (Single causes are rarely the single cause of anything.)

As for exercise and calorie counting? Physical exercise should be

associated with mental health where it approaches the status of miracle cure, rather than weight loss for which it is actually contra-indicated. In a compellingly Animist way, the positive mental health effects are *increased* if the physical exercise occurs in a natural setting. Recent studies from City University of New York even suggest that there is no difference in calorie use between humans with moderate activity levels –walking, taking the stairs, gym once a week- and full-blown gym buddies. University of York in Toronto research shows that it was easier to lose weight in the 70s and 80s than today, even with identical levels of calorie consumption and physical activity. We spy some mystical advice in amongst the undergrowth of all these studies: Live an active life closer to nature and you will be physically and psychologically healthy. Team Animism wins again.

Returning to the ecosystemic self, it is becoming clear that the five decade assault on your gut bacteria –called by some your ‘second brain’- is the linking factor between the rise of diabetes, heart disease and the obesity epidemic. So not only was it easier to lose weight thirty years ago, people who grew up in those decades appear to have microbiomes that are better at metabolising food than younger generations. The diversity of gut bacteria today is 30% lower than it was fifty years ago. Do not reach for the Quarter Pounder just yet. It is via the microbial route that modern fast foods are *actually* killing us.

Typically your gut contains 3,500 different bacterial species, weighing in at approximately three pounds. Tests involving subjects eating a ten-day diet of fast foods reduced this diversity by 1,300 whole species! This genocide leads to an invasion of harmful microbes -opportunistic pathogens called bacteriodes- that inhibit metabolism and cause a cascade of health problems (associated with inflammation and reduced immunity, hence the ‘spell’ on the previous pages).

This is all before we get to the overuse of antibiotics in a medical and food production setting. Antibiotics, you will recall, are specifically designed to destroy bacteria. And indeed, our obesity crisis has now jumped to farm animals and pets, who are not typically found Netflix and chilling with Doritos in the wild. Tests where gut bacteria from obese humans are transferred to mice lead to rapid weight gain in the lab animals. (Side note: this may partially explain why fat friends and families tend to flock together.) The same is true

for six month old babies with obesity. Clearly they're not skipping the gym to go out drinking beer with their work colleagues. Endocrine-disrupting chemicals in the modern world and a microbiome in crisis are the vectors here. Our mind war has just opened up another front in the physical. Send reinforcements down your gullet.

The inevitable conclusions once again refer back to the Mystery and Classical Age esoteric schools: Nutritional mastery in the form of a diverse, fresh diet –as opposed to the minimisation of fat and even sugars. Easier said than done at this stage of our apocalypse. In the 1950s, there were twelve food staples regularly traded on commodity exchanges. Now there are five, going on four. Two of them are already highly genetically modified –soy and corn –and the other three –wheat, rice and potato- are partially modified. Do not for a second believe there is a safety consensus regarding GMOs, for it is a bought and paid for fraud. Now we find the cancer death rates in the parts of Argentina that use GMO crops are more than double the national average. Fifteen thousand years ago, our ancestors regularly ate around 150 different ingredients each week. Today we eat twenty or less, many of which are genetically modified or artificially sweetened. I got your so-called paleo diet right here.

The other modern scientific myth that needs to be banished with laughter is the suggestion that supplementation does nothing. The reality is we have been degrading the soil biome for more than a century while simultaneously spraying our foodstuffs with chemicals whose only purpose *is to kill things*. The microbial soil food web that previously converted nutrients from the earth into our food is gone and in most of the western world, will *stay gone*.

You would think that with the case for nutrition being *the* factor in the diseases and chronic conditions that are killing us being so open and shut that modern medical practice and education would be doubling down on it. Nope. In fact, the number of hours devoted to nutrition in medical curricula has actually *decreased* from 21 hours in 1985 to 19 hours today. Over *four years at school*. This makes it very likely you will be better-informed regarding nutritional issues than your general practitioner. Whenever the world breaks, it seems to fall to the wizards to fix it. Good hunting.

Fasting

Regular readers of *Rune Soup* will know that the loss of fasting from the western magical tradition is a particular *bête noir* of mine. It is there in the grimoires. It is there in the traditions of the desert mystics and Gnostics. It is there in the Mystery Schools. If your form of personal enchantment leans toward the passive –dream work, sigil shoaling, etc- then popular methods of intermittent fasting should probably be incorporated into your regimes. The dream states you encounter approach Technicolor lucidity. (Full mastery of fitful sleep is mandatory. Earplugs, melatonin... whatever is needed.) Then there are also the medical studies that show it resets the immune system, the metabolism, extends lifespans and even –under supervised conditions- *reverses* chronic conditions such as Type II diabetes and heart disease.

Fasting is a technique that can help you move mountains. You may even cease to resemble one.

Energy Healing

We use this term with some reservation based largely on the inefficiency of magical models to even begin to explain quite what is meant by 'energy'. Perhaps we could say 'consciousness effect healing' but that really only moves the furniture around a little.

Nevertheless, proficiency is required in at least one system of the magician's choosing, such as Reiki or homeopathy. On a personal level, I remain surprised at the slow uptake of the Bengston Method –created by Dr Bengston, obviously - as its effects have been observed under clinical conditions and his concept of 'image cycling' lends itself to improved sigil magic effectiveness. In his book, Dr Bengston requests that people not share the method described within it –which seems only fair- but if you have a need to either improve your sigil results or cure cancer in mice then you should probably look into it.

Rogue Health

A common refrain at *Rune Soup*: Are we not poisoners? However bad the

nutritional and health situation happens to be in the developed world, it still falls to us to seek out and use those techniques shunned by western monoculture. For instance, it is probably cheaper to move to Colorado and make your own Rick Simpson oil than undergo cancer treatment in an American hospital. It is *definitely* cheaper in the long run to visit an Amazonian shaman for a week than spend two decades taking antidepressants. Your situation will always be unique because you are unique upon the earth and among the stars. But this is the sort of thing wizards do. They quest. That option will always be available to you. That call is ever your destiny.

As for daily life outside such tragic diagnoses, we must update our Culpepper's. Lawn is now America's largest crop, taking up three times the land that corn does -more than 40 million acres. Lawn maintenance comprises up to 75% of household water use in the summer. This nightmare is easily reversed. Let your witch's garden grow wild with natural antivirals, anti-inflammatories, antibiotics and every different edible thing that can possibly fit. But always, always with the health of the soil -the *earth*- fixed firmly in your hearts and minds.

We are all dirt witches now.

FIVE

THE BEST WIZARDS ARE DEAD WIZARDS

A VOCAL MINORITY OF AMERICAN OCCULTISTS SWEAR OFF ‘ANYTHING CHRISTIAN’ AS A result of their negative experiences in the ecstatic churches of their youth. In many ways this is to be commended as the transcendence of the childhood state –as well as its subsequent rediscovery- is a passable descriptor for the entire metaphysical journey. But, in most cases, the Christianity they swear off is really anything but. Public declarations of Jesus as one’s lord and saviour, immediately followed by the hanging out of preacher shingles by any old moron, are singularly American phenomena (although now exported to much of the developing world thanks to the ‘helpful’ intervention of missionaries). These activities have no corollary in the rituals of the eastern or western churches where you find, instead, millennia-old practices based around deep readings of the Church Fathers and a profound understanding of the same Neoplatonic and Platonic magical stew that birthed western ritual magic.

The good news is these errors can all be washed away by a realisation of the true meaning of ‘Catholic’ as ‘universal’. The numerous traditions of the saints are thus seen to be what they are: the insertion of dead wizards with all their attendant powers into a European continuation of a delightfully murky, spirit-haunted ‘low Platonic’ worldview. It’s starting to sound interesting now, isn’t it? It gets even more interesting when you realise these dead wizards come ready made with their own saint days, magical correspondences, cultural

touchstones and, in more than one case, delicious pastries.

Although they are not to be faulted for relying on the best academic material available to them at the time, the magicians of the High Victorian Age seem to have largely left this fecund soil unsoiled. (That said, Crowley may have intuited the cosmic need for the saints if his rambling inclusion of a grab-bag of names in the Gnostic Mass is anything to go by.) It was not until the latter part of the twentieth century that academia realised it was not dealing with what Princeton history professor Peter Brown calls 'the steep crisp lines of a pyramid, culminating in Christian bishops acting as aristocratic patrons' but a far more 'poly focal' early church. The rise of the cult of the saints was a cacophony of spiritual and political voices finding an uneasy agreement with some fairly long-lived indigenous necromantic practices. It was not some clumsy hijack of local gods by a new power elite. There is some Deep Magic waiting to be excavated here.

For instance, prior to the church's centralisation, it fell to individual Christian families to care for their dead. Very often they were buried beside Jews or Pagans. Heads of households would perform rites and ensure graves were tended. Initially, in both Rome and Byzantium, it was not even clear whether Christian souls were still active after death or whether they just slept until the End Time. Families in Western Ireland or Northern France could not wait that long. From this uneven ground rose the ghostly forms of local saints and the continuance of local culture heroes. We must remember that for the people of this time, the sky was far from empty. The saints were just one class of being that connected backward to the *daimones* of the Classical World and forward to the presiding angels and spirits of their current one. This *cosmos* was a much larger space than we typically occupy today, and mankind's role in it was small by comparison. When the church finally got around to putting a word on it, 'intercession' was too weak. The Animist interplay between the seeker and the universe had survived into the new regime, where it continues largely unmolested. That is what is waiting for you on the other side of your squeamishness.

Moving beyond the European Christian milieu, the presence of the saints hints at a Deep Structure that probably stretches at least as far back as the Eurasian shamanism that birthed the European, Vedic and presumably some

Chinese traditions (among others). Consider the parallels between the deeds of the saints and those of the Tibetan Rinpoches. Or, moving westward and in a more folkloric direction, the posthumous deeds of Marie Laveau. As with the Black Madonnas and the rise of Santa Muerte, we see the retained potency of the saintly system by what continues to emerge from it. The motor has been left running for thousands of years. No time to explain. Get in.

For centuries, it was a requirement that all Christian altars must have a saintly relic in them to be 'sanctified'. A magical understanding of power objects and their presiding spirits never really went away. In *The Cult of the Saints*, Peter Brown writes of how the presence of these holy men and women continued to suffuse a numinous energy into the physical world of Early Medieval Europe:

The saints were never, simply, powerful lords or advocates at a distant court. They got down in there. They were deeply immanent presences. Their touch caused human bodies to retain their original, natural integrity. The heavy scent of paradise wafted from their tombs. Great trees planted beside their tombs blossomed. The description by Gregory of Tours of the shrine of Saint Eulalia in Mérida reveals the slow change by which the saints came back to earth. Gregory summarises the verses of Prudentius written around the year 400... [He] had written of how the soul of Eulalia had left her mouth to fly like a radiant, white dove, up to the stars. It is a moment of apotheosis, of entry into the starry heavens. The coarse earth was left far behind, as had been the case with heroes, divinized emperors and wise men in the pagan world.

By the time Gregory of Tours was recounting the stories, three large trees stood by Eulalia's tomb. They would bloom on the day of her December festival and, if the saint was pleased, these white flowers would become "radiant as gems".

St Cyprian

If the grimoire tradition were to have a patron saint, it would be St Cyprian of Antioch. Not only are there numerous books of magic named for him stretching from the New World up into the northern reaches of Scandinavia, but his poly form life and history lend itself to some very active magical practices.

Firstly, as Jake Stratton-Kent points out, Saint Cyprian has one foot in the Old World and one foot in the New. This means sustained contact with the saint opens up a few extra doors and allows you to push a bit further into other systems than good taste and self-preservation might otherwise allow. Secondly, his folkloric status as 'bishop of the graveyard' allows St Cyprian to perform double necromantic duties as both a psychopomp and a 'stand in' for certain grimoire rites that require the captured soul of a dead person (typically a criminal) that is used to bring in another spirit being such as a Sibyl.

Then there is his patronage of magic books themselves. In life, Cyprian was a magician who was converted to Christianity after he cast a love spell on (Saint) Justina who nullified it by making the sign of the cross. Peter J Carroll writes of the need for every sorcerer to have a 'wizardly' /Ouranian archetype in his or her cosmology. Saint Cyprian of Antioch certainly fulfils this function.

Just be aware that when you catch the current you will find yourself reading the early Church Fathers and researching the typological origins of the Baptism like it is no big thing. But it has been my experience that such knowledge is far more operatively useful than googling how to create a servitor.

SIX
ON GOETIA

THIS CHAPTER COULD JUST AS EASILY HAVE BEEN CALLED ‘HOW TO READ GRIMOIRES’ as the capacity to do so appears to have escaped many people.

In *StarShips: A Prehistory of the Spirits*, I made liberal use of Harvard Indologist, Wendy Doniger’s, famous metaphor of the microscope and the telescope. Using the telescope we may discern similarities of shape and form on the macro level, using the microscope we may uncover the myriad fascinating details and distortions between related texts and myths. Viewed through a telescope, ‘goetia’ is a type of magic dating back to at least Greece’s Archaic Period that has been applied to a system of spirit engagement associated with polyglot spellbooks and sigils –themselves largely originating in the Alexandria of Egypt’s Late Period- that bounced around the Eastern Mediterranean for a few centuries before travelling up into central and northern Europe via Italy and Moorish Spain, picking up a few local practices and beasties as it went. Viewed through a microscope we can see how the Greek Magical Papyri informed the *Hygromanteia*, we can watch the mutation of related spirit lists up through 14th and 15th century Germany, we can witness the rise of demons and corresponding angels out of the decans that then bleed into the medieval worldview. Both the telescope and the microscope are useful when deployed correctly, worse than pointless when used incorrectly.

You will find recommended texts in the Black Library section of this book but what needs to be understood from the outset is that *this* is the western tradition: a form of spirit engagement with its feet firmly in the Palaeolithic, refracted through the ever-incomplete, often deliberately misleading workbooks of one and a half millennia of wizards, charlatans, priests, bankers and kings. The grimoires themselves are not the western magical tradition, rather they are the archaeological evidence that one existed at all levels of society, even if its expression differed on a class basis.

I sometimes joke with Geraldine Beskin of London's Atlantis Bookshop that what is needed is a sort of *Dorling Kindersley Guide to the World of the Grimoires*: hapless stock photo actors in simple reconstructed clothing, 3D cutaway diagrams of buildings, and so on, showing what they wore, what they ate, what their economy was like. Because, like any archaeological evidence, the key to unpacking the tradition and making it *work* is *context*. When you know that olive oil was used in lamps certain divinatory rites in the *Hygomanteia* become clear. When you know where pine kernels were imported from, the Lady of the Mountain operation makes more sense, and so on. But a Doreen Kingsley grimoire guide would be metaphorically useless because true initiation lies in extracting the jewels from the piles of cowshit on your own. The Moorish astrologers believed that God contained this wisdom in riddles and puzzles so only the worthy could find it. There is much to recommend such a perspective.

It is probably important to underline that an improved understanding of the historical context of the grimoires is not necessarily a license to engage with their spirits in whatever freewheeling, short-cut way you prefer. Sure, you *can* do this, but as Dr Stephen Skinner points out in his *Techniques of Solomonic Magic*, western ritual magic's deep structure –its names, sigils and steps- is highly conserved across time. The implication is that this deep structure works *better* than any other, at least for the families of spirits that have come down to us. Rigid adherence is mercifully unwarranted, however, which is good news for readers who enjoy having sex more than once a month or do not have access to small children to take into the woods to act as scryers.

There is no substitute for discretion and experimentation in the formulation of your own spirit procedures. For my money, the western magical tradition

begins and ends with that statement.

If I am permitted one observation, it would seem to me an under-utilised component of this deep ritual structure is assuming the specific authority of 'the magician archetype' from within the context of the grimoire being used. Typically this is Moses or Solomon, names all-too-frequently abandoned by modern magicians. The 'form' of assuming the authority of a more powerful being and using said authority to summon a lesser spirit is certainly far older than Solomonic magic. But there is a 'sum greater than its parts' effect of using these names rather than ones that may be more amenable to your preferred esoteric tradition, as these are the names by which *these* spirits are called. Do try to meet them halfway. Lon Milo DuQuette, referring specifically to Enochian magic, likens it to speaking French to your waiter in Paris. Once you have made a little effort, your waiter will switch to English. (If only to save his ears from your mangling of his beautiful language!) Such courtesy should extend beyond the use of language to other ritual activity. Magic is, if anything, extradimensional diplomacy.

A Brief Note on Abramelin

Through an accident of history, *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage* has probably been over-emphasised and inaccurately contextualised for most of the last hundred or so years. As with so many texts and influences on the Victorian magical renaissance, much of it was down to the documents available for translation and the order in which they were translated. Insights from these piecemeal translation efforts were then hastily assembled into the lesson plans associated with the quasi-Masonic degree structure of the orders in question. Not that we should appear ungrateful. The best thing our magical ancestors did for us was spend their own time, effort and money bringing these texts out of academia and into the light of modern practice, even if some of their initial translations have not stood the test of time.

The Abramelin operation describes a six-month (to 18 month) process, which culminates in the magician making contact with his/her Holy Guardian Angel. Mathers liked it because he believed he had finally found a grimoire of 'pure' Kaballistic magic largely free of the contamination –and odious demons– of other Solomonic texts. Given that it seems probable the operation is a

descendant of various Greek and Alexandrian rites to contact one's 'Supernatural Assistant', the bed bugs are probably more important than Mathers would have liked, at least as important as the mattress.

He may have been even less pleased with the latest historical research. Although the earliest copy of the manuscript dates to 1608, I find myself completely convinced by historian Thomas Hatsis's contention that the 'sleeping ointment' provided by the 'woman of Linz'—given that the procedure contains none of the signifiers of witchcraft that arose in later centuries—dates from some time in the 1400s and thus provides the tantalising suggestion that there really was a continuity of folk pharmakeia beyond the end of the Classical Age. Amusingly, this may ultimately be more 'useful' in the revival of western magic in the long run than taking a six-month holiday off booze.

SEVEN

THE SECRET COMMONWEALTH OF SPACESHIPS

FOR COMING UP ON A CENTURY, INTELLIGENT PEOPLE HAVE KNOWN THAT THE spectrum of numinous phenomena currently called UFOs are *least* effectively explained by recourse to the 'extraterrestrial visitation' hypothesis... even if a tiny subsection of the spectrum may be considered precisely that.

This has caused researchers in the physical sciences to move from one end of the interpretive spectrum –the Materialist, little green men end- to somewhere in the middle. But there have also been esotericists who have moved from the opposite end of the spectrum into the middle. Indeed, we could say that all the best wizards end up there. Consider the following excerpt from Crowley's own journals, published as *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. He is, inevitably, making one of his many bitchy remarks about the Society for Psychical Research, but on his way to doing so he also says something quite important.

I observe, after a talk with M. Jules Courtier yesterday, that all their S.P.R. work is proof of extra-human forces. We knew about them all along; the universe is full of obscure and subtle manifestations of energy; we are constantly advancing in our knowledge and

control of them. Telekinesis is of the same order of nature as the Hertz rays or the radium emanations. But what nobody before me has done is to prove the existence of extra-human intelligence, and my Magical Record does this. I err in the interpretation, of course; but it is impossible to doubt that there is a somebody there, a somebody capable of combining events as a Napoleon forms his plans of campaign, and possessed of powers unthinkably vast.

Cleary Crowley was far from the first to 'prove' the existence of these intelligences. In fact, if you have read my *Star.Ships: A Prehistory of the Spirits*, you will know I make the case that a goodly chunk of human culture and technology can be interpreted as 'proof' of these intelligences. What we can say in defence of Crowley's contribution is that he not only recognised the existence of a range of beings behind what Dr Jeffrey Kripal calls 'the one-way mirror' of observable reality, but that he recognised the masterful skill that goes into 'their' plans. Any one with even trifling experience with spirit work will have seen how they often make their presence, wishes or intentions known via a string of the most baroque, apparently-acausal, largely-trivial events and coincidences. For Crowley, this was someone/thing 'capable of combining events as Napoleon forms his plans of campaign'. I'd suggest, however, that while Napoleon's plans were certainly complex, the plans of whatever is behind these phenomena appear almost overly so.

Crowley exemplifies the peculiarities of engaging with these phenomena better than even he knew, given his subsequent oblique influence on the twentieth century's space programme and popular culture. In fact, it appears one of the tell-tale signs of extradimensional contact is the way certain understandings come down to us 'out of sequence', so to speak.

Awareness of these external agencies dates back as far as we can see in the historical record. For most of history they were the menagerie of spirits, faeries, demons and other things that go bump in the night. In the west, they had largely become 'mere' folklore by the time the space race began in earnest, whereupon these phenomena were interpreted as physical visitors from other planets - a mistake used to tremendous propaganda effect during the

heady days of the Cold War. Then a combination of psi research, astronomy and improved religious studies gave us back the idea that we are dealing with something extremely strange, probably quite dangerous and definitely long-lived. Something which seems intimately related to and extremely *interested in* the 'shape' of our beliefs.

And then there's poor old magic, running to catch up to the Deep State after half a century of unlimited black budget money spent attempting weaponise what appears to be a critical component of Reality with a capital 'R'. We should run a little faster. Wizards have been intimately involved in spy craft and power games for centuries, probably millennia. We may even have something to offer, if only we were to stop tripping over our own silly little beliefs along the way. Theoretically, magic is best positioned for an experience of the sacred as *alien*; as what Rudolph Otto called the 'numinous', described below in Dr Jeffrey Kripal and Whitley Strieber's *The Super Natural*:

Otto went to great lengths, mostly with biblical materials, to show that this numinous energy or alien presence might be experienced as positive or negative, or both at the same time. The numinous might in fact invoke a whole range of physiological, emotional, and spiritual responses: dread and foreboding, awe and mystery, eeriness, terror, reverence and worship, even ecstasy and mystical union. The angel is an expression of the numinous, but so too is the demon. Otto was very much a follower of Kant. He did not think that human beings generally have any direct access to the numinous presence as it really and truly is. He thought rather that this mystical presence is always filtered through and shaped by the categories of the human mind and the cultures that largely determine its functioning.

Dr Kripal reminds us that Biblical encounters with God often result in the death of the seeker. Widening the sacred out beyond that which is 'nice' very much sits inside the magician's circle. Not just the numinous, but also the deceptive

caprice of these experiences suggest we are dealing with differing subsets of the same phenomena. In *The Super Natural*, Strieber describes interviewing people local to his famous *Communion* encounter in upstate New York in the months that followed it. A carpenter, finishing a house near the Strieber cabin, was sleeping in the worksite when he was awoken by a short, dark humanoid - who instilled terror in the tradesman- before transforming into a bird of paradise and vanishing. Visitors to the Strieber cabin encountered what are described as kobolds that morphed into spectral humanoids and fled toward Delaware Peoples gravesites on the property before also vanishing. Indeed, the 'shape' of spirit contact in the west is remarkably consistent across time and space. The apocryphal author of the *Great Book of St Cyprian*, a monastery librarian known as Jonas Sufurino, opens his grimoire with a tale on a mountaintop during a storm, where he invokes the Lord of Avernus. The storm responds to his invocation and from that point on Sufurino is in telepathic contact with the Devil. It is all very *Close Encounters*; mountaintops, flashing lights -more so if you throw in the torsion effects that regularly accompany electrical storms. The mountain in question is in northern Germany and is known as Brocken. The site has a long association with witchcraft and is believed to have been a location of Odin worship during the reign of Charlemagne.

What magic has to offer for the interested -if slightly foolhardy- seeker, is a set of protocols honed from centuries of spirit contact. This is rare in the West. Let us hypothesise a spectrum of western seekers with entheogen fans at one end and competent paranormalists such as Jacques Vallée or George P Hansen at the other. At the entheogenic end, people are often far too credulous in believing the messages they receive. An example would be Andrija Puharich and Uri Geller's repeated failed predictions for saucer landings based on information their 'received' from a super-computer communicating with them from the future. At the paranormalist end, Jacques Vallée once famously remarked "just because a message comes from Heaven doesn't mean it's not stupid." Hansen, in his *The Trickster and the Paranormal*, warns -accurately enough- of the life disasters that befall paranormal researchers when engaging with these phenomena. One end accepts too much, the other end accepts too little, and there in the middle is the western magical tradition exemplified by the experiments of John Dee and Edward Kelley, or Aleister Crowley and Victor Neuberg.

When it functions correctly, magic has its own sets of protocols for verifying and interrogating these messages -as well as providing highly necessary systems of protection. Mastery of these protocols provided Crowley with his greatest revelation: Contact with these beings is essential for the development of mankind. I would modify the revelation slightly to remove 'development', in favour of 'change over time' or '*hopefully* benign manipulation'.

This process is an update of the archetypal shamanic journey and his or her ongoing role for the tribe: seeking out these beings, trafficking with them for personal or tribal gain and generally just avoiding their ire. I would suggest that ongoing interaction with the spirit world is a naturally occurring, entirely normal, component of human existence. If that is indeed the case, then the need to elevate Animism to the Big Worldview Table is only increased.

This Used to Be a Bad Neighbourhood

Sometimes it might be aliens though, yeah? Probably not in the way you think. The trouble with the Mankind's-gods-are-UFOs hypothesis is that while there is ample good evidence that the world's mythologies have recorded possible 'alien visitations', there is not much evidence to suggest these visitations trigger the creation of new religions. Instead, they seem to be absorbed into the existing worldview. Fátima, the stories of Bishop Agobard, Chinese dragon legends, some of the descriptions of vimanas. If any of these are memories of 'alien visitations', then they certainly add complexity to the local belief systems, but do not replace them. Even the famous –and regularly misunderstood- cargo cults were not replacements; they were additions to a local Animist belief system.

More interesting is the growing consensus around how life arrived on this planet in the first place: via *directed* panspermia. Additionally, computer models of large scale asteroid impacts on Mars show that around 4% of the ejecta would land here on earth. Either of these scenarios should be raising an eyebrow on the face of any half-decent folklorist or student of comparative religion.

Staying with Mars, the presence of Xenon 129 –a telltale weapons signature

that cannot occur naturally - suggests the atmospheric detonation of very large nuclear weapons sometime between 250 million and half a billion years ago. Throw in the suggestion from highly qualified individuals that a number of planets in our solar system appear to be home to extremely old, ruined, artificial structures -plus the dismal efforts by various space agencies in concealing these findings- and the inhabitants of earth begin to look like the very first gentrifying family in what was once a very bad neighbourhood. (This also suggests that a century of pissing broadcast signals out into space might be the equivalent of going swimming in murky water at sunset with a bleeding leg.)

Any of these observations throw the common magical practice of planetary or stellar propitiation into a startling new light. You could make the case that it is a faintly alarming form of ancestor worship. Thus you have no need to join a space cult. You are probably already in one.

A 'True' Necronomicon

The title of this chapter comes from one of the most important works of fairly lore ever written, the brainchild of a seventeenth century Scottish minister known as Robert Kirk. His goal in collating fairy lore was to demonstrate the reality of non-human intelligences, 'second sight' and a theistic worldview against the growing tide of Scientific Materialism. He was Charles Fort on a mission.

Collating the weird was ever the role of the wizard. And the weird we have access to at this stage of human history would make Kirk's or Fort's mouths water. Lovecraft opened his story, *The Call of Cthulhu*, with the famous opening lines:

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the

piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

Our goal is to correlate the mind's contents: The implications of psi research. The implications of astronomy. The implications of directed panspermia. The implications of Whitley Strieber's *Communion* event. The implications of Pi being found at the subatomic level and also encoded into the dimensions of the Great Pyramid. The implications of Russian cosmonauts not seeing aliens but dead relatives and the Archangel Michael once they got out of the earth's gravity well. The implications of a nuclear weapons signature in the Martian atmosphere. Correlate away!

Whatever is 'really' going on, the story will be weird. And exploring in these directions may make quite a few sacred cow burgers among the more virulent devotees out there in the magical community. But it is important to remember these explorations 'de-spiritualise' nothing. Rather they bring some aspects of 'the spiritual' into the realm of the measurable, the *correlatable* - probably at a scale not previously encountered in recorded history. We must not waste this opportunity. Robert Kirk would not have wasted this opportunity. Robert, son of James.

James Kirk

EIGHT

REALITY OF THE RULERS

STUDY HOW POWER AND WEALTH WORK FOR MORE THAN A SINGLE SECOND AND YOU will be wearing a tinfoil hat before you know it. Today's magicians often have too little experience with either power *or* wealth to have formed a workable map for navigating how the casino works and who are the real croupiers. This was not always the case. John Dee is largely responsible for putting the idea of a British Empire in Elizabeth I's head. The Hermetic underground arose as a result of the political machinations of the Counter-Reformation and central Europe's changing landscape; 'taking dark' their plans for universal education and the elevation of individual liberty. And before all of these were the magical tin-foil hatters *par excellence*, the Gnostics.

In the words of the "grandfather of Gnostic Studies", Hans Jonas, the rise of the Gnostics 'is the first time in history that the radical ontological difference of man and nature has been discovered and the powerfully moving experience of it given expression in teachings strange and suggestive. The rift between man and nature was never to close again.'

Eighty years of scholarly confusion surrounds what the Gnostics meant by 'nature' in this context. Were they life deniers, suspicious of fleshly experience? In some sense yes, this is what is meant by 'nature'. But there is also the capitalised 'Nature', just as there is capitalised 'Necessity'. Nature is the totality

of the conditions of reality in which we find ourselves. This includes physical limitations but *also political ones*. Gnosticism may rightly be described as an alien religion in that it explores mankind's *cosmic alienation*; the belief that this is not all there is to life or to being a human.

This collection of movements arose during a reactionary and rebellious time. The religious institutions of the eastern Mediterranean had little to offer. The Empire was corrupt and lacked any local participation. Some kind of cosmic apocalypse –typically an extreme climate event- was expected any day. Gnosticism was a mystic attempt to explore and catalogue these forces of oppression, stretching from the outer bounds of the stars down to the local magistrate; how they arose and what one should do about them. Their prescription to this cosmic malady was a mystic one, complete with freaky sex play and liberal use of entheogens. (Still waiting for my invite to that party.)

Because of this mystic solve, it is rather like trying to separate the ingredients of a bouillabaisse when pulling apart how the Gnostics saw the world, what was metaphor and what was political reaction. Consider how the Jews exiled to Alexandria would have thought of Hadrian, a man who declared himself a living god, levelled the Temple Mount and banned them from Jerusalem. As Tobias Churton points out in *Gnostic Mysteries of Sex*, one of the many names given to the false god who created the physical world was Saklas, meaning Fool, 'in the sense of a tragicomic stage impressionist, impersonating a Being beyond him and his comprehension. Like the man who identifies his soul with his ego, he just *gets in the way*.'

It is a curious twist of fate –one that leads to the unavoidable conclusion that something *wyrd* is happening in imperceptible realms- that the greatest tranche of Gnostic texts was discovered the same year that the vast infrastructure of the shadow state began its enormous build out. Lost for one and a half millennia, the Nag Hammadi texts were discovered in 1945, the final year of World War II. It was off to the races for all the black projects, spy games, surveillance technology and the other mechanisms of control we now experience after that. Pause to consider just how useful Saklas/'Fool' is as an idea when reading through the vain, warmongering ambitions of Hillary Clinton's leaked emails when compared to what she actually said in public. *These are fools that men adore; both their Gods and their men are fools.*

Magic has always been about seizing power or subverting it, the goal in either case being freedom from the conditions of reality in which the magician finds him or herself. Returning to that optimisation definition, magic as a *path* is about optimising for human experience. At basically any point in human history, this is the precise opposite goal 'The Rulers' have planned for you. Hence my preference for Catherine Austin Fitts's term 'Official Reality', rather than the more common Consensus Reality. It has never felt particularly consensual to me.

For reasons that appear to come down to personality type, large sections of the modern magical community display a cowardly avoidance of exploring where Official Reality ends and where we begin. This cowardice speaks volumes about any occult capacity they claim to have, as magic's great power has always been an ontological one. *This is what we do.* We map these dangerous roads not to defeat or change Power –the new boss is ever the same as the old one and it is politically and historically naïve to think otherwise- but to build better lives outside the grasp and beyond the site of monoculture.

Those who would dare claim Giordano Bruno as a spiritual ancestor would do well to remember it was monoculture that burned him. We do not belong here.

NINE

MOTHER OF THE GODS

THE TWO MAIN REASONS WE FIND PRACTICAL AND FOLK MAGIC INSIDE EVERY SINGLE religion on earth is firstly because it predates them all and secondly –almost by definition- because it suspiciously regards devotionalism as an irrelevance. Devotionalism is the largest cultural divide between contemporary American and European magic. This may be a monocultural holdover, given the differing levels of social prestige associated with religious belief. In Europe it is viewed with quiet embarrassment, in America it is loudly and publicly trumpeted.

Particularly when it comes to chaos magic, building your own optimal metaphysics becomes more challenging when you have to shoehorn it into whatever preferred version of a Supreme Being you have selected, as they all tend to be quite unsophisticated and clunky from a metaphysical perspective. Put simply, you are better off developing a regular meditation practice than trying to force a square Creator into a round hole.

It is worth pondering that our earliest spiritual beliefs appear to have viewed the Creator with the same complete disinterest that it seems to view us. Early folclorists and antiquarians considered this disinterest to be a sign of the natives' savagery –as if they were too stupid for a Biblical conception of God- but precisely the opposite is true. What Creator god worth its salt would give even

the slightest shit about a sacrificed goat or how often you masturbate? Besides, there is an element of self-respect here. *He's just not that into you.* It is the neuroses-inducing idiocy of a personally approachable universal creator that is the savage belief. (Had Meister Eckhart been a Victorian explorer, Christianity would have put a better foot forward than it did with the retired vicars of the nineteenth century or the happy-clappy, fly over morons wandering about Africa and the Amazon today.)

Any way, all of that being said, you may as well have some workable formulation of a Creator that does not get in the way of the performance of magic but can be brought out and dusted off if ever you are called upon to dedicate a yacht or baptise somebody's child or something.

Chaos

Despite not (consciously) being part of the original thinking around Pete Carroll's selection of the name, 'chaos magic', a possibility emerges from an esoteric analysis of the word itself. A Greek term, *kaos* means the void, the abyss, the First Created Thing. The word derives from the Proto-Indo-European term for *gaping*, or *yawning*, as in an opening mouth, a primal scream issuing from behind ancient teeth.

For those of you who have read my *StarShips: A Prehistory of the Spirits* or, even better, Dr Witzel's *The Origins of the World's Mythologies*, chaos is that which is formed by the separation of the Sky Father from the Earth Mother – the cornerstone piece of the 30,000 year old Laurasian cosmology. This gap/gape/yawn known as chaos allowed the creation of all life and light in the universe. It is built of it.

Tiamat

Obtaining a clear picture of the earliest Sumerian cosmology is currently, and may always be, impossible. *The Epic of Creation*, which describes Marduk's defeat of the great chaos dragon, Tiamat, is not the oldest, but it is reasonable to suggest that some of its themes are dramatically older than the first appearance of the tablets upon which the tale is written. Firstly, Marduk assumed many of the stories and attributes of earlier gods when he rose to

political prominence. Secondly, the ‘creation of the universe out of the corpse of a dismembered dragon/monster mother’ my theme is sufficiently widespread to suggest a very early date of conception. Finally, the whole story appears to be, at least in part, about local struggles for succession among the rulers of the various city states, with Tiamat representing older regimes and Marduk representing the seizing of legitimacy by force. (You will find on YouTube a presentation I gave in Glastonbury called *An Archaeology of Dragons* that explores this topic in considerable depth, should you be interested.)

Tiamat is thus not only the vastly ancient dragon mother of the gods, she is also the mother of demons and magic and the source of divine authority. In Tablet III of the *Epic of Creation*, an emissary is despatched to the court of the gods who would make war against Tiamat, describing her plans:

Tiamat who bore us is rejecting us! She has convened a council and is raging out of control.

The gods have turned to her, all of them, even those you begot have gone over to her side, have crowded round and rallied beside Tiamat.

...

Mother Hubur [a title of Tiamat as Sea Monster of Creation], who fashions all things, contributed an unfaceable weapon:

She bore giant snakes, sharp of tooth and unsparing of fang. She filled their bodies with venom instead of blood.

She cloaked ferocious dragons with fearsome rays, and made them bear mantles of radiance, made them godlike, chanting “Whoever looks upon them shall collapse in utter terror! Their bodies shall rear up continually, and never turn away!”

The cosmic nature of Tiamat is made clear in the next few lines, which are a transparent reference to an early form of the zodiac, and thus all of Creation.

She stationed a horned-serpent, a *mušhuššu*-dragon, and a *lahmu*-hero, an *ugallu*-demon, a rabid dog, and a scorpion-man, aggressive *ūmu*-demons, a fish-man, and a bull-man, bearing merciless weapons, fearless in battle.

Her orders were so powerful they could not be disobeyed. In addition she created eleven more likewise.

Demonstrating Tiamat's army is celestial and tied to the ancient magical notion of divine or 'right' kingship, she elevates her champion and lover (and son/grandson), Qingu, to 'command of the assembly' of the stars/gods, and sits him upon a 'throne'.

"I have cast the spell for you and made you greatest in the gods' assembly! I have put into your power rule over all the gods!"

You shall be the greatest for you are my only lover! Your commands shall always prevail over all the Annunaki!"

She gave him the Tablet of Destinies and made him clasp it to his breast.

"Your utterance shall never be altered. Your word shall be law!"

Best laid plans, eh? In Tablet IV, Marduk quickly defeats Qingu, 'counts him among the dead gods', seizes the Tablet of Destinies and presses it to his own breast, conferring authority upon himself. Marduk then turns to Tiamat, whom

he has already captured. It is here that both the true antiquity of the tale is revealed, as well as Tiamat's potential usefulness in yacht dedication and whatever other sundry prayers you may require.

The Lord [Marduk] trampled the lower part of Tiamat, with his unsparing mace smashed her skull, severed the arteries of her blood, and made the North Wind carry it off as Good News.

His fathers saw it and were jubilant: they rejoiced, arranged to greet him with presents, greetings and gifts.

The Lord rested and inspected Tiamat's corpse.

He divided the monstrous shape and created marvels from it. He sliced her in half like a fish for dry ing.

Half of her he put up to the roof of the sky, drew a bolt across and made a guard hold it. Her waters he arranged so they could not escape.

He crossed the heavens and sought out a shrine. He levelled Apsu, dwelling of Nudimmud. And the large temple, which he built in its image, was called Esharra.

In the great shrine Esharra, which he created as the sky, he founded cult centres for Anu, Ellil and Ea.

...

He fashioned stands for the great gods. As for the stars, he set up constellations corresponding to them.

...

He founded the stand of Neberu to mark out their courses, so that none of them could go wrong or stray. He fixed the stand of Ellil and Ea together with it, opened up gates in both ribs, made strong bolts to left and right.

With her liver he located the heights; he made the crescent moon appear, entrusted Night to it, and designated it the jewel of the night to mark out the days.

Tiamat is not only the Mother of the Gods and the Mother of Magic -the entire universe is made out of her. Marduk may have done some very graphic rearranging of the cosmic furniture, but he cannot end the only thing that exists. Here then, is a way of rolling up an Animist universe into a form suitable for devotion should the desire strike you.

Mother of the Gods

Like so much of Ancient Greek cosmology, the Mother of the Gods my theme was imported from Eurasia. This is seen in the race of beings, the Titans, that precede the Gods, but also in the existence of actual 'Mother of the God' types, including Rhea. Within this context, the supremely ancient form is approached in a way most amenable to humans. I recommend the *Orphic Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* as translated by Athanassakis and Wolkow, which I would include below were it not for Johns Hopkins University Press's absurd copy right requirements and costs (doubly hilarious as the translations are easily found online). A small, copy right friendly segment will have to suffice, if only to demonstrate the obvious Near Eastern symbolism surviving into Ancient Greece:

Yoke your swift chariot drawn by bull-slaying lions,

And join our prayers, O mighty goddess.

...

You are queen of the sky; in the cosmos yours is the throne, the throne in the middle, because the earth is yours, and you give gentle nourishment to mortals.

In any case, it does not matter much. This form recurs through mythology and some early magical texts as the Mistress of Beasts and very probably the Lady of the Mountain. She is best approached via an examination of the Mysteries of one of her many descendants and the being that best encodes her dual-function of unstoppable destruction and conference of kingship, Inanna or, more recently, Babalon. There is deep insight here that, in a very literal sense, cannot be put into words.

Go looking for the Mother of the Gods and She will find you.

TEN

OLD SCRATCH

IN THE WEST, IT IS HARD TO ARGUE THAT THERE IS ANY VIABLE MAGICAL TRADITION *without* Old Scratch. Witness the hundreds of peculiar landscape features with the name 'Devil' in them: Devil's Elbow, the Devil's Teeth, the Devil's Steps. Many of these sites have long been loci of Fortean and UFO Phenomena, pointedly reminding us of the Old Master's ancient Trickster status.

Iberian folk magic, as a further example, seems to have retained –possibly by way of the Bogomils and thus back to the Gnostics- the belief in the Devil as Demiurge, as Lord of the World. In this conception, all earthly matters –and also all sorcery- were his domain. It was not worship that caused the witch to seek him out. It was just good business. She would still be in church that Sunday. Similarly, the spirit lists of the Central European grimoires invariably have him in there somewhere, where he usually fulfils the equivalent function as he does for the less literate classes.

Moving into the New World and combining these strands, we have Tituba – the slave girl at the centre of the Salem trials. Whatever was going on with her, it not only has associations with the Devil but also UFO phenomena, via her instructions from and spectral meetings with a “man in black”. This is from Peter Levenda's *Sinister Forces: Book 1*:

Tituba's account of leaving her body at night and traveling to the meetings, and then returning again before dawn, sounds eerily similar to some accounts of alien abductions. The existence of witch marks—odd bruises on one's body suggestive of pacts with the Devil, etc.—have their correlates with the stories of alien surgery and alien implants. In fact, Tituba first claimed that she flew to Boston through the air in both body and soul, but amended this fact later to state that she only appeared in Boston in the spirit.

Having already discussed commencing an operative relationship with the Devil in *The Chaos Protocols*, and otherwise earnestly recommending pursuing it further via a grimoiric vector, we turn instead to *book magic*, to the true and lasting worth of chasing the Old Master.

Lectio Satanas

When Margaret Murray's thesis of a surviving pagan witch cult in western Europe finally collapsed, it took with it the notion that witches were a continuous survival of some sort of moon goddess cult. Unfortunately it also took with it the false-assumption that witches had nothing to do with the Devil, and the notion that the Devil is 'really' Pan or the Horned God of the Celts inexplicably survived. In his landmark study, *Lucifer: Princeps*, Peter Grey observes:

The Murray thesis... and Wicca went on to ostracise anti-clerical Satanism to make the budding nature religion palatable for the newspaper readers of middle England. Lucifer was not entirely absented, but presented via Charles Godfrey Leland's *Aradia* as a name for the Roman god of light, and coupled with the goddess Diana. It is soft focus scholarship at its worst.

It is soft focus scholarship because it completely misses any number of magically relevant vectors that led into the great storehouse of ideas that became the Devil. These include the esoteric symbolism of the Fall and its implications for the descent of spirit into matter, the presence of Devil-analogues such as Set/Typhon in the Greek Magical Papyri and early grimoires, the Devil's association with the Nephilim, Watchers and other barely-remembered spirit contact events, the fate of Babylon, and what rebellion and the seizing of divine kingship imply for the Laurasian magical worldview. When 'Lucifer' is actually found in Roman mythology, it is as a minor personification of early-morning atmospheric phenomena. As for the 'Horned God' associations, these were preceded by conceptions of the Devil as a serpent, dragon, goat, ram, sea monster and any number of theriomorphs.

Studying the 'barbarous names of evocation' in the Greek Magical Papyri, the magician learns that different divine names and concepts are moved about, combined and recombined. They can be performed as is to great effect, but they can also be picked apart and followed along separately to their origin. It is the same with the Devil. It is a polyvalent, pulsing phenomenon sitting at the very heart of the western magical tradition. It is encountered via spellwork and explored via *lectio satanas*.

Baphomet

The Devil as he is most commonly encountered by chaos magicians is Baphomet, where he/she offers a very specific form of *lectio satanas*. Baphomet and the Devil are not functional equivalents. Rather, Baphomet may well be the most interesting form the Devil has assumed in the past couple of centuries, at least in the Old World.

The now-familiar iconography by which we best know him/her comes to us via the nineteenth century occultist, Eliphas Lévi. Baphomet is depicted as bi/omnisexual, with a lamp of wisdom between its horns, winged and cloven-hooved, with a mercurial caduceus in its lap, and indicating the Hermetic axiom of 'As Above, so Below' by pointing to the heavens with one hand and the earth with its other one. Given that Pete Carroll is principally responsible for the prominence of Baphomet among chaos magicians, we shall leave it up to him to interpret what Lévi was conveying. From his *Epoch: The Esotericon*

[I]n one extraordinary image Lévi, the ex-priest and political rebel turned magus, presents to sexually conservative and still fairly religious yet increasingly scientific society, a vision of human aspiration as 'god of this world', a figure which encompasses the earliest shamanic conceptions of the life force on earth, pagan representations of it as Pan, the monotheist's denigration of it as the Devil, and the ever present but often hidden ideal of Humanity (of both sexes) in pursuit of promethean and luciferic enlightenments.

For the modern magician, Baphomet is a symbol bomb. Meditation on and examination of Lévi's image brings into focus the vast majority of the contemporary western esoteric system. But push on that door just a little bit harder and it swings open to reveal centuries of ambition, conspiracy, extradimensional phenomena and quests that may ultimately reshape what we know about world history.

Lévi picked the word up from some of the accusations made against the Templars during their trial. Scholarly consensus –a category I typically consider has as much intellectual weight as a flock of chickens in a thunderstorm- tells us that the accusations of worship of 'Baphomet' levelled at the Templars probably derives from a mis-rendering of 'Mohammed' rather than the more esoteric 'baph-metis' or 'wisdom baptism'. Be that as it may, from a *lectio satanas* perspective, drawing a line back to the Templars drops us, once again, right at the sweet spot between terrestrial and spiritual power, right back to the *Reality of the Rulers*.

The Templars were the world's first transnational legal entity, whose sole purpose was military in nature, whose funds and fundraising were entirely out of the hands of local dukes and kings. Theirs was the first fulltime standing army since the days of the Roman Empire and theirs was the first-ever European army. This is a surprising outcome for an order of just nine knights, whose formation –although it is doubtful any one ever believed this- was

allegedly to protect pilgrims heading to the Holy Land. Not that they'd have been able to see these unprotected pilgrims given they spent all their time digging under the Temple Mount. (For reasons that have never been satisfactorily explained.)

The rise and rise of the Templars occurred simultaneously with the equally mysterious Gothic Cathedral building project and the first stirrings of the Classical World in Europe for five centuries, arriving via the Islamic vectors of Norman Sicily and Moorish Spain. It was the Moorish route in particular that gave the Continent – and thus the western magical tradition- the marvellous troubadour current and, in particular, the Grail Romance. Most famous among the troubadour-derived tales is Eschenbach's masterpiece, *Parzival*, written in the opening years of the thirteenth century. Eschenbach claimed he received the story from a troubador named Kyot of Provence, who had in turn found it, written in Arabic, in the work of a Jewish astrologer named Flegetanis. Flegetanis encountered this tale in the Moorish magico-intellectual hothouse of Toledo. He told the story of a war in heaven, a war between the angels, with Lucifer -the Light Bringer- as its hero. During his defeat and fall from heaven, a stone fell from either his crown or his forehead (third eye) and became the Grail. This Grail, “whose name” Flegetanis “had read in the constellations” was no cup, but a green or *emerald* stone, called *lapsit exillis*.

With the benefit of eight centuries of hindsight, it is fairly clear the earliest Grail stories are about the survival and re-introduction of Hermetic wisdom – the knowledge of the stars and how we return to them- and *this* knowledge is associated with Lucifer. Thus, given all the Templars' strange excavations in the Holy Land and Egypt, we can never definitively rule out that at least some of them were not messing around with magic. As a result, for modern practitioners, Baphomet becomes a particularly marvellous stand-in for the whole process of re-enchanting the west.

One final note. It is interesting to ponder on the prominence of St John the Baptist among the Poor Knights, leading some to suggest they were secret adherents of the Johannite Heresy; the belief that St John was the ‘true’ Messiah. There is another synchrony stical possibility. St John the Baptist and Lucifer both shared a name.

Morningstar.

The Breaking of the World

There is the tantalising promise of some sort of infinite treasure dangled at the end of *lectio satanas*. During his long investigations into the origins of the world's mythologies, Dr Witzel created what he calls Pan-Gaean Mythology, a speculative construction of mankind's first ever cosmology, based on the distribution of various mythemes across the world. At a time depth of between 150,000 and 65,000 years ago, he speculated that mankind believed in a distant creator god who had long-departed earth. At some stage this creator god sent down a Trickster emissary from the sky to teach mankind culture and technology. This is either in response to humans violating a taboo, or we subsequently violate one using the skills we have learned from this emissary. Dr Witzel goes further – and I think he is right to do so – in suggesting this Trickster may have been a serpent. Snake, taboo, reception of knowledge not meant for mankind. It's starting to sound faintly familiar, yes?

If we look for the most likely stellar phenomena to be associated with this tale, it would be the appearance of Venus in the pre-dawn sky. It would be the Morningstar who first taught mankind. This suggests that what we consider a largely Near-Eastern belief – that it was the demons, Nephilim, Watchers, etc who taught mankind writing and metallurgy and so on – may in fact be an extremely old and more universal survival.

It also suggests it may be time to give the Devil his dues. And possibly watch *The Ninth Gate*.

ELEVEN

ON MYTHOLOGY (AND APPROPRIATION)

INEVITABLY, WHEN WE TALK ABOUT MYTHOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF CHAOS MAGIC, we are also talking about the impact of popular culture and that most histrionic of terms, 'appropriation'. These chimeras all exist on the story telling spectrum. They describe ways mankind -*all* of mankind- tells stories about ourselves. In a previous book, *Star.Ships: A Prehistory of the Spirits*, I rely on the work of mythologist, Dr Wendy Doniger, to open up and reclaim the power of comparison for a magical audience. Regarding this story telling spectrum, in *The Implied Spider*, she writes:

Narrative does not receive raw experience and then impose form on it. Human experience is inherently narrative; this is our primary way of organizing and giving coherence to our lives. But we can never give an exact account of our experience, any more than we can retrieve a dream without any secondary revisions or elaborations.

The dream analogy is important and has been compared to mythology since

the days typically described *in* myth. More recently, the titan of twentieth century mythological studies, Joseph Campbell said in one of his many public lectures:

Myths are public dreams; dreams are private myths. By finding your own dream and following it through, it will lead you to the myth-world in which you live. But just as in dream, the subject and object, though they seem to be separate, are really the same.

Mythology has this power because, as Dr Doniger observes, humans construct reality in a narrative fashion. Karen Armstrong, former-nun-turned-public-theologian, turns this observation into advice in *A Short History of Mythology*:

A myth is essentially a guide; it tells us what we must do in order to live more richly. If we do not apply it to our own situation and make myth a reality in our own lives, it will remain as incomprehensible and remote as the rules of a board game, which often seem confusing and boring until we start to play.

A myth then, is not a falsehood, but –to paraphrase Tolkien- a description of something that is in some sense eternal. On my bookshelves are collections of Maori mythology, First Nations Trickster stories from North America, a few dozen books on Classical and Near-Eastern mythology, Aboriginal creation myths and Chinese dragon stories. I fall into none of the cultural or ethnic groups from which these stories emerged, yet I devour the tales greedily, like a whale eating krill. I do not know what it is to ‘be’ Chinese or Maori. But then, I do not know what it is to ‘be’ the (white) woman living next door to me in London.

‘Appropriation’ is magic’s great bogey man. I have encountered it only

once in over twenty years. Most examples of appropriation that people yell about on the internet (ugh!) emerge from monoculture –where it certainly exists- and not from magic. But if you fail to grasp the difference between monoculture and magic then this is not the book for you anyway. A white girl wearing a First Nations headdress at a music festival has nothing to do with magic (and even less to do with good taste).

Finding inspiration and joy in the stories of other people is not only an essential component of magic, it is an essential component of being human. We can experience the wondrous differences expressed in people across time and space, but we can also be enriched by those moments of *connection*, those moments when we *understand* the deeper human components to mythology. Most people know this before they even begin their magical journey. Indeed, it is often the launchpad for it in the first place.

You can passionately love the story of the Maori forest god, Tane, without declaring yourself a Tohunga. Very occasionally you may find some person or group who have taken it too far, who have metaphorically declared themselves to be Tohungas. Walkaway. There is no surer recipe for madness than attempting to correct the whole universe, especially in the digital age. Walkaway and remember for as long as there have been magicians and mystics, there have been fraudulent ones. There have been fake fakirs, slippery shamans, manipulative monks and thieving theurgists. A close-knit, local magical community ensures the fraudulent soon seek out their marks elsewhere.

What you lose by avoiding cultural exploration for fear of appropriation is like visiting a tropical island and refusing to enter the water for fear of sharks. The risk/reward profile is way off balance. Western magic is a tale of dizzying hybridity -from the plains of Eurasia to the teeming streets of Alexandria, to the incense-filled drawing rooms of Lancaster Gate at the height of Empire. Ours is the original melting pot. And what we cooked were stories.

Comparison, Not Appropriation

There would be no magic without comparison. It is a supremely important tool for examining sameness and difference in the entirety of the human

experience. Too often comparison is jettisoned along with ‘appropriation’ thanks in large part to four decades of intellectual pipsqueaks in the academy receiving tenure for declaring you cannot compare anything to anything else. Wrong. You can and we should, particularly if we are interested in improving the efficacy of practical enchantment.

In his textbook, *Comparing Religions*, Dr Kripal provides six guidelines for effective comparison which must be added to the intellectual armoury of any chaos magician:

1. Always keep sameness and difference in some creative or constructive tension.
2. Always be aware of your own perspective as your perspective and do not confuse it with some universal human position. That is, strive to be as ‘reflexive’ as possible in your comparative practice.
3. Comparison works through comparing one religious/spiritual complex (A) to another religious/spiritual complex (B) through a third term, concept or experience (C) that derives from your own enquiry (as in point 2) which need not be found in either A or B. Examples of concepts (C) include sex, death, ghosts, divination, love or food. While one cannot claim the bodily experience of food consumption is experienced the same way in different spiritual complexes, but they are indeed experienced.
4. A and B should be compared as fairly as possible. This is done by ensuring they are roughly at the same level of sophistication or complexity when it comes to the concept, C, that you are comparing. Do not compare Christendom’s Hitler to Hinduism’s Ghandi, for instance if you are examining ethical norms and treatment of social minorities. Similarly, comparing the religious experience of orbital space flight between Russian Orthodox Christianity and Inuit Animism is probably not very useful. (Religious characterisation of space may well be, though.)
5. Do not choose a C that privileges the spiritual worldview of A or B. So do not compare the afterlife of Shinto practitioners and New Kingdom Egyptians on whether or not the souls make it through the Court of Osiris. Never use a religious text as the basis for universal comparison. Dr Kripal writes “That is not comparison. That is

special pleading. That is not the comparative study of religion. That is religion.”

6. Provoke and challenge universally. No worldview, including Materialist Scientific ones or your own, is immune from analysis. Comparison is the questioning of everything, *especially* one's own worldview.

Pop Culture

Those who consider Superman to be operationally equivalent to Apollo err just as much as those who consider that magic must remain completely separate from all forms of modern storytelling. It is the ‘little boxes on the hillside’ error that infects so much of the western tradition. If it’s not in a grimoiric look-up table –and more importantly if it’s not in the right *field* of said look-up table– then it is *off* the table.

Dealing with the former error first: not everything in popular culture can be used in magic because not everything in popular culture is a good story. In fact, most of it isn’t. *The Odyssey* is not equivalent to a reality TV programme because Homer’s narrative tells us something profound, enriching and timeless about being human. Approached correctly, something like *Star Wars* can do the same. In fact, Joseph Campbell considered George Lucas to be his greatest student. This is what Lucas said to Bill Moyers in a documentary about the great mythologist:

I'm telling an old myth in a new way ... myths help you to find your own hero's journey ... Everybody has the choice of either being a hero or not being a hero every day of their lives... It's not a grand thing. You don't have to get into a giant laser swordfight or blow up three space ships to become a hero.

Telling ‘an old myth in a new way’ is another way of saying that Lucas is stepping into that eternal ‘shape’ that gives mythological narratives their power.

Wendy Doniger got the name for her celebrated lecture mentioned above, *The Implied Spider*, from considering what this story 'stuff' was made of, and who was 'spinning' it:

In a... famous essay, [anthropologist Clifford] Geertz speaks of humans as animals suspended in webs of significance that they themselves have spun, webs of culture.[..] This is a useful metaphor for the comparatist if we take the spider to be... the shared humanity, the shared life experience that supplies the web-building material, the raw material of narrative to countless human webmakers... These human storytellers gather up the strands that the spider emits, like silk workers harvesting the cocoons of silkworms, to weave their own individual cultural artifacts... The implied spider generates, and is therefore implied by, the stuff that myths are made on... [W]e must believe in the existence of the spider, the experience behind the myth, though it is indeed true that we can never see this sort of spider at work; we can only find the webs, the myths that human authors weave.

You will recognise these webs only occasionally in popular culture, and certainly not on a Kardashian's Instagram. Chaos magic has been indelibly imprinted with this particular form of spider hunt because it rose to wider prominence during a brief moment of when a golden age of British comic writers overlapped with the rise of desktop publishing and the early days of the internet. There were a lot more webs woven through popular culture then. *The Invisibles*, *Twin Peaks*, *The X-Files*. Those days are not only long gone so that we have to look harder for webs, but the webs are now spun through a system of surveillance, propaganda, political control, manipulation and brain entrainment technology straight out of the nightmares of that very same brief golden age.

So we can still find the spider behind Spiderman, even if it is a little harder now. Just make sure it is Dr Doniger's arachnid and not Shelob.

Getting Psychology Wrong

Anecdotally, those resistant to exploring the relationship between psychology and magic seem to be those whose identity is invested in being a Super Powerful Wizard for Realsies or some High Priest of a god who Really, Really Exists Like the Way A Fish or a Toy ota Prius Exists. To think this way is to catastrophically fail at understanding human emotion, consciousness, psi effects, history in general and the history of psychology in particular. There is a fundamental misreading of the impact of Neoplatonism and all its monstrous children -such as Descartes and modern Materialism- behind this. Undervaluing the 'psychological' only emerges in a culture that has permanently separated the mind from the matter. We must do better.

There is something profound and inextricable in the relationship between mythology, psychology and consciousness effects that mean they can never be approached separately, however invested one is in a particular view of themselves. In the now-famous (and readily available on YouTube) 1988 documentary, *Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth*, the man himself said:

With their discovery that the patterns and logic of fairy tale and myth correspond to those of dream, the long discredited chimeras of archaic man have returned dramatically to the foreground of modern consciousness.

Here is where chaos magic departs slightly from Dr Doniger in whether or not the spider is simply *implied*. It is probably hugely important that not only do myths follow dream logic, but that engaging with them produces real world effects. When Jung was undertaking the dream/myth/symbol work that became *Red Book*, he and his family would regularly experience poltergeist effects in the tower he built on the shore of Lake Zürich. It is commonly observed that many of western magic's words, such as 'spell' and 'grimoire' derive from words associated with 'speech' and 'story telling'. There is a power in telling stories –particularly resonant, mythological ones- that you ignore at your own peril.

Ignorance is perilous not only because you may lose the path or fall prey to some other human's story, it appears something else is spinning webs through culture and it is not us. After decades of ufological research, Dr Jacques Vallée came to the conclusion that the goal of these phenomena was to impact human culture and mythology, which he describes in his journals as "the most powerful force on earth." If a (presumably non-human) intelligence or intelligences wanted to shape or impact human culture, it would bypass politics entirely and operate in the realms of dreams and the unconscious. The proverbial saucer would never land on the White House lawn because it is far more effective to land in the cultural imagination.

And yet this is the field of research many 'super serious wizards' think 'isn't real magic'! (The good ones grow out of it.) It is fascinating to consider how and where the extradimensional has had an impact without an acknowledged awareness that it has done so. For this personally important example, in place of 'extradimensional', we shall use 'Faery'.

During a trip to Oxford for an exhibition of magical books at the Bodleian library, I learned that Tolkien's son, when he was young, would have regular nightmares of a monstrous owl that would appear in his room and peer down on him from the furniture or the foot of the bed. Tolkien named it 'Owlamo', sketched it –the original was in the exhibition- and this "seemed to rob it of its power" he later recalled.

The paranormalists among you will recognise the owl as a defining symbol for Whitley Strieber's 'Visitors'. The association between owls and these phenomena is extremely long-lived. (I'm writing this chapter in the British Museum members' room, which sits directly under the famous Queen of the Night plaque from the Old Babylonian period, which depicts a goddess/demoness flanked by two owls.) They are silent, nocturnal, predatory *watchers*. Given the definitions of mythology's power and function that open the chapter, it is interesting to discern the presence of the owl/Visitor motif in the home of the man who would go on to discover Middle Earth, the richest English mythic landscape ever created. Where these forms emerged from is a place Tolkien called 'Faery'. Tolkien scholar Verlyn Flieger writes "no great leap of imagination is needed in order to see that... Faery was as necessary for his own spiritual health and complete functioning as sunlight for his physical

life.” His own close friend and fellow Inkling, C. S. Lewis once wrote:

Myth is the isthmus which connects the peninsular world of thought with the vast continent we really belong to.

If you are a chaos magician, you are a mythologist. And probably a thief.

TWELVE

ON ADVENTURISM

A GOODLY CHUNK OF THE WORDS USED IN MAGIC ARE ASSOCIATED WITH ADVENTURISM. *Astral travel*, shamanic *journeying*, Hedgecrossing, vision *questing*. Terence McKenna once said that, apart from psychedelics, nothing is as boundary-dissolving as travel. There is no getting around the fact that wizards should have adventures. It comes with the territory the way feet come with podiatry.

As to why adventurism is inherent in magic, that is probably quite a deep question. It is perhaps overly deterministic for this readership to suggest it is some sort of inherited deep structure from mankind's two hundred and fifty thousand year hunter gatherer period (compared to our brisk ten millennia of settled agriculture) but there is probably something in there. The reality is if you didn't go adventuring you would starve and die.

There is also a deeper, mythic component which may even tantalisingly suggest something about the structure of reality itself. Most esoteric traditions settle on the 'purpose' of the universe being an experience of itself. The journey –the adventure- may well be a microcosmic expression of the universe experiencing the universe, rather than sitting at home on the unmanifest couch, fondling the cat and ordering pizza via an app. Everything about our experience of life suggests it is to be interpreted in a narrative fashion and the most widespread narrative found on earth is that of Joseph Campbell's

Hero's Journey.

People seeking the 'meaning' of life are perhaps heading in the wrong direction or, put another way, circling around and around in their kitchen. Humans do not appear to be seeking meaning so much as *experience*. Experience of the other, experience of the new, experience of the numinous. It certainly feels, in the experience of experience, that there is a resonant effect from one's physical life out into the entire cosmos.

Wizards, then, should have significant lives. If this does not interest you, then I suggest you find yourself a cheaper hobby, such as collecting the art of Damien Hirst or heroin addiction.

The Art of War for Wizards

Arguments against the need for adventurism in magic are as shallow as they are moronic, and I have heard them all: That it is somehow neo-colonialist –as if white Europeans are the only ones to go adventuring. Such an attitude denies 95% of the earth's population their humanity. Or that it is genderist –as if Aboriginal women never fished, hunted or quested. Adventure does not require *machismo*, only courage, and the most courageous people I have ever met have all been women. Most laughable of all is that it is classist because it costs money. However pleasant the experience may be, business class flights to seven-star resorts on the Arabian Gulf are not adventures (unless your flight is hijacked). Indeed, the whole point of the adventure –reflected in the story of the Major Arcana of the Tarot- is that one proceeds out into the world with nothing and returns as the universe entire.

Any outlays associated with adventuring should not be seen as costs but as investments. To paraphrase McKenna, those who have dissolved the most boundaries are best positioned to see opportunities and *opportunities multiply as they are seized*. The CEOs with the most global experience tend to be the most well-paid. We live in a time of chaos –I have written an entire book, *The Chaos Protocols*, about how to proceed through such times- and chaos is the great, fecund mangrove swamp of opportunity.

When seeing costs as 'investments', this is not for a second to suggest that adventuring is exclusively or even primarily economically motivated. It is an

investment in the non-monetary *you*. There is nothing for clearing up any residual, happy-clappy feelings about the potency of the natural world quite like having a mako shark breach right next to you as you ascend from a dive on Greenpeace's sunken *Rainbow Warrior*.

Adventurism speaks to the heart of what it is to practice magic. It is a seizing of things denied to you by birth or circumstance. It is a fundamental call of the universe's bluff. The famous seventeenth-century Portuguese Jesuit imperialist and thinker, António Vieira, put it thusly:

Nascer pequeno e morrer grande, é chegar a ser homem. Por isso nos deu Deus tão pouca terra para o nascimento, e tantas para a sepultura. Para nascer, pouca terra; para morrer toda a terra. Para nascer, Portugal: para morrer, o mundo.

To be born small and die great, that is to be a man. For this did God give us so little land for birth, and so much for the grave. To be born, a small piece of land; to die, the whole earth. To be born, Portugal; to die, the world.

A small place to be born in, the whole world to die in.

THIRTEEN

ON RITUAL

ANY NUMBER OF DEFINITIONS OF RITUAL, SPECIFICALLY MAGICAL RITUAL, HAVE BEEN floated over the last couple of centuries. Ritual is mythology in action. Ritual is dramatised psychology. Inevitably, this state of affairs leads to the oft-expressed, little-considered view that any intentional act can be a ritual.

‘Everything can be a ritual’ is a partial credit answer. Given the appropriate background context and experience, this is indeed the case. For those of us in the western traditions, you are best served by gaining some theatrical exposure, even something as simple as being an amateur stage hand or hosting ‘reading aloud’ evenings in your house will suffice. This is to be combined with an understanding of the shared history of theatre and Classical philosophy. They emerge from the same impulse and are attempts to answer the same, eternally-unanswerable question.

Stepping backwards in time from the Classical Age, we see the vast majority of Near-Eastern myths, but especially the Akkadian ones, were written in the bare-bones style of stageplays or performative texts. The stories from Babylon lack the descriptive imagery and sheer delight in vocabulary that one finds in Homer. Embellishments and flourishes were breathed into the texts by their narrators and singers, in real time, in the act of story telling. Our magical ancestors would struggle to define mythology as something separate

to ritual. Magic happens in the performance of it, not in its silent contemplation. Any one else who misspent their largely-sexless adolescence playing role playing games would be aware that games nights are often accompanied by peculiar states of consciousness and even the odd poltergeist effect.

We may presume that role playing games and theatre and the singing of Gilgamesh are themselves distant echoes of supremely ancient forms of what twentieth century scholars called Sympathetic Magic; the shamanic mimicry of prey animals on the Steppes or the donning of masks that resembled faces glimpsed at the edges of the campfire light. I rather suspect that the first ever magical ritual performed on this planet was a *matching* of the human form with some observed natural phenomena, perhaps a swaying in time with the wind through the branches of the trees or the movement of a hand following the flight of a bird.

Physical ritual is magic's primal form and it is designed to resonate with or echo something in the wider universe. (Think back to the previous chapter and how the Hero's Journey can be viewed as a long-term ritual.)

Understood in this way, ritual's resonant properties offer undeniably superior methods of achieving psychological health when compared to much of what is for sale via the allopathic medical industry. One of the most remarkable books I have read in years is Alejandro Jodorowsky's *Manual of Psychomagic*. The legendary filmmaker devised hundreds of small ritual performances –psychoanalysis in action- for achieving emotional resolution. My personal favourite is his psychomagical cure for homesickness: get a relative in your homeland to send you ten pounds of earth, which is placed in an open container. Each day, the operant sits with his/her feet in the 'earth footbath' for half an hour while watching television or reading. When the operant is next in his/her homeland, he/she should also plant a tree.

Any magician reading Jodorowsky's recommendation cannot fail to be impressed. Game recognises game.

Getting Their Attention

At different times in the history of western magic, the spirits have either been considered the sole source of magical 'power' or one of a number of factors

that optionally contribute to a successful outcome. The changes in opinion were largely determined by the church's prevailing attitude to sorcery at the time. Thus, Renaissance magician, Marsilio Ficino, managed to avoid ending up on a pyre by opting for a 'natural magic' that relied on the unseen energies inherent in Creation rather than trafficking with demons and faeries.

With the slightly-improved insight that has come from a century of psychical research, phenomenology and UFO experiences, we arrive at the premise that there is probably quite a bit to this whole 'spirit thing'. These findings provide us with a cleaner definition of what specifically magical ritual (are there any other kinds?) might be about. Christopher Knowles says that magic is all about "getting their attention". A spirit model—and attracting the attention of the spirits—empowers us to re-enchant the world. We can also cast our eyes back to the past and spy 'getting their attention' in the ritual behaviour of our ancestors. Consider what is conjured in the mind's eye when reading some excerpts from *The Third Hymn to Inanna: The Holy One*:

The people of Sumer parade before you.

They play the sweet ala drums before you.

The people of Sumer parade before you.

I say "Hail!" to Inanna, Great Lady of Heaven!

They beat the holy drums and timpani before you.

...

The people compete with jump ropes and coloured cords.

The people of Sumer parade before you.

...

The ascending kugarra priests raise their swords before you.

The priest, who covers his sword with blood, sprinkles blood,

He sprinkles blood over the throne of the court chamber.

The tigi-drum, the sem-drum and the ala-tambourine resound!

In the heavens, the Holy One appears alone.

My Lady looks in sweet wonder from heaven.

She looks in sweet wonder on all the lands,

And on the people of Sumer as numerous as sheep.

When you realise the hymn is but a piece of a wider ritual celebration and that, if the hypothesis holds, there is 'something' on the other end of the line, it is hard to escape the conclusion these Sumerians probably got the attention of that 'something'. While the economics of large-scale civic festivals honouring the planet Venus are currently unfeasible down on a personal level, the past offers us both aspiration and inspiration for deepening our own ritual activity and presumably assisting our attention attraction efforts.

Large civic attempts to attract attention have informed imperial architecture for centuries. London is one of the world's great pageant cities and as you move about its heart, you are struck on multiple levels by the deliberate use of space, buildings, parks, Egyptian obelisks, statues of long-dead monarchs and sightlines down processional routes all designed to reinforce the 'spell' of royal power. Indeed, whether it is chicken or the egg, empires tend to have ritual cities at their core. Rome, both ancient and in the Hermetic sun temple design of the Vatican today. Paris, with its similarly-inspired Hermetic sightlines down to Notre Dame and its smattering of pilfered Egyptian *objets*. London, with its most famous resident ritualist parading herself up and down the Thames in gilded gold boats as well as the peculiar traditions of the world's oldest tax haven, the City itself. And Washington DC, with its haphazard smattering of Masonic iconography and curious foundational rituals.

Few people today realise just how intentional these designs really were, or

that the planners themselves were perfectly aware of what they were doing. Few magicians spend enough time considering what the combination of these ritual landscapes and the cities' respective civic calendars are actually doing on a magical level. This is doubly-disappointing because it not only means one is more likely to fall victim to the 'spell', it also means the magician is leaving some very useful tech on the table.

The same can be said of magicians' surprising disinterest in the odd ritual behaviour of organisations such as NASA. If ritual is 'getting their attention' then drenching rockets in Egyptian symbolism and firing them at the planets and moons of traditional astrology *is* a ritual. Why do you suppose there are so many odd consciousness effects in astronauts and strange things sometimes spied from livestreamed cameras attached to the international space station? Such disinterest on the part of so-called magicians may well be professional jealousy. Nothing we could do could possibly get the attention of the Intelligence of Mars more than *visiting* it. True as that may be, the option of learning from these rituals is still available to us.

Offering and Sacrifice

The spirit world quickly becomes fascinated by sacrifice, probably because it is a rarely observed event. Almost no other creature does it and those that do are alarmingly intelligent -approaching humans in their use of language and symbolic thinking- such as the corvid, octopus or elephant.

Sacrifice is fascinating because it is a topological rearrangement of the universe, either in its material form –burnt offerings, ritual murder, etc- or in its temporal form –fasting, sexual abstinence, etc. Rearranging the topology of the universe is almost by definition a godlike power given that that is probably how the whole enchilada was created in the first place. To echo or mimic that is certainly a very good way of getting attention.

Synchromysticism as Kabbalah

How does the Technical Hermetica 'work'? How did Ficino's system of planetary ritual magic 'work'?

Simply put, both work because some things are associated with other things. Symbols recur, patterns repeat, sounds heard on a radio associate with similar outcomes in your life. An Animist universe speaks a language of symbol and synchronicity. To you, to itself, to the birds.

This awareness underpins systems of magical correspondence the world over –such as practical Kabbalah or Technical Hermetica. They are all parsed through their own worldviews –most of them too textually based for my own liking- and focusing on one or using one to ‘explain’ another is to throw away the candy bar and eat the wrapper.

These systems are indications that the universe speaks in a symbolic language –which is why ritual works in the first place- but they do not constitute the entirety of the language. They are at best small phrasebooks picked up at an airport on your way to Babel. Certainly use them but use them in a wider synchronomystic context: they provide interpretations, *translations*, of the language of the universe.

Leaning into the universe

The *Rune Soup* definition of magical ritual is that it is a non-specific probability enhancer. You can perform them as needed, of course, but -once your divinations and regular enchantments are up and firing- you can also discern when resonant ritual times are coming back around again and *lean into* them. These repeated times of ‘resonant opportunity’ may or may not be related to astrology but they certainly appear to ‘work’ in the same way.

A personal example may be illustrative. From the late summer of 2015, I began to discern a string of curious personal ‘replays’ that matched the same time in 2013... a half-year that resulted in the culmination of an unsatisfying career phase as well as a dramatic rise in wealth and opportunity. So I spent those autumn and winter months deliberately replaying some of the high points of the same period in 2013: we went to the same market towns in Wiltshire, we ate at the same restaurants, I even re-read some of the books I was reading and re-watched some of the television programmes I was watching in 2013. In the end, the same outcome was achieved from both a career and success perspective. I cannot be sure if that would have happened without the ritual

behaviour but why would I ever risk finding out the hard way?

One of Aleister Crowley's personal wealth magic anecdotes seems to be cut from the same cloth. He once wrote about needing money so he behaved as if he already had it, taking himself out to a lunch of oysters and champagne. Both these stories suggest a need for a wider understanding of ritual/resonance and -like so much about magic- argue for an interpretation focused more on *dialogue* with the unseen rather than the one-way communication method of barking your requests at it.

This only comes with practice. What Crowley failed to mention is that after years of regular magical work, it seems likely that he could 'sense' his own future state of having money and performed the actions required to 'bring that state down to earth'/resonate with it.

Without this learned ability, most people who try the 'oysters and champagne' approach just end up a little bit drunker and a little bit poorer. So there's a second personal anecdote for you.

FOURTEEN

ON DIVINATION

A FULL EXPLORATION OF CARTOMANCY –ITS ORIGINS AND HOW TO PERFORM IT- IS TO be found in *The Chaos Protocols*. Without question, it is an essential skill for any chaos magician -or even just any creative type. Here we will attempt to describe the consciousness effects that underpin divination and then suggest a procedure that is not only a complete divinatory system in its own right, but is also a hugely useful training exercise that will improve your effectiveness with other divinatory systems as well as with seeing spirits and activating sigils.

Clairvoyance

Divination is ascertaining the future state of a person or an object. There are several ways this probably ‘works’ and I expect one or more is in play with each successful act of clairvoyance.

1. Your present self makes contact with a future self that is in possession of the information such as the physical description of the man you are going to marry or the streetscape outside your future workplace.
2. You achieve telepathic contact with someone in the present who is in possession of the required information. This is commonly encountered when performing divination for another person.

3. You achieve telepathic contact with someone in the past or the future -alive or dead- who is in possession of the required information. I suspect a small majority of past life memories should be interpreted along these lines.
4. You achieve telepathic contact with an Other –be it yourself in a post-physical state, an extradimensional being, and so on. These can be particularly unreliable as the spirit world is not exactly known for its truthfulness.

Most –if not all- these hypotheses imply that there is not only a consciousness field underpinning reality but that it can function as some sort of ‘Akashic Hall of Records’ or whatever you wish to call it. As the saying goes, nothing lasts but nothing is lost.

Remote Viewing: The Chaos Magic Way

This is really a two-player game but I have yielded some interesting one-player results by purchasing some old postcards from the Notting Hill markets and having someone else slip them into some numbered envelopes. (The numbers are for recording purposes.) You could also get a friend to print off twenty random pictures from a Google image search.

General best practice suggests you should be sober, alert, well and even empty-stomached to yield the most accurate viewings. I time these for the morning after a fast day, which also means I have not consumed alcohol for over twenty-four hours -something I assume is a factor. Dr Russell Targ, founder of the Stargate Program, also suggests the session should occur in a dimly lit room. In London everything is dimly lit, so I can’t vouch for whether this helps or not.

Step 1

DECIDE ON THE TARGET. If you are working with someone else this should be one of a variety of oddly-shaped, multi-textured objects. Examples include plastic crocodile toys, hockey pucks, clay bricks, and so on. If you are working solo, randomly select a sealed envelope. In either case, the target should not be

known to the reader (and is better if it is also unknown to the assistant).

Step 2

ON THE LEFT hand parts of a blank sheet of paper, the reader begins recording her impressions: cold, wet, sharp, small, large, wood, metal, heavy, liquid. Also the reader sketches her impressions of what she sees. Always start with what is surprising or odd about the object, focusing entirely on the senses.

If, at any stage, the reader receives a clear impression of what the object 'is', such as a riverine landscape or a toaster, she writes that object on the right hand side of the page and 'dumps' it from her mind. It is extremely likely these impressions are what Ingo Swann called the 'analytic overlay'. The human mind, like nature, appears to abhor a vacuum and leaps to fill in the dots: A round object is... a ball! Except when it isn't.

Step 3

TAKE A BREAK FOR A FEW MINUTES. Make tea or just sit and breathe for a while. Then return your awareness to the paper and see if any additional impressions come to you. Particularly see if new impressions of earlier observations come to mind: it's cold... and it's also *shiny*. Or *green*. Or whatever.

Dr Targ observes that, in order to be right, you also have to be willing to be wrong. Do not overthink the process and remember that the best remote viewers (that we know of) on earth reached a level of accuracy between 50% and 75%. Wrong comes with the territory. It's not an exam.

Step 4

IF THERE IS room on the same sheet, summarise your impressions beginning with the ones you feel the strongest about, in descending order of confidence. Otherwise use a second sheet of paper.

Then make a call about what the object or target is. You can either say “it’s a toy crocodile or dinosaur”, or “it’s a small, plastic object. Probably a toy. It’s green and spiky.”

At this point, if you are working with a partner, he or she will then show you the object and talk you through the parts you got correct. I guarantee you will find things on the object that you *wanted* to describe but didn’t. Hence the need for practice.

Now, do it over and over. And over.

Divination for Fun and Profit

Perhaps the most famous remote viewing experiment -even making the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*- was when Russell Targ’s team called the week-end for the silver futures market nine times in a row, making \$120,000 in 1982 money. Each week, assistants selected objects that they would hand to the remote viewers at the end of the week, depending on whether silver was:

- Up a little.
- Up a lot.
- Down a little.
- Down a lot.

Trades were made accordingly and after the Friday bell, the corresponding object –a bottle of champagne, some old pancakes- were handed to the viewer. (Targ cautions they were unsuccessful the next year when they repeated the trial.)

There is a way to replicate this experiment using only a practitioner and an assistant. Select a market that is volatile and select an outcome that is binary. For example, the USD Index, and whether it is up or down.

1. Get two envelopes that say ‘up’ and ‘down’.
2. Have an assistant randomly select images/postcards and place one in each envelope in such a way that he/she does not see the images.
3. The viewer does a reading as described above.
4. The assistant opens both envelopes, without showing the reader, and

places a trade accordingly. If the reader is way off, do not place a trade.

5. At the end of the week, repeat the post-reading process, describing what the viewer got correct.

I haven't done this with real trades yet but it is important to realise that if you can get this right seven times out of ten, you have effectively unlimited money. At least, as Dr Targ warns, until the next year.

FIFTEEN

ON PRACTICAL ENCHANTMENT

"Life for a warrior is an exercise in strategy." Don Juan went on. "But you want to find the meaning of life. A warrior doesn't care about meanings."

- *A Separate Reality*. Carlos Castaneda.

PRACTICAL ENCHANTMENT IS NOT a path to spiritual development. But living in a universe where practical enchantment works does make that quest just a little bit easier.

The method I am best known for promulgating is a form of sigil magic, described in detail on *Rune Soup*. I've already contributed to moving this practice forward as a hugely effective form of practical enchantment so I am going to avoid it here. Every band gets tired of playing their old stuff. Probably the only thing I would add to the already-published process is to create sigils in one notebook, transfer the final designs to a second notebook, leave them for a day or two then copy onto your pieces of card, etc, from the second notebook. Endlessly returning to this simple –if elegant- system risks keeping the chaos magician perpetually in the shallow end of the pool. And the deep end is so much fun.

Practical enchantment is now commonly described as probability

enhancement. Which is really another way of saying 'creating luck'. Hopefully good luck. This is what Cunning Craft is, in all its myriad forms, with its herbs and bones and psalms and powders. Creating luck.

In Borneo, the Kantu people use an intricate system of ornithomancy –bird divination- to select the site to be cleared for that season's crops, principally the appearance of the scarlet-rumped trogon. Swidden farming is an unpredictable practice. An area of land that may seem suitable can be disastrous if there is too much or too little rain, or if the river is too low. Any number of factors in a hugely complex ecosystem can determine whether the Kantu eat or not. Thus any kind of systemic procedure for selecting agricultural sites will fail in fairly short order. Yet the Kantu do not starve.

Anthropologists presumed that the presence of these bird species conveyed something ecological about the quality of the soil in the typically poor-quality land of the Kantu. It turns out this is not the case at all, and it is precisely the random appearance of the birds that prevents any kind of systematic method from developing, thus ensuring site diversification. It is this diversification –this *chaos*- that gives the Kantu crops an over-the-odds chance of survival for that season. (The keen-eyed Animist would –and should- point out that even if the birds aren't saying something ecological, they are obviously saying something else.)

The lesson of the Kantu is one of harnessing probability. Of *leaning into* chaos, of pouring fuel onto burning chaos. The birds are an excellent metaphor for the physical components of practical magic: they are observably useless yet, *used correctly*, they work. They facilitate a dialogue between the Kantu and a location's probabilistic conditions that give the Kantu people an edge.

It is just so with practical enchantment. Universal prescriptions do not help you to drive to your own probabilistic conditions. What follows in the next part of the book are accelerants, incendiary devices, for your own personal quest for crop sites. Be very wary of a beginning-to-end 'recipe' for a spell. It may have worked for its author but unless that author is *you*, its impact will differ... or vanish.

From your very first act of practical enchantment you gain automatic entry into a conspiracy to re-enchant the world. The good news is you will

instantly find co-conspirators who will be your allies for life. The bad news is you will still be fighting for re-enchantment with your dying breath.

Welcome aboard.

A Note on Prayer

There is always a risk when presenting practical enchantment in such a way as to optimise the likelihood of your preferred outcomes that one can drain all the magic out of magic. Revisiting that least popular of practices -prayer- is a useful counterbalance.

Prayer has a lot of good data behind it these days. From the intentionality experiments of William Tiller to Elizabeth Targ's research that patients who are prayed for recover faster than those who aren't -even if the recipient is unaware he or she is being prayed for. Analysis of these data suggest prayer comes with its own best practices:

1. Group prayer works better than individual prayer, particularly if simultaneous praying is involved. Note, it appears more important for prayer to coincide in *time* rather than space. It is presumably better to have people praying for the same goal in the same location, but there is little observable impact on outcomes when distance is involved as long as simultaneity is observed.
2. Pray *for* a being rather than *to* a being. Examples include using phrasing such as "may your temples and holy places be restored, may the offering pyres burn high once again, may your name be on the lips and hearts of every seeker in the West." Then slip your own request in somewhere at the end. You would have to be possessed of a fairly rudimentary understanding of Divinity to suppose that this sort of flattery somehow 'tricks' a god. Rather it is likely that praying *for* something brings you further into alignment with its grace. As C.S. Lewis observed, 'prayer doesn't change God. Prayer changes you.'
3. Prayer, rather than magic, is where you set your will against the forces of darkness. You really can pray for world peace rather than enchant for it. Practical enchantment deals with the blurry, short end

of the probabilistic spectrum. Prayer calls in the cavalry.

Prayer, offerings and some spirit work exist on the same broad spectrum we might call interaction with the non-physical. Thus the differences between them usually come down to semantics. If it is at all helpful, consider the following:

Practical enchantment is how you construct a miraculous life. Prayer is how the miracles get in.

PART TWO
THE LONDONOMICON

SIXTEEN

ON INITIATION

INITIATIONS ARE LARGELY IRRELEVANT AND HAVEN'T REALLY BEEN PART OF THE western magical tradition since the end of the Classical Mysteries. If you want an apron or a badge, do not join an occult group but think about joining a society that has some actual clout, like Skull and Bones. Even the Rotarians qualify for discounts at some chain restaurants.

Dr Stephen Skinner observes two main reasons initiation is problematic in the West. Firstly, the line was broken so any initiation is -by definition- a reconstitution and hence cannot really deliver on its promises. Secondly, western 'initiations' are formed in a Masonic mode and are thus human-centric. This is in contrast to the Chinese traditions he compares them to that consider the aspirant to be initiated when he/she can successfully summon and bind the assigned class of spirits. It is only after that does the applicant move onto the next class of spirits. This not only seems to be a much more effective system, it is one we can reverse-engineer into the individual western magician's life by, you know, doing magic.

What do you suppose happened to mankind's first ever shaman? Who was around in Southern Africa almost a million years ago to teach her the Middle Pillar? Mircea Eliade wrote that all Creation stories were an attempt to explain or at least model mankind's rise to self-awareness. Even in Animist cultures,

which hold a more positive view of the physical world –although far from the totally positive one we commonly assume today - there is an awareness that reality is not quite as advertised. Something broke and let magic and technology in. ‘True’ initiation is a play-out of that reality and the subsequent practice of magic is proof that it stuck. In *The Sacred and the Profane*, Eliade writes:

[The initiated human] further believes that life has a sacred origin and that human existence realizes all its potentialities in proportion as it is religious – that is, participates in reality. The gods created man and the world, the culture heroes completed Creation, and the history of all these divine and semi-divine works is preserved in the myths. By reactualizing sacred history, by imitating the divine behavior, man puts and keeps himself close to the gods – that is, in the real and significant.

You will discern my profound ambivalence to the concept of ‘proper’ initiation by revisiting the chapter on ritual. If you start down this path, one way or another you will ‘get their attention’ and the myth cycle will play out in your life anyway. Jung recognised the same thing when talking about how the unacknowledged or ignored aspects of the unconscious will come to dominate your life if you do not face them. Eliade saw the same thing when he observed that modern culture continues to play out the initiatory shape, albeit in a declined form:

Very often the “struggle for life,” the “ordeals” and “difficulties” that stand in the way of a vocation or a career, in some sort reiterate the ordeals of initiation; it is after the “blows” that are dealt to him, the moral and even physical “suffering” and “torture” he undergoes, that a young man “proves” himself, knows his possibilities, grows conscious of his powers, and finally

becomes himself, spiritually adult and creative (the spirituality is, of course, what is understood as such in the modern world.)

Initiation will always find the seeker -she who has recognised that there is a crack in the world and decides to see if it is indeed how the light gets in. One starkly beautiful and quite tragic Creation story -what Dr Witzel would consider a Gondwana tale- comes from the Nandi people of West Africa. When they encountered the less technologically sophisticated Dorobo people of what is now Kenya, they assumed they were a more primitive human -the first peoples- and built or received this creation tale about them:

When God first came down from the heavens to prepare the present order of things, there were only three creatures here. The Dorobo man, the elephant and thunder. One day thunder said "what sort of creature is man, that he can turn over in his sleep? I have to get up to turn over." Elephant responded "I too have to stand up if I want to turn over in my sleep."

Note: It is interesting that what causes alarm for elephant and thunder is sleep proficiency, dream proficiency ... proficiency over the imaginal. Man has a separate inner world to the natural kingdom.

Thunder declares that it fears man and escapes to the heavens. Elephant mocks thunder for this, saying that man is only a small thing, so he shall stay behind. "But he is bad," thunder says. "He can turn over in his sleep."

Man is pleased that thunder has left, because he was afraid of thunder. He then goes to the jungle, fashions a bow and arrow and dips the arrow in poison. Man shoots elephant, who cries out in pain and raises his trunk to the heavens, calling on his friend, thunder, to save him. Thunder refuses. "I shall not take you, for you mocked me when I said that man was bad and you said he was small."

Elephant died and man became great in all the lands of the earth.

This story is emblematic of the Fall/violation-of-taboo/beginning-of-magic motif that not only underpins the Creation stories of this planet, but one that is ritually played out in initiation, typically ending in a restoration of the world, such as we find in the *Hermetica*. (It also has some personally pleasing ancient alien motifs.) We find the same thing in the story of Simon Magus who is - almost criminally - our most-ignored magical ancestor. In his apocryphal debate with the apostle Peter, Simon argues that the God of the Law is imperfect and -by definition- could *not* be the supreme god. A tenth century Syrian bishop puts some words in Simon's mouth:

“God willed that Adam should not eat of the tree; but he did eat; he, therefore, did not remain as God willed him to remain: it results, therefore, that the maker of Adam is impotent.[...]

For what reason on earth did God curse the serpent? For if he cursed him as the one who caused the harm, why did he not restrain him from doing so, that is, from seducing Adam? But if he cursed him as one who had brought some advantage, in that he was the cause of Adam's eating of the good tree, it needs must follow that he was distinctly unrighteous and envious...”

This was the logic Simon marshalled to defend his use of magic and trafficking with angels against the buzzkill apostle. Here again, magic enters the world through a crack, a taboo, a Fall. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the first time a child gets away with lying to a parent, he or she learns that they have a separate worldview -a separate inner reality- to the parent or parents. The *lie* demonstrates the separateness of self. It is that very separateness of worldviews that underpins origin stories. In Eden, everything is naked -not just the humans- but after violating the taboo Eve now knows it. In the Nandi tale, thunder knows that man has a separate worldview and becomes fearful. Initiation then, is a form of ritual as described in a preceding chapter as a resonance with or re-enactment of this moment of Creation.

Orders, viewed over a long enough timeline, are really just a pre-internet

way of delivering magical tech. 'Magic'-whatever that is- will find you. It probably already has, especially if you have taken my advice on adventuring. Should you wish to hurry it along, stay up all night on a beach, high on mushrooms, reading the Orphic Hymns aloud to the sea.

SEVENTEEN

THE SPELLS PARTICULAR

MAGICIANS ACCRETE SPELLS TO THEMSELVES LIKE BARNACLES ON A SHIP. EACH barnacle pattern is different although some high-level similarities may be observed among those who ply the same waters -and thus attract similar barnacle species. Movements of ships from port to port result in tech sharing among otherwise unrelated coastal ecosystems, and probably always have.

This marine metaphor can be taken to its inevitable conclusion with the suggestion that dry docking and examining one's own hull every now and again can improve overall ship functioning.

Generally -although not exclusively - my accreted spells run along early grimoiric lines as they work better for me. I have several explanations as to why this might be the case, which guarantees I will offend everyone.

Firstly, alignment with a more historically accurate version of the western tradition –not the post-Renaissance Neoplatonic, faux-Masonic, poorly-appropriated Ka-blahblah of the nineteenth century - is a gift that keeps on giving outside the magical circle. Peter Grey writes of rewilding witchcraft. A pivot towards the spirits of the grimoires and a diversity of engagement with those spirits -which includes the off-book approaches of the cunning men and accused witches of western Europe- achieves a similar aim to rewilding. In fact, it is part of the very same process: such a pivot reintroduces the wolves

back into a psychic ecosystem laid to waste by Golden Dawners; Neopagans; comic book fans masquerading as chaos magicians; and the timid psychologists of the twentieth century. So there is a net effect on the wider magical culture that I am unashamedly trying to achieve.

Secondly, grimoire-based spells might work better because it might just be 'better theatre'. I am passionate about history and so the act of lining up my own practical enchantment within an observable historical current may 'get me deeper in the zone', so to speak. It is worth pointing out that I think this explanation is highly unlikely, at least as a *singular* explanation any way.

Finally, a grimoire-based approach is a perfect match for phenomenological analysis. We may even call modern grimoire magic 'performative phenomenology'. Contained within the family trees of the various spirit lists are age-old recordings of Magonian encounters -from local monsters to foreign storm gods to the decans found painted on the inside of Middle Kingdom Egyptian coffins. Some are useful. Some are downright terrifying. Some needed to be invited in. Many needed to be exorcised away. If we are -as Dr Kripal observes- "cats in the library" then these spirit lists are as close to a card index that we in the west are going to get.

Magical 'powers', for want of a better term, are highly conserved across cultures. Having got divination and a broad spectrum practical enchantment approach (sigils) out of the way, almost everything else lines up under the following headings and these spells are no exception:

- Contact with the God/the spirit world
- Journeying to the spirit world
- Personal energy regulation
- Protection and banishing
- Creation of fetishes, use of naturally occurring objects

When viewed in conjunction with the recommendations in *The Chaos Protocols*, a complete system emerges, the context of which is to be found in *StarShips: A Prehistory of the Spirits*. There is method to this madness. Nonlinear experiences such as magic by definition do not submit themselves to linear explanations. It is an error of thinking brought over from a largely-American monoculture that there exists some kind of *7 Habits of Highly*

Effective Wizards checklist one can simply skim through. I do not subscribe to this error and refuse to pander to those that do. As Jung himself wrote in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, “there is no linear evolution, only a circumambulation of the self.” So that complete, singular book you are looking for remains eternally unwritten, although consuming all three of mine will in some sense ‘unlock’ my version of it in your head.

And so we begin.

Wake the City

The following invocation is a generalised call to place spirits. You can actually use it to invoke London (I tried from Australia) but you can and should also modify it for your own locale. Engaging with place spirits is a cornerstone magical practice. Very little can be achieved without their –I don’t want to say support- but at least their tacit acquiescence. Of course, some place spirits are more amenable with offering support. London will rarely help you but can certainly *become interested in you*. That can have its own uses. Regarding offerings, London likes Bordeaux. She used to own the place and remembers it fondly -like a childhood holiday home.

Pleasing or interesting the spirits of complex places results in a site-specific variant of what happens when you get right with your ancestors and your dead. Locked gates open for you, chance encounters on the street turn into doubling salaries. One receives the psychic keys to the city.

As for engaging with London specifically, place spirits have a unique perspective on the events that happened within them. So wherever you may be, you might be interested in the rise of the hard sciences, or the Bloomsbury Set, or Elizabethan theatre. Alternatively, you may just be in need of some non-physical assistance in opening an offshore bank account or fancy having a crack at invading France.

London, flower of cities all, I conjure you by God, spirit of London, by the masts of your sailing fleets, by the bells of your churches, by the songs of your docks. I conjure you, spirit of London, by the names of Gog and Magog, wherever you may be, wake, come to me at once. I conjure you by your river,

your clay, your stone, your roads, by yours trains and your cobbleways, wherever you may be, whether in the sky or in the earth, in a statue, a palace, a crypt, in the voices of the marketplace, in a hanging ground, a royal park or a buried temple, far or close; wherever you may be and wherever you may dwell, come here without delay.

The Garden of the Lord

On my first trip to Barcelona, I had some peculiar dreams of the Moorish occupation of Spain. Although the Moors only ruled the city for eighty years, the architecture and lay out of the old town demonstrates a distinctly Moorish response to the climate, with its hidden gardens and high buildings shielding the narrow streets from the heat of the midday sun. It is probably one of the most beautiful cities on earth.

I have always been terribly struck by the idea of the great libraries of Cordoba and Andalucia, its visiting scholars and wandering mystics. There is something inspiring in the image of diverse peoples discussing a blended concept of divinity late into the summer evenings, with the smell of orange blossoms hanging in the air. These sensory images are what come to mind when I think of IAΩ —a quintessentially blended supreme being.

1. Prepare a ritual space with incense or essential oils that call Moorish Andalucia to mind.
2. Sit quietly as if in meditation and begin breathing *in* a white light, flecked with gold. Silently ingest the slow, vibratory name, *eeeeeehh aaaaaahhhhhh ooooooo*.
3. Continue until your whole body and the space around you is vibrating with this gold-flecked light.
4. Now begin to vocally vibrate the holy name on each outbreath, taking the entire breath to do so.
5. As you do, picture a Moorish garden shimmer into existence around you, becoming more and more detailed with each outbreath. See it high on a hilltop, within the city walls, looking out over the Mediterranean as the sun sets to your right. See the orange and the fig trees that line the garden wall, hear the fountains and smell their water in the air, mingle with the jasmine clumped along the arches,

observe the paved pathways between the garden beds.

The garden you create is not only a contemplative space you can return to, it is also an offering to and alignment with IAΩ that builds in detail and complexity over time.

Hymn to an Alien God

From the Bruce Codex, purchased in Upper Egypt in 1769 and later acquired by the British Museum, this incomplete hymn I have adapted for ease of performance. It appears to be a Gnostic unfolding of Creation and a call for the aspirant to complete Creation by returning to the source. It is interesting to see the water become the ocean become the sea, with the Earth in it. It is a properly cosmic vision of Form becoming Space/Cosmos becoming the Physical contained in the Space, yet still retaining its original substance, and each with its own vibrational iteration of a divine name. Very Laurasian from a metaphysical perspective.

At the risk of sounding like a cookbook, this hymn is just lovely with a little incense at twilight. It also works great for small groups, with each participant getting a verse and everyone joining in for the vibratory name. Picture your words reverberating through the vastness of deep space like the opening sequence of a classic sci-fi film.

Hear me as I sing praises to thee, O Mystery who existed before every incomprehensible one and every endless one. Hear me as I sing praise to thee, O Mystery, who hast shone in thy mystery, so that the mystery which exists from the beginning should be completed. And when thou didst shine, thou didst become the water of the ocean whose imperishable name is this :

AH-ZA

Hear me as I sing praises to thee, O Mystery who existest before every incomprehensible one and every endless one, who hast shone in thy mystery. The earth in the middle of the ocean was purified, of which the incomprehensible name is this:

AH-ZAE

Hear me as I sing praises to thee, O Mystery who existest before every incomprehensible one and every endless one, who hast shone in thy mystery. All the powerful matter of the ocean which is the sea, with every kind within it, was purified, of which the incomprehensible name is this:

AH-ZA-HE

Hear me as I sing praises to thee, O Mystery who existest before every incomprehensible one and every endless one, who hast shone in thy mystery. And as thou didst shine, thou didst seal the sea and all things in it, because the power within them rebelled, of which the incomprehensible name is this:

AH-ZA-HE, AH-ZA-HE, AH-ZA-HE

Dialling Up Magonia

There is no getting away from the fact that St Agobard of Lyon –via whom Dr Vallée received the word ‘Magonia’- was an asshole. He had some truly appalling opinions of the city’s Jewish population and he thought the local townsfolk–those who witnessed and even captured a few ‘wizards’ from Magonia- were deluded, illiterate savages.

So Magonia is currently without a patron saint. The closest we have to it in the West is probably Our Lady of Fátima, but even her transmitted prayers are too alarming for most magicians. (“O Mary, obtain for me the conversion of Russia, Spain, Portugal, Europe and the entire world!”) Nevertheless, we require a method of contact with this realm, and the Sixth Enochian Key is the way to do it. Why? Because it appears to summon The Nine.

The spirits of the 4th Angle are Nine, Mighty in the firmament of waters: whom the first has planted a torment to the wicked and a garland to the righteous: giving them fiery darts to winnow the

earth and 7699 continual Workmen whose courses visit with comfort the earth and are in government and continuance as the second and the third. Wherefore harken unto my voice: I have talked of you and I move you in power and presence: whose Works shall be a song of honour and the praise of your God in your Creation.

In John Dee's system, the Sixth Key summoned the spirits of Fire, which is already –pun alert- getting *warmer*. But when you consider the other motifs in the evocation, you'll see a surprising match to some of the descriptions provided by the entity or entities Andrija Puharich called The Nine. And, just because I do not appear to be done offending the unimaginative Dee LARPers out there, we also have the fact that a number of Enochian words recurred during the UFO channelling fad of the late twentieth century.

There are a number of off-book methods of using this Key. It can be combined with the circle and spirit conjuration in this chapter. For those with an unhealthy risk appetite, it can be used *sans* circle, merely teamed with an invocation to St Cyprian. Finally, some combination of the two can be used with the Elestial shewstone method listed below.

Prayer of St Cyprian

St Cyprian of Antioch is the undisputed patron saint of the grimoire tradition. In his apocryphal fourth century *Confession*, he lives the quintessential pan-Mediterranean wizard's life before converting to Christianity. Born in Antioch to wealthy parents, he is initiated into Mystery traditions there, he then becomes a citizen of Athens and then journeys to Egypt to join the Memphite priesthood before returning to his native lands. All along the way he picks up and embodies the polyglot influences that informed the Theurgy and practical magic of the time.

This is before he even begins his very *Game of Thrones* afterlife, journeying to the cold of Northern Europe and appearing in grimoires there, and heading west onto the Iberian peninsula and -by that route- out across the

Atlantic where he looms large in various New World magical system.

Saint Cyprian is the magical saint you are looking for. No other form offers a more invitational route into the dizzying hybridity of the practical magical traditions of the western world. This is my most-used Cyprian prayer, drawn from ConjureMan Ali's *St Cyprian* chapbook, available from Hadean Press.

San Cipriano di Antiocha, who by Divine Grace was converted to the faith of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, you who possess the highest secrets of magic, build now a refuge for me against my enemies and their evil deeds. For the merit that you obtained before God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, cancel out evil spells, products of hate, the spells that hardened hearts have cast or will come to cast against my person and against my home.

With the permission of God Omnipotente, answer my prayer and come to my assistance. By the Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Circle or Space Consecration, Invocation

This is modified from the *Grimoire of Honorius*. You can either use it in the same manner you 'season a cast iron pan' before cooking with it. Otherwise it can serve as universal launch codes -so to speak- for experimental spirit conjuration.

Begin your perambulation of the space or circle and say the following.

O Lord, we appeal unto Your virtue. Oh Lord, confirm this work which is being manifested within us. I shall open the Book of the Seven Seals. I have beheld Satan as a light falling from Heaven.

It is You who hath given us the power to trample Dragons, Scorpions and Your enemies under Your feet. Naught will harm

us, not even Eloy, Elohym, Elohe, Zebabot, Elion, Esarchie, Adonay, Jah, Tetragrammaton, Saday.

The Earth and all those who dwell therein are of God, because he hath established it upon the seas and He hath prepared it upon the rivers. Who is the one who shall ascend upon the mountain of the Lord? Or who is he who shall not be received in His Holy Place? The innocent of hand and the pure in heart!

With your perambulation completed, return to the altar/circle middle/ritual focal point and say:

Princes, open your Gates, open the Eternal Gates and the King of Glory shall enter! Princes, Raise up the Eternal Gates. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord Almighty, Lord Conqueror in Battles.

IAO SABAOTH. Amen.

(Optional: *The Headless Rite* as described in *The Chaos Protocols* could be performed here.)

In the name of the Most High, Lord of this world and the next, IAO SABAOTH, come all ye spirits by the virtue and the power of your king and by the seven crowns and chains of your kings.

All the spirits of all the hells shall appear to me, before this circle, whensoever I shall call upon them. Having been commanded, come all ye at my commandments to do all that is in your power.

Come, therefore, from the East, South, West and from the North. I conjure and command you by the virtue and the power of the Most High, He who hath created the Heaven, the Sea and all that is under the Heavens.

IAO SABAOTH. Amen.

At this point, say “from among you I summon [...] in the name of his/her lord [...]” or words to that effect. Or, if you are working with St Cyprian, then say “most holy St Cyprian, with your command of the magical art, bring to this circle [...] in the name of his/her lord [...]”

Sabbat in a Box

Although the Devil resists singular biographies, one of the oldest and more obvious branches of his family tree runs back to the famous Indo-European ‘proto-Shiva’ of Indus iconography, seated in a faintly yogic pose, horned and surrounded by animals.

With that in mind, let me commend to you my cheekily named ‘sabbat in a box’.

- Go camping with one or more people. You really must be in the wilderness for this.
- In the early evening, start a fire.
- Get really stoned.
- Set a timer on your phone or similar for twenty minutes. I know this sounds brief but trust me, it will not feel like it.
- Sit around the fire and chant a mantra I cobbled together for Shiva Pashupati, Lord of Beasts:

OM PASHUPATEYEH NAMAHA

- When the timer says stop, stop. Irregular stoners will know how grateful you will feel for this to be over.
- Then just... revel. Eat, play music, laugh. Haven’t you ever been to

a sabbat before?

Summoning a Dragon

The dragon is a truly ancient form. Draconian currents have long been associated with supercharging the human energetic system. Consider the Kundalini 'serpent', the description of the snake in *the Book of the Law*, the use of dragon energy in Chinese folk and astrological magic or the Ancient Egyptian association of spirits with snakes... which survives into the grimoires via the many uses of snake parts and spells for warding against snakes.

The following invocation can then be used either to 'merely' summon a dragon spirit or it can be combined with visualised colour breathing to absorb draconian energy into your body like a wheatgrass shot for your chakras.

First, the English, then the Greek

Oh Ancient Serpent

Oh Great Dragon

Who was and who is

Throughout the Aions

Be thou with our spirit

HO OPHIS HO ARCHAIOS

HO DRAKON HO MEGAS

HO EN KAI, HO ON KAI

HO ZON TOUS AIONAS

META TOU PNEUMATOS SOU!

And finally, a Welsh version for people who don't speak Welsh -which is basically most people on earth including those who live in Wales. I had this

translated for me on Holy Isle by the daughter of someone who does translations for the Crown. Apparently some other Welsh speakers have suggested alternative ways of writing it. But I rather like its potential inaccuracies as it aligns with how words of power moved between languages in the magical books and papyri of the Classical age. Also, I performed this version of it to Dinas Emrys –the sacred hill in Wales that contains the sleeping red dragon from Arthurian legend- and can happily verify that it does indeed wake dragons. Pronunciation in brackets.

O Sarff Hynafol

(Oh Sarf Hinarvol)

O Ddraig Nertilol

(Oh Dry-g nearthol)

Pwy oedd a pwy sydd

(Pool oyth a pool sith)

Trwy'r amseroedd

(True-ir am-ser-oyth)

Bydd gyda ein ysbryd

(Beeth gerdah ayn ers-breed)

The Seine River Spell

So named because the Seine is the south-to-north flowing river I most often find myself near. This is a wishing spell that calls upon the Devil, modified from the *Black Book of Elverum*. Step one is to find a south-to-north flowing river... or a north-to-south in the southern hemisphere.

Step two is to whisper your wish to a coin and throw it in. For drama, I favour old numismatics like Half-Crowns or Victorian farthings, which are easily acquired in bulk on auction websites.

Defixiones

Stay ing with rivers, we have defixiones. Something about the defixio feels as if it is the bizarro-world sigil, the solve for when you have malefic requirements and do not want to store them into your own head. Also like sigils, much is to be gained by exploring and experimenting with this form, assuming you have sufficient enemies to do so. (As with prayer, defixiones can be used to set your will against the enemies of the whole world. So you should be more than fine for targets, unfortunately.)

The classic defixio is a letter to the dead and/or the gods of the underworld, scratched into thin pieces of lead, then rolled up and spiked with a nail before being thrown into an open tomb or a well. Hundreds of variations on this theme have been found across the Roman Empire. Many of them would look entirely familiar to today's rootworkers in both function and phrasing. Names of enemies have been crossed out seven times, personal effects have been included, bargains made and so on. One defixio found on the Appian Way heading into Rome has alternating lines written upside down, a style I have adopted for my own defixiones. In the more than seven centuries that defixiones were used, thriving local industries built up around them so that the illiterate could pay to have one inscribed against his or her enemies by a specialist craftsman. Think of it like a pan-dimensional Imperial telegram service.

Today we no longer have an abundance of scrap lead lying about upon which to carve our defixiones. The metal appears to have been used mostly for convenience rather than for any 'magical' association. Indeed, the death/lead association could have a lot to do with the substance's use in these very enchantments, rather than the other way around. (That and the fact that lead pipes go underground.) So I mostly just use the same card stock that I keep around for sigil shoaling, though I have retained the use of nails as these are still easy to come by.

What follows is my *Confounding Defixio*. Rarely do I find myself in the situation of actually wanting someone dead or -mercifully- needing someone to be so. More commonly -particularly in business- you want someone who is causing or risks causing reputational damage thwarted or confounded. Essentially you want a target's plans or machinations to crumble or unwind as

fast as possible. This goal combined with the underworld components of a defixio mean that your cosmic pen pal can be none other than Nebiros.

Nebiros or Naberius is a grimoire spirit whose name likely derives from a conflation of Anubis and Cerberus. Naberius appears in the form of a three-headed dog –providing the Cerberus connection- or in the form of a crow, which suggests speech or speaking to the dead. More than that, though: Naberius can either restore lost dignities or procure the loss of dignities -a perfect match for either restorative or destructive reputational magic.

If you have developed a working relationship with Hermanubis as described in *The Chaos Protocols* then call him into the ritual space in which you will construct your defixio. They are –in many ways- mutations of the same form. (Or rather, there are some deep structural overlaps you will eventually encounter.) Otherwise St Cyprian and a conjuration similar to that described above will be more than sufficient.

WRITE the following on black card or scratch it onto a thin sheet of lead if you somehow have such a thing, you weirdo:

Naberius, I invoke you by the gods in Hades, OUCHITOU, and by the dispenser of tombs.

Bind every limb and sinew of [name]. Bind both [name] and all [his/her] actions. Confound all [name]’s plans.

I register [name] in the books of the underworld for failure in word and deed. Naberius, unleash your legions to confound and thwart [name]. Bring [name] only defeat.

I hand [name] to the gatekeeper of Hades, who is Naberius.

IAŌ, ABRIAŌ, ARBATHIAŌ, ADŌNAI, SABAŌ

Fold the card in half and draw the seal of Naberius on one side of the folded paper, leaving enough room for the next step: Pierce the folded card with a nail. Do not damage the seal of Naberius when doing so.

Release your hell hound. Wells are unsurprisingly hard to come by today but you may be near old mine shafts or cave systems. When it comes to depositing your defixio in a graveyard, ensure you have permission and a working relationship with the graveyard spirits, lest you risk some pretty intense blowback. I have dropped defixiones off the Hammersmith bridge into the Thames in west London but only after building up that relationship. It seems to please the Thames, as a former Roman port town, to participate in these rituals again. (Regular readers may have noticed I have a fascination with river spirits, particularly those that create cities along their banks.)

Obviously this form lends itself to near infinite variations of text, spirit, construction and disposal. Learn by doing.

Love and Sex 'Spells'

Improvements in psychology as well as ongoing sexual emancipation have made this category far more redundant than most people realise. There are *no* love spells in the Greek Magical Papyri. As Dr Stephen Skinner observes, this suggests very strongly that their original authors were moonlighting priests from Egyptian temples. Love spells do then proliferate in European folk magic where the life outcomes of women were far more tied to securing and keeping a decent marriage than it is today. They are evidence of oppressive cultural milieus that –whilst there is obviously much further to go in securing true equality – resemble today's dating landscape less and less.

I actually swore off love 'spells' almost twenty years ago. It seems that either they are successful and become unmitigated disasters in the lives of the enchanter and enchanted or they are unsuccessful and further enable creepy stalker behaviour -behaviour which is used by the perpetrator as an excuse to avoid much-needed emotional or psychological development. Love -being

miraculous- is better suited to prayer than enchantment.

As for sex enchantments, my go-to in much wilder, much younger days was to sigilise for increased encounter rates and dedicate a night out on the pull to Dionysus: pouring the first drink of the evening on the naked ground to him, then offering the opportunity to skinride during the drugs, dancing and (hopefully) inevitable sex that was to follow. This falls under the 'getting their attention' rules of divine contact. I am unsure how interested Dionysus (or whomever) would be in skinriding while you sit on your couch, swiping left or right on your phone. Sometimes the old ways are better.

An Elestial Shewstone

My mother the psychonaut now has so many crystals she is probably tipping the east coast of Australia slowly into the sea. For a while, she was in the habit of spontaneously sending large specimens from her travels to London until it became apparent that the excess weight fees applied by the Royal Mail risked bankrupting me.

After one such painful trip to my post office to pick up a very heavy package and pay the inexplicably high duty, I became the begrudging owner of a very large piece of Elestial quartz she had acquired in Peru. As I grumpily lifted it out of its packaging on the street in front of the post office, my left hand picked it up and suddenly my mind's eye could see over an intricate MC-Escher-style city of what looked like crocodile people, dressed as if the ancient Maya were cast in the movie *Tron*. (Mother is a skilled collector.) And that's how I got my shewstone.

Unfashionable though they are among magic's cool kids, there is much to recommend crystals. That said, I find most crystal 'correspondences' to be beyond absurd. You are instead advised to go to a physical vendor -not a website- and find yourself a decent sized one that resonates with you in some way. (Or you could just befriend my mother?)

Below is a stone blessing from the mysterious and delightful *Cambridge Book of Magic*, so named because it was acquired by Cambridge University on the west coast of Wales in 1899. It appears to have been written in the last fifteen years of the reign of Henry VIIIth, as the libraries of the lesser

monasteries vanished into private hands.

I exorcize you, all unclean, evil and damned spirits, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, so that you go out and draw back from this stone and do not approach it.

He himself commands you, accursed spirits, who walked with dry feet over the sea and when Peter sank down stretched out his right hand. Draw back from this stone, therefore, accursed spirits, and give honour to the Father and to Jesus Christ his Son and to the Holy Spirit. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen. Amen.

You only need to perform the blessing once –or at least I have only needed to perform the blessing once- as long as you keep your shewstone somewhere generally ‘clean’ from a magical perspective.

To activate it, create the appropriate ritual space –to a particular Olympian spirit, for instance- and ask to be shown its realm, domain, etc. Then say, also adapted from the *Cambridge Book of Magic*,

Malo. Malesi. Offadi. Theolochim.

May I see wonders.

Then sit and look into the shewstone, observing with your mind’s eye. Sometimes I hold my Elestial in my left hand instead of looking into it, but this is very me/my-shewstone specific.

The Tritopatreion

As someone possessed of an all-consuming interest in the Palaeolithic origins of magic, I am terribly struck by the fact we do not know -and will never know- the names of the gods called at Göbekli Tepe or the spirits painted on the walls of Lascaux Cave. In both cases -and in almost all similar cases- these

were names that were uttered and cried for thousands of years of the human journey but have now long passed out of memory. There is something very profound in the contemplation of such vast timelines. As it turns out, some of our more recent magical ancestors -the Ancient Greeks- were moved by this same profundity. And so we have the Tritopatores, a form that allows for the incorporation of all those forgotten gods and allies into your contemporary practice.

The Tritopatores are the unremembered ancestral gods of all mankind. They are the gods, heroes and ancestors whose names we no longer speak. Orpheus describes them as 'gatekeepers of the wind' in his *Physika*, 'wind', 'air' and 'spirit' being etymologically related. Orpheus considered them psychopomps and also gatekeepers of new life. They are the unnamed elder gods. This is a chaos magic book so this is your Necronomicon bit. Except better.

Build a Tritopatreion:

1. Dig a triangular hole with a northern apex in your yard away from the house or in some little-trafficked wilderness area.
2. Set about it four cardinal stones, river stones, preferably.
3. Pour in honey and wine. Burn offerings to the Tritopatores in front of it: incense, olive wood, leaves, etc. Then place or pour the remnants in the hole.
4. Tell the Tritopatores that you remember them in your offerings and ask them to look with favour upon you and your family, and to turn away when they are angry.

A British Museum Exorcism

A Babylonian spell for banishing domestic ghosts, written in large script on a clay tablet in the British Museum, runs as follows:

Zu-zu-la-ah nu-mi-la-ah hu-du-la-ah hu-šu-bu-la-ah

According to Assistant Keeper in the Department of the Middle East at the British Museum, Dr Irving Finkel, this is goo. By the Babylonian era, many of

the enchantments in old Sumerian had long been divorced from their original context. However, in his *The Ark Before Noah*, Dr Finkel suggests he has found an origin for this particular enchantment. Around 2,000 BC the Sumerians were importing fierce mastiff dogs from Elam and *zi-im-zi-la-ah* appears to be the name for an Elamite dog warden. He suggests this is an incorrect borrowing of an administrative text into much later magic at a time when the earlier writing was difficult to understand. Possibly. But given the long attestation of dogs as guardians of the spirit world I would say it is more likely the terminology is deliberate. Thus this spell wrangles and commands unruly spirits out of a place in the same way a dog warden would wrangle and command what must have appeared to be terrifying demons to Sumerian eyes -these foreign mastiffs. And so we come back to dogs, spirits and cynocephali once more.

I can attest to this charm's efficacy for minor spirit removals, particularly if you are caught out without your toys. If you are not, then it works even better when combined with a spirit rattle.

The Exorcism of St Cyprian

The following is the work of St Cyprian as exorcist and banisher of demons. This is particularly useful in clearing recalcitrant infestations of physical space. It is modified from an exorcism of a person as described in José Leitão's essential *The Book of St Cyprian: The Sorcerer's Treasure*. Although I have thankfully not had cause to use it for such purposes, keep it in the back of your mind for that. You never know when it may come in handy.

I wear my Cross of St Cyprian for this but then I always do when clearing away wooly-googles. As ever, my 'nuclear option' for spirit clearing incense is Dragon's Blood.

I, Cyprian [Your Name], by God Our Lord Jesus Christ, absolve this place and those in it of all evil sorceries, enchantments, blockings, ties that men and women make on request, in the name of God Our Lord Jesus Christ, God of Abraham, great and powerful God! Glory unto thee forever.

*May all misfortune and affliction upon this place be destroyed,
undone, unbound, reduced to nothing by Thy Holiest Name.*

[Make the sign of the cross to the north.]

*With me be the Angels of Heaven, mainly St Michael, St Gabriel,
St Raphael and all the Saints and Angels of the Lord, and the
Apostles of the Lord and by all the orders of the Saintly
Evangelists.*

*By the seventy-two tongues that are spread throughout the world,
and by this absolution, and by the voice that called Lazarus
from the grave, by all these virtues let this place and these
people be restored to sanctity and grace. I, in the name of
IAO SABAOTH, order that everything here cease its
supernatural disconcert.*

[Make the sign of the cross to the south.]

*I banish thee, excommunicated demons, or evil baptized spirits, if
with evil bonds, sorceries, the Devil's enchantments, be them
of envy, or be them made of gold, or silver, or lead, or on
lonely trees, may it all be destroyed and no longer bound to
this place or those that dwell within it. If this sorcery or
enchantment is in any celestial or earthly idol, may it all be
destroyed by God.*

[Make the sign of the cross to the west.]

As Jesus Christ separates and banishes the Devil and all his sorceries from the Earth, so by these delectable names of Our Lord Jesus Christ, may all demons, ghosts and evil spirits in the company of Satan and his companions flee to their residences, which are all in the Hells, being there in the company of all the sorcerers who have laid a curse upon this place.

[Make the sign of the cross to the east.]

May the curse be undone and nullified, banished, broken and abjured by the power of the Holy Obedience, by the power of the Belief in God the Father and the three Persons of the Holiest Trinity. With all sanctity I banish thee and exile thee, cursed demons, evil spirits, rebellious to my and our Creator!

[Make the sign of the cross upon yourself three times.]

Amen.

One final note. If you are clearing a house you can also go room by room making the sign of the cross, instead of in a circle.

Go Set a Watchman

The rosemary in my yard was not originally planted to keep ghosts away. But it, combined with the St John's Wort -which was- have certainly dropped the number of wandering spirits that the practice of magic tends to attract. Grow them at the back of your house rather than the front and feed them both with red wine and a prayer on St John's Eve.

For apartment dwellers or those with unforgiving landlords, you can also

gather/buy St John's Wort on a Friday, dry it, put it in a small jar and hang the jar with twine in your window. An always-on security system.

Protection from the Evil Eye

The Evil Eye is a more sophisticated metaphysical concept than many people realise. It is a combination of deliberate spiritual attack, social pressure, the displeasure of place spirits, one's own psychology and fears and generalised misfortune. It seems we in the west have only recently abandoned it – probably to our detriment- as numerous methods for preventing being “overlooked” by the eye survived well into the twentieth century.

The following is modified from the *Carmina Gaeilica*'s 'Uibe Ri Shul'. Use it as-is or use it to charge your various apotropaenia. For instance you could asperge fresh water or wave cleansing incense around, or you could pass protective amulets through the incense smoke to charge them.

*The fair spell that lovely Mary sent,
Over stream, over sea, over land,
Against incantations, against withering glance,
Against inimical power,
Against the teeth of wolf,
Against the testicles of wolf,
Against three crooked cranes,
Against three crooked bones.*

*Whoso made to thee the Eye,
May it lie upon himself,
May it lie upon his house,
May it lie upon his flocks,*

*May it lie upon his substance,
May it lie upon his fatness,
May it lie upon his business,
May it lie upon his children,
May it lie upon his wife,
May it lie upon his descendants.*

*I will subdue the eye,
I will suppress the eye,
I will banish the eye and the tongues of death
Completely.*

Feel free to de or re-gender as you wish or need.

A Prayer for Emergencies

If you are caught out in a challenging situation, then consider the traditional prayer of the Celtic fisherman. I find its brevity hauntingly poignant.

*Oh God, the sea is so great
And my boat is so small.*

The Benediction of the Sibyls

Although most spirits have a tendency to declare this when they show up, in this case I believe them. The Sibyls are back.

After almost five centuries, the Council of Trent banned the *Song of the Sibyl* from being performed at Christmas Mass in the 1500s, though it was immediately restored by churches in Catalonia and Majorca. Perhaps the

councillors realised that having a superstar pagan prophetess and goddess being led up to the altar to then turn around and sing the End of the World to the congregation was no longer a good match for Christian Europe? For that is what the Sibyls are -superstar prophetesses and goddesses. Contemporary occultism's ignorance of them borders on criminal.

The etymology of the word, 'sibyl' was unknown even in Classical times. Julius Caesar's chief librarian, Marcus Terentius Varro hazarded a guess that it came from a long-forgotten dialect of Aeolian once spoken in Asia Minor. A few centuries later Pausanias was adamant the word was North African. The office of the Sibyl was too old even then to be certain. The Sibyls were just... there.

Similarly, no consensus appears on the number of Sibyls and whether or not the term referred to an 'office' such as their far more acceptable cousins, the Oracles. We may assume many women 'gifted' with prophetic powers who fell outside the state approval that accompanied Oracles were called Sibyl. Plutarch writes

[T]he sibyl with raving mouth, according to Heraclitus, utters things mirthless and unadorned and unperfumed, and her voice carries through a thousand years because of the god who speaks through her.

This is divination done rough –the unlicensed dentists of the Classical World's prophecy industry. The most famous of the Sibyls is the Sibyl of Cumae, who prophesied from a cave you can still visit northwest of modern day Naples. It was to her that Aeneas went, believing only she had the power to correctly prophesy the outcome of the Trojan War.

My favourite legend of the Cumaeian Sibyl is her presenting the nine Sibylline Books of Prophecy to Tarquinius Superbus, who balked at their price. She burned three of the nine books in front of him and kept the price the same. Still the king said no. The Sibyl burned the next three books and kept the price

the same. Tarquinius bought them. (*That* is how you negotiate.) He was the last of the seven kings of Rome. Probably should have bought the whole set.

It was the Sibyls' association with the prophetic good stuff that got them caught up in Christian Apologetics as the early church philosophers attempted to demonstrate the legitimacy of Christ by recourse to Classical pagan sources and prophecies. Lactantius, in *The Divine Institutes*, even throws in Hermes Trismegistus for extra effect: "But that there is a Son of the Most High God, who is possessed of the greatest power, is shown not only by the unanimous utterances of the prophets, but also by the declaration of Trismegistus and the predictions of the Sibyls." This is how the Sibyl ended up getting her invite to Christmas Mass in Majorca. Constantine even quoted a purported Sibylline prophecy that spelled out the name of Jesus at the First Council of Nicaea.

Through the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, various Sibylline prophetic books and depictions appeared across Europe, most notably the *Sibylline Oracles*. It is here that the Sibyls become useful to the practicing magician once more through their amalgamation with each other and subsequent coronation in Faery.

For my money, Camille Paglia's analysis of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* in her *Sexual Personae* remains definitive:

So the liberated woman is the symbol of the English Renaissance, as the beautiful boy is the symbol of the Italian. In *The Faerie Queene* we see her in free movement. I speak, of course, of artistic projection and not of the life of real British women. But art is what transcends and what survives. Of all truths, it is the finest.
[...]

The *Faerie Queene* is the most extended and extensive meditation on sex in the history of poetry.[...] Spenser agrees with classical and Christian philosophers on the primacy of reason over animal appetite. He looks forward to the Romantic poets, however, in the

way that he shows the sex impulse as innately daemonic and barbaric, breeding witches and sorcerers of evil allure.[..]

Christianity, far from putting out the pagan eye, merely expanded its power. Christianity's vast tracts of the forbidden are virgin territory for the pagan eye to penetrate and defile. The *Faerie Queene* is a massively original analysis of these tensions in western culture.

Elizabeth I looms large in the English imagination at this point. And it is worth observing that *The Faerie Queene* emerges in the same reign as John Dee's exploration of the angelic realms and is thus more or less concurrent with the celebrated *Daughter of Fortitude* revelation. Both Dee and Spenser peer out on a vast imaginal empire and even contribute to its materialisation in the form of the nascent British Empire. At the centre of this imaginal empire they both see a magical queen emerging, dripping with martial and sexual potency.

One last contemporaneous writer needs to be thrown into the mix. Reginald Scot and his *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, which includes a very detailed conjuration of a Sibyl as Faery Queen, modified below. Clearly something was going on in the non-physical at the time and it is no small thanks to whatever that was that we, a mere five centuries later, were all blessed with J.R.R Tolkien's own discovery of 'Faery' and the subsequent delivery of the most astounding 'fictional' landscape ever encountered.

The Sibyl likely blended with the Queen of Faery in witchcraft and ritual magic because she possessed ecclesiastical legitimacy -albeit an uneasy one. She is a thing the church says exists that also is not a demon or an angel -just like faeries (most of the time). This hybridisation brings into alignment the Sibyl's sovereignty over the far reaches of Magonia with her ancestry in the terrifying utterances of chthonic prophecy in deepest antiquity.

And so we come to the final enchantment of the book and the reason for performing it. The benediction of the Sibyls: the sound of their voice heralds

the re-enchantment of the world and the restoration of the western imagination. In its performance -if she is pleased- lies your own lifetime pass into her realm of Faery, an inexhaustible spring of creative fecundity and inspiration. Each performance of the benediction brings the re-enchantment of our world one step closer.

Step 1

SCOT WRITES that the magician should 'go to a place fast by', in 'a fair parlour or chamber'. This ritual is not to be done at home, likely because it requires the assistance of a recently dead criminal who is to 'fetch' the Fairy Sibylia for the magician.

A modern modification of this would be to impose on St Cyprian in his role as Bishop of the Graveyard to bring in the Sibyl for you. That is what I did, but I also did not perform this rite in my house. We rented a 'fair parlour' in the New Forest -which seemed appropriate- and I found a clearing nearby to the Inn. Interestingly, the ritual also calls for a hazel wand, which I did not possess for the trip but found one for sale the afternoon of the rite in Sibyl (!) Leek's witchy old town of Burley.

So secure yourself a room or a wilderness location, a hazel wand and offering of pine nuts and honey. (Extra credit will be given to those who work out why.)

Step 2

DRAW TWO CIRCLES, either in chalk if inside your fair parlour, or use the hazel wand in the dirt if outside. One circle must be large enough for you. The other is for the Sibyl. Place the offerings in the second circle.

Step 3

PERFORM THE SPACE conjuration as described above, omitting the

'princes, open your gates' part and replacing it with a call to St Cyprian, asking him by his art and authority to open a space between the Sibyl circle and the realm of Faery.

Step 4

COMMENCE THE CONJURATION of the Sibyl as follows, modified and expanded from Scot.

I conjure thee Sibylia, O gentle virgin of fairies, by the mercy of the Holy Ghost, and by the dreadful day of doom, and by all the angels and characters that be in the firmament, and by the king and queen of fairies, and their virtues, and by the faith and obedience that thou bearest unto them. I conjure thee Sibylia by the blood that ran out of the side of our Lord Jesus Christ crucified, and by the opening of heaven, and by the rending of the veil of the temple, and by the darkness of the sun in the time of His death, and by the rising up of the dead in the time of His resurrection, and by the Virgin Mary, mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the unspeakable name of God, Tetragrammaton.

I conjure thee O Sibylia, O blessed and beautiful virgin, by all the royal words aforesaid; I conjure thee Sibylia by all their virtues to appear in that circle before me visible, in the form and shape of a beautiful woman in a bright and vesture white, adorned and garnished most fair; and to appear to me quickly without deceit or tarrying, and that thou fail not to fulfil my will and desire effectually.

For I will choose thee as my ally and companion, that we may glorify your name and skills among the sorcerers of the earth. That your realm and your name is elevated in the hearts and dreams of the men and women of the West, that this world which is God's is re-enchanted once more.

Sibylia, virgin queen of Faery, be pleased with this offering which is made to you. I ask you, kindly one, bestow your blessings: since you are all power, not for nothing has Hecate set you to rule the groves of Avernus.

I conjure thee Sibylia, O blessed virgin of fairies, to give me good counsel at all times, and to come by treasures hidden in the earth, and to fulfil my will, without any deceit or tarrying, from this day hence.

Nor yet that thou shalt have any power of my body or soul, earthy or ghostly, nor yet to perish so much of my body as one hair of my head. I conjure thee Sibylia by all the royal words aforesaid, and by their virtues and powers, I charge and bind thee by the virtue thereof, to be obedient unto me, and to all the words aforesaid, and this bond to stand between thee and me, upon pain of everlasting condemnation.

Fiat, fiat, fiat, Amen.

Speak any additional requests to the spirit in the circle at this juncture. Determine for yourself if the rite has been successful. When you are ready to close communication, end with the license to depart:

I conjure thee Sibylia, which art come hither before me, by the commandment of thy Lord and mine, that thou shalt have no powers, in thy going or coming unto me, imagining any evil in any manner of ways, in the earth or under the earth, of evil doings, to my person or my family.

I conjure and command thee Sibylia by all the royal words and

virtues, that thou shalt always go peaceably to the place from whence thou camest, and look thou be ready to come to me, when thou art called by any conjuration of words, at my commandment, and to answer me truly and duly of all things, my will quickly to be fulfilled.

Vade in pace, in nomine patris, & filii, & spiritus sancti. And the holy cross be between thee and me, or between us and you, and the lion of Judah, the root of Jesse, the kindred of David, be between thee & me Christ cometh Christ commandeth Christ giveith power Christ defend me and his innocent blood from all perils of body and soul, sleeping or waking

Fiat, fiat, Amen.

Step 5

ASK ST CYPRIAN TO close the space, then close out your circles.

EIGHTEEN

SPACE WEATHER

THINKING BACK TO THE RITUAL CHAPTER AND ITS BRIEF EXPLORATION OF IMPERIAL civic calendars, a little-used force multiplier becomes apparent to the keen-eyed magician. It is far more effective to assert sovereignty over your own ritual year than to rely on a British agrarian one wholly invented by a couple of Edwardian nudists.

Two simple facts. Firstly, we have not been farming for all that long in the grand scheme of the human journey. Secondly, farmers do not need a priest to tell them when to plant or when to harvest. This is immediately apparent to them via the local climatic conditions which can often vary by up to a month in any given year as the regularity of our little planet's trips around the sun are mitigated by other cyclical effects such as Ice Ages, El Niños, cosmic rays, volcanic eruptions, forest fires or local pest infestations.

The calendarisation of story telling and cultural activities long predates settled agriculture. For the Boorong People of Australia, when the giant fish constellation set with the sun it was time to begin the trip north to the Mille River where their cousins dwelled, for feasting and ritual. Stories lend themselves to cyclical ritualisation, which are then associated with agriculture or hunting and gathering. One is seen as a reflection of the other, and interrelated in a profound way –such as the rising of Sirius and the flooding of the Nile in

Dynastic Egypt. These phenomena *co-relate* to rather than predict their partner. Indeed, it is probably profoundly important on a metaphysical level just why it is that the cosmos appears to shape itself after a story.

Putting the Magic Back in Astrology

Whatever is going on here, the universe does appear to have waveform rhythms, which is to say, cycles. This reality underpins ritual calendars the world over and –occasionally- thinkers, artists and philosophers try to describe it more accurately. Poet and Golden Dawn magician, William Butler Yeats, did with his concept of gyres. Terence McKenna did with his concept of Timewave Zero, Martin Armstrong was illegally held without charge for years for refusing to divulge the details of his Pi-based Economic Confidence Model. (Goldman Sachs and the CIA both wanting to get their claws on a model should be enough to pique the interest of any chaos magician looking for an advantage.)

Being a subset of the universe, human culture and behaviour expresses waveform rhythms. As Brutus says in *Julius Caesar*:

There is a tide in the affairs of men.

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;

 Omitted, all the voyage of their life

 Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

(Act 4. Scene iii.)

Magicians seem less inclined to take Brutus's tide when it is running, instead preferring the far more modern (seventeenth century) approach of clumsy, ham-fisted force of casually picking a planet from a grimoiric look-up table and bashing away.

Astrology is elegance... a descriptor rarely associated with occultists. If you read through the dizzying number of proscriptions in a text such as the *Picatrix* what emerges is an almost-Eastern sense of 'right action, right time'. The planets are not IBM Help Desk. In fact, they are probably described as physical representations of the cosmos's control system in more texts than they described as helpful or benign.

But patience and subtlety of action tend to invalidate the western magician's belief in his or her (usually his) omnipotence and importance to the universe. Do not make that mistake. Either become a world expert in astrological magic and build your entire system around it or take the 'ten thousand foot view' and get the lay of the land each year from a competent astrologer and adjust your plans accordingly. The middle ground is worse than useless. It is easier to start a fire in a drought than it is during a flood. Know which is which.

Enchantments and Timing

Staying momentarily with astrology, it is interesting to consider the possibility that it may have nothing at all to do with the planets. It was the explanatory model that the neighbouring bodies in our solar system exert some kind of force or rays on earthlife that led to the initial rejection of astrology in the early days of chaos magic. But just as magic itself may be a culture-specific way of modelling and using mankind's naturally occurring psi capacities, astrology may well be a culture-specific way of modelling the waveform/cyclical nature of reality that we observe right down to the subatomic level. If you have read *Star.Ships: A Prehistory of the Spirits* you will know that organising cultural life around the position and reappearance of the stars is an exceedingly long-lived idea... long enough for it to have developed into a workable system thanks to tens of millennia of trial and error. *How it works* is very much another matter.

There is an element of Pascal's Wager to all of this that makes ritual timing worthy of consideration for even the most dyed-in-the-wool Chaote. One of the grandfathers of modern probability studies, Pascal famously decided it was better for an individual to believe in God even if He may not exist since even a low probability of eternal punishment outweighs the transitory benefits of living an atheistic life; such as getting your Sunday mornings back. There may be

absolutely nothing behind astrology, but there *might* be, and the ‘compliance cost’ added to your practical enchantment is only marginal. Why take the risk of not having your enchantments come off then?

Timing your enchantments requires a stacking of models. At a macro level, the magician should be aware of astrological timing on an annual and monthly basis, as well as any other systems that may be relevant –such as Armstrong’s ECM. The next level down becomes pantheon and even grimoire-specific. Dating as far back as Egypt’s Old Kingdom –I’d argue for a much earlier date, obviously – is the belief that different spirits govern individual chunks of time: decans, days, hours, and so on. Dr Skinner observes that in some traditions, the spirits would not consider the magician to be initiated at all if he or she would not pay due respect to the god or being that rules the hour of your magical operation. Pascal’s Wager comes into play once more. Even if the presiding spirit of the hour is not the target of your evocation (and if not, why not?), you are urged to include them in your invocation and/or ritual space creation. For instance: “On this day of... in the hour of... I summon...” or “This space is made on the day of and with the permission of....”

Further specifics beyond this point are unhelpful as they depend on the system you are working with. Many grimoires have their own system of day/hour rulership. I personally prefer those in the *Hygromanteia* or my own reconstruction of Late Period Egyptian timings. The key is to retain the general ‘shape’ of timing in your enchantments.

Your Own Sacred Calendar

There is a compound interest effect in sticking to a holy calendar of your own devising, year after year. In some sense you become the microcosm you want to see in the macrocosm. Individualising a ritual year affirms the concepts and people you hold important or who have otherwise formed you. You become the Pharaoh of your own little Egypt, which is a pleasingly Hermetic image.

Below is my current ritual year, provided as a serving suggestion only. Your own little Egypt will not be identical to mine, though there may be some overlap. It is important to realise that these ‘holidays’ do not all require full-blown rituals. For instance, I usually just take someone handsome or intelligent

out for a martini (invented in California) on the anniversary of Jack Parsons's death.

As unwizardly as it sounds, the easiest thing to do is to add all your 'holy-days' to the same Google Calendar you presumably use to run your life. That way the observation of them can more easily blend into your daily life. The events or festivals in my own calendar break into three broad categories:

- Planet and Off-Planet
- Saint Days
- Hero Days

Planet and Off-Planet

This is the category you are unfortunately probably most familiar with from the so-called pagan Wheel of the Year. Firstly, it really needs to be said that if you want to 'align' with the 'seasonal forces' of the earth, you are better off gardening, growing as much of your own food as you can and otherwise eating seasonally and locally than you are indulging in an Edwardian pastoral fantasy.

A second category worth exploring despite protestations of appropriation is local indigenous festivals. (It is worth noting that for the Maori, for instance, if you are born in New Zealand regardless of race you are *Tangata Whenua* or 'people of the land'. Not sure how that becomes appropriative, then.) These are the stories of the soil you live on and the seas you live beside. Stay away from the traditional headdresses and you should be fine.

Bridging the gap between planet and off-planet are the equinoxes and solstices, which are really more solar system events rather than planetary ones. Equinoxes have some sort of liminal power that make them magically useful. Solstices are a lovely excuse for a party, assuming you need one. (I don't.) That is how I mark them.

The final grouping within this category are astronomical/astrological events that are personally relevant to you that year. You *can* work these out based solely on your sun sign but they deepen in meaning and probably efficacy if you make them natal-chart specific. Examples would be the movement of an outer planet into your sun sign or rising sun. I mark these events with some

simple rituals of offerings, orphic hymns, incense and so on. When you time these rituals correctly they strike me as a much better way of experiencing the mouthfeel of 'ancient' or 'foreign' festivals than any attempt to accurately reconstruct a Babylonian or Egyptian festival. After all, it was these astronomical events that were at their core, and I know for a fact you don't own Karnak.

Saint Days

How any one can claim to be magically sensitive and still declare that 'the Christians' simply 'changed the names' of 'pagan' feast days to make them saint days is beyond me. This insults the intelligence of these 'pagan' ancestors one claims to revere as well as the potency of the European magical tradition as expressed in the stories of the saints.

I made it my business to visit dozens of holy places associated with saints – official and unofficial- right across Europe. What you experience is a localised expression of magic, mysticism and culture -not some 'pagan god' with a 'new name' that you think your ancestors were too stupid to tell the difference between. (Mine certainly weren't.)

Perhaps more importantly for ritual observation, marking local seasonal or cultural events by saint day provides us access to the intervening one and a half thousand years of customs associated with the event being observed. These can include prayers, the making of fetish objects, traditional foods or songs. The goal of having your own sacred calendar is an ever-deepening experience of the authentic throughout the years of your life. For me the saints are the best way into this. Here are the saint days I observe.

St Dwynwen – January 25

She is considered the Welsh 'St Valentine' for her intercessionary powers over affairs of the heart. But her story is far more interesting, given that she is a Dark Age princess from the holy isle of Anglesey and her story involves magic potions delivered by angels, lovers turning to ice and the granting of three wishes.

The 'thawing of the ice statue' motif may be calendrically significant. Any one who has been to Wales in late January will know what I mean.

St David – March 1

Staying with Wales, we have the country's patron saint. St David's Cathedral in southwest Wales ranks among the 'holiest feeling' places I have ever visited. That current of transformative, experimental, early Christianity is everywhere found. The saint's backstory is filled with a panoply of Celtic mystic wonders; giant gemstones, bees, stags, evil princes. He is half the old and half the new.

St David's final words were to 'be joyful and do the little things that you have seen me do'. It is a good day to celebrate life's quiet wonders.

St George – April 23

There's an almost noble subtext in the marking of St George's Day which is to rescue this fascinating warrior saint from Far Right nationalist groups that have adopted a dead Syrian as their symbol of keeping England white and free of foreigners.

St George is a complex motif, containing the vastly ancient iconography of the dragon; her destruction and the creation of the world; combined with half-remembered echoes of Eurasian kingship and warrior cults and a deliberate attempt to summon back the might of the Roman Empire.

In many ways, it is pleasing to contemplate this poly form while enjoying its contrast to England's benign absurdities like bunting, tea and cheese rolling.

Walpurgisnacht – April 30

Though there is a saint associated with this night, St Walpurga, her influence on the night is weak. Traditionally this was the evening witches would gather on the Brocken, in the Harz Mountains, to cavort with and praise the Devil.

Very much a party night.

St Columba – June 9

Hope of the Scots, St Columba was a highborn Irishman who founded an early church community on Iona: an island -speaking from experience- whose association with magic is entirely deserved.

Conversion incidents in the days of the early church were essentially wizard battles. The stories of Columba have him flying, battling sea demons, turning back curses and generally being a purple-cape-wearing badass Gandalf.

He absolutely excels in counter-magic... although it feels more like 'nullification' magic. Anything worked against you just turns to wet spaghetti and falls to earth.

If you have some whisky handy on June 9th, raise a glass.

St John – June 23/34

St John's Eve must surely qualify as the most magical night of the year. It groans under the weight of local customs and folk magic, from hilltop bonfires to feeding herbs in your garden.

St John himself is the white hot heart of post-Christian esotericism. He retains the headless motif explored in *Star.Ships: A Prehistory of the Spirits*. It is his magic that brings the Logos/Christ down to earth via baptism. It is his iconography hidden in the forest of medieval knightly heraldry and heresy. He sits precisely opposite Christ in the calendar, atop the accumulation of delightful pagan Midsummer survivals. A night not to be missed.

The Dog Days

Corresponding with the return of Sirius to the sky in late summer are the dog days, known for their oppressive heat and risk of illness.

A plethora of dog-headed saints fills the calendar at this time, including St Christopher on July 25 or my personal favourite, Saint Guinefort, who is an actual dog, from thirteenth century Lyon.

Guinefort was protecting his lord's son from a viper that had entered the room while his lord was out hunting. When the lord returned, he saw the room in disarray and blood dripping from his hound's jaws. Believing Guinefort to have slain his son, the lord kills him, only afterwards spying the baby under some cushions beside a chewed-up viper. Grief stricken, the lord throws Guinefort down a well and covers him with stones. Thereafter the well became a site of petition, particularly for mothers seeking protection for their babies. Some of them would leave the sick child at the well overnight with a candle on either side of its head, not returning until they had burned out. So we may be looking at some sort of Roman Hekate survival given the dog, the well and the twin torches. (The actual shape of the story is much older -probably Eurasian in origin- as there are versions that replace the dog with a Mongoose in India, for instance.)

Regardless, it is a beautiful and moving story to commemorate, particularly for pet owners. August 22 is the local feast day.

St Bartholomew – August 24

Another canine survival. Bartholomew is said to have converted somewhere called the City of Dogs, and travelled with cynocephalic companions. His feast day is August 24th.

According to José Leitão, this day is marked in northwest Portugal by a beach baptism of children to St Bartholomew against fear and the Devil. In the largely pre-literate saintly lore of Europe, this makes Bartholomew either a cypher for the Devil himself or a means of binding him. Whichever it is, he is worth your consideration.

St Cyprian – September 16 - 26

Surely requiring no introduction by now, St Cyprian of Antioch has something of a tide. Beginning on September 16th with St Cyprian of Carthage, it is common in New World traditions to light novenas and mark each day until September 26th, the feast of St Cyprian of Antioch. (Nine days bring us to the 25th, and then it's St Cyprian's feast day.)

Given my own astrological landing coordinates, the Dog Days are very personal to me and my ongoing Sirius works. The Days of the Cyprians are the other high point in my 'professional' calendar, if you will.

Miracle of the Sun – October 13

Pushing the 'saint day' label somewhat, we have the last and greatest apparition of Our Lady of Fátima -my favourite modern UFO event by some margin.

This was the day that up to 100,000 people saw the sun dance and change shape in the sky while it rained rose petals over some parts of the crowd.

Fátima is one of my most-approached Marian forms. Unsurprisingly, she has a more Fey/ambivalent –dare I say 'alien'- vibe but her close association with Our Lady of the Rosary provides both spirit world oomph and a system to direct that oomph where it needs to go.

Also I really like Portuguese food.

All Saints Day – November 1

Not just for Halloween hangovers, being up early on a cold November morning is an optimum moment for sensing the presence of the thousands of mystics and madmen, stretching back into Antiquity, who hold out little werelights for our own journey. Go for a walk and a think. Pick up some holy water from a church. (Then take care of that hangover.)

Hero Days

There is not much use giving you my personal hero days because they mean nothing to you. I mark the birthdays of both my grandfathers, the day I first arrived in New Zealand and the day I first arrived in the UK. Also my birthday but, to be honest, it falls so close to St John's Eve I usually just buy a nice bottle of wine and stay in watching catch-up television.

Other hero days are potentially more widely useful.

Tolkien's birthday – January 3

The man who gave me –and likely a lot of you- my first proper mythology. I visit his grave every time I am in Oxford. All the little flowers and Lorien brooches left by nerds from right across the world is very touching to see. Find the others, eh?

Giordano Bruno's death day – February 17

By now you must be familiar with his visage from every iteration of *Rune Soup* since its inception. It is from a statue set up in Rome's Campo di Fiori (paid for by Freemasons) that faces the Vatican, in the very place where they burned him.

Bruno is the true founder of unrepentant space shamanism and the quintessential meddling, adventurous (and interpersonally difficult) wizard.

Discovery of Uranus – March 13

On this day in 1781, a German musician and his sister doubled the size of our solar system with a discovery they made in their backyard in Bath, using a homemade telescope.

William and Carolina Herschel are the ultimate proof that dedicated outsiders –whether outside the ‘correct’nationality, gender or club- can literally make the universe a bigger and better place.

The Siege of Monségur – March 16

The culmination of the genocidal episode known as the Albigensian Crusade, it was on the 16th of March that the remaining Cathars were burned in a bonfire after the fortress of Monségur was breached in 1244.

Some esoteric traditions maintain that the Holy Grail was smuggled out during the fall of the fortress. This is best read metaphorically as a reminder that the Empire can never fully defeat The Signal. It is what I remember on this day.

Jacques de Molay – March 18

Funny how these dates cluster. This must be the ‘French royal murder’ part of the calendar. As you know, de Molay was the last Templar Grand Master, who was burned alive on a floating pyre on the Seine in 1314. He cursed King Philip IV from the pyre. The king was dead within a year.

The historical provenance of the story that a Freemason pushed through the crowd at the guillotining of Louis XVI to dip a cloth in the royal blood and shout “Jacques de Molay, thou art avenged” is not particularly good. But it is a wonderful sentiment, to be whispered whenever a European technocrat falls from grace, which happens often these days but not nearly often enough.

Feast for the Three Days of the Writing of the Book of the Law – April 8, 9, 10

Say what you will about Aleister Crowley, the reception of the Book of the Law is one of the most important examples of automatic writing in the western magical tradition.

For non-Thelemic Thelemophiles, this is best marked by reading aloud each book on its respective days and a feast on the final day.

Jack Parson’s death day – June 17

The original rocket man, emissary of Babalon and author of *We Are The Witchcraft*. A hero in any one’s book.

Bastille Day – July 14

What can I say? I’m an unashamed Francophile.

Granny Demdike - August 20

Old Demdike was an avowed witch, part of the famous Lancashire Witch Trials. She admitted to being a witch, she admitted to cursing people and to being the head of a coven embroiled in a witch war with a neighbouring

family. She was clearly a rockstar (as well as a presumably dangerous and awful person).

Granny Demdike actually died in Lancaster Castle in April before the trial in August 1612. It was on the 20th that ten other witches were sent to the gallows, which seems like a better day to raise a glass to unrepentant witchcraft.

Saturnalia – December 17 – 23 (ish)

Not strictly a 'hero' unless we spread the term over the entire population of Ancient Rome.

You already celebrate Saturnalia. The candles, the gift-giving, the feasting, the public role reversals, the temporary abrogation of decorum (office Christmas parties). It is pleasant to do so intentionally. Typically, I use the opening of Saturnalia as my excuse for having 'non-family Christmas' drinks. This is known as Cheesemas to my materialist friends because that is essentially all that I serve. Take it from me, Saturn loves stilton and port.

NINETEEN

THE BLACK LIBRARY

THIS CHAPTER WAS ALMOST CALLED *SOPHIE'S CHOICE* BUT I FEEL THAT MY DECISION was much more difficult. Standing in front of all my darling books, having to make the decision of what constitutes the *least* number of titles to recommend. I would not wish it on any bibliophile.

In retail strategy there is a concept known as minimum credible range. If, for instance, you would like your store to be known for supplying ingredients for Mexican cookery, you cannot just place a can of tomatillos next to your spice shelf. There are a *minimum* number of products you must stock to *credibly* be considered a store that caters to Central American cooking.

We use the notion of the minimum credible range here to provide some book recommendations. It cannot be emphasised enough that this is a *minimum* recommendation. Literally hundreds of worthy books, just on my own shelves, do not appear here and that is not a comment on their quality or utility in the slightest. Nevertheless, the question I am asked most often is 'what books should somebody who resonates with the *Rune Soup* view of chaos magic read, particularly if they are just beginning?'

I avoid answering that question and, humbly, I am right in doing so. You are built just as much from the bad books you read (and reject) as you are from the good ones. There is no short cut to be gained by only reading 'good' books

because you will not develop what is probably the most important intellectual muscle in armchair magic: discernment. Similarly, you will not find those good books that become so important in your journey if you reject them out of hand as 'bad' - if you judge them by their covers, so to speak.

So instead of responding to 'what books should a beginner read', let me offer you the *minimum credible* *Rune Soup* chaos magic library. Other titles certainly will feature on your shelves, depending on your predilections. This is simply – and *minimally* – *Rune Soup*'s 'black library'. These titles are what you will find in the reference section of my hypothetical astral library. I commend it to you in lieu of a bibliography.

One final note: There is no fiction section but it goes without saying that *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Earthsea Quartet* and *The Invisibles* would make it into the minimum credible range.

Chaos Magic

- *Liber Kaos* – Peter J Carroll
- *Liber Null & Psychonaut* – Peter J Carroll
- *Psybermagick: Advanced Ideas in Chaos Magick* – Peter J Carroll
- *The Apophenion* – Peter J Carroll
- *The Octavo* – Peter J Carroll
- *Epoch: The Esotericon and Portals of Chaos* – Peter J Carroll & Matt Kabrynn
- *Pieces of Eight* – Gordon White
- *Necronomicon* - Simon

Western Magic and Witchcraft (Practical)

- *The Magical Treatise of Solomon or Hygromanteia* – Ioannis Marathakis
- *The Lesser Key of Solomon* – Joseph Peterson
- *Apocalyptic Witchcraft* – Peter Grey
- *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* – Hans Dieter Betz
- *The Book of St Cyprian: The Sorcerer's Treasure* – José Leitão
- *Book 4* – Aleister Crowley

- *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* – Henry Cornelius Agrippa
- *The Orphic Hymns* - Apostolos N. Athanassakis and Benjamin M. Wolkow
- *The Chaos Protocols* – Gordon White

Western Magic and Witchcraft (Historical/Contextual)

- *Geosophia* - Jake Stratton-Kent
- *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* – Owen Davies
- *Lucifer: Princeps* – Peter Grey
- *Star: Ships: A Prehistory of the Spirits* – Gordon White
- *Mystical Origins of the Tarot* – Paul Huson
- *The Quest for Hermes Trismegistus* – Gary Lachman
- *Thrice Great Hermetica and the Janus Age* – Joseph P Farrell
- *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman World* – Daniel Ogden
- *The Classical World* – Robin Lane Fox
- *Comparing Religions* – Jeffrey Kripal
- *Aleister Crowley: The Biography* – Tobias Churton
- *The Ancient Mysteries* – Marvin Meyer
- *The Sacred and the Profane* – Mircea Eliade
- *The Origins of the World's Mythologies* – E.J. Michael Witzel
- *Sinister Forces vol 1, 2 and 3* – Peter Levenda
- *The Red Book* – C. G. Jung
- *Techniques of Graeco-Egyptian Magic* – Stephen Skinner
- *Techniques of Solomonic Magic* – Stephen Skinner

Psi and Science

- *The Science Delusion* – Rupert Sheldrake
- *Consciousness Beyond Life* – Pim Van Lommel
- *Science and Psychic Phenomena: The Fall of the House of Skeptics* – Chris Carter
- *Authors of the Impossible* – Jeffrey Kripal
- *Cosmic Trigger vol 1* – Robert Anton Wilson
- *Permaculture: A Designer's Manual* – Bill Mollison

UFOs and Spirits

- *Supernatural* – Graham Hancock
- *Dimensions* – Jacques Vallée
- *Confrontations* – Jacques Vallée
- *Forbidden Science vol 1, 2 and 3* – Jacques Vallée
- *The Super Natural* – Jeffrey Kripal and Whitley Streiber
- *The Trickster and the Paranormal* – George P. Hansen
- *Final Events* – Nick Redfern
- *Food of the Gods* – Terence McKenna

Economics and Probability

- *Antifragile: Things That Gain From Disorder* – Nicholas Nassim Taleb
- *The Drunkard's Walk: How Randomness Rules Our Lives* – Leonard Mlodinow
- *The Internet is Not the Answer* – Andrew Keen
- *Get a Job, Build a Real Career and Defy a Bewildering Economy* – Charles Hugh-Smith

TWENTY

CONCLUSION: SO, DOES IT?

DOES CHAOS MAGIC STILL EXIST THEN?

It certainly does as a straw man on the internet, a public punching bag for allegedly more ‘serious’ magicians who are presumably terrified of being tarred with our brush for the simple sin of following their own path. Chaos magic is the bogeyman of the ritually lazy: “At least I’m not *that*.” The absurdity of these detractors shines brighter with each protestation, allowing everyone else to navigate past the rocks of naïve self-importance.

It exists and it is iterating, passing from its errant adolescence into an inevitably-overconfident adulthood. Like the Golden Dawn and Thelema before it, chaos magic no longer needs the pre-internet technology of magical orders to keep its lungs moving in and out. It can breathe on its own. In fact, it is orders themselves that need to work out if or what they should be now they are no longer required as life support systems. There is a surprisingly large opportunity here: any number of functions exist that need filling in the post-digital/analogue world we are entering. Every so often, magic mirrors should just be used as mirrors. What are *you* for?

Some of the criticisms levelled against chaos magic are valid. There is certainly a lot of nonsense out there. Though, in the western magical and pagan traditions, that positively defines a ‘glass houses’ conversation. The criticism

that it is ahistorical, however, is entirely invalid. Chaos magic owes its inception to the ahistoricity of the truth claims and practices of the western magical traditions that predate it. It formed as a rejection of them, firstly in their entirety and then eventually in a partial manner, following a few decades of re-onboarding of the worthwhile elements.

Whether it continues to exist is an open question for two key reasons. Firstly, its founder is still alive and on a purely nominal basis few spiritual systems outlive their originators for very long. I think it will beat these odds by virtue of its built-in emphasis on decentralisation which has been core to its success from the very beginning. Secondly, it may just suffer that most terrible of fates: it may *succeed*. A day may come when the idiocies and idea viruses of the western magical tradition are irritated away, when at least the theoretical overlap of science and magic –and they should entirely overlap- is achieved. When there is just *magic*. Until then it will remain an irritant, waiting for the pearl.

Something we were all taught in our first weeks at film school –and promptly ignored- was that in order to subvert the rules and conventions of filmmaking you must first learn and *master* them. If you disregarded them with no understanding of why they evolved in the first place then your film will be garbage. There is a lesson in that.

Magic, at least in its expression, is art. It is not the fault of the grimoires or Kabbalah that Mathers and Crowley got them wrong. Nor is it Mathers' or Crowley's fault: they were films, not rules. The great watchword of this current magical revival is *context*. Conserved and refined across millennia of time and space are pieces of the greater whole. Pieces of land, story and situation that cohere to imply something probably quite profound about what it is to be human in a wider philosophical context. It is not The Answer that emerges from the restoration of context –there may be no such animal- but a better way of asking The Question. Locate these pieces. Locate the context.

Ask The Question.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Australian by birth, Gordon White's family has strong connections to the wider South Pacific thanks to his grandfather's experience in colonial administration in Nauru and New Guinea. He spent much of his early years exploring and diving in Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia.

Gordon first became interested in western occultism at the age of thirteen, following a series of intense dream experiences, and this interest became a lifelong pursuit.

His esoteric leanings found an inspirational overlap with his exploration of the Pacific following the publication of Graham Hancock's classic *Fingerprint of the Gods*. This led him to study documentary production at a university level, film an underwater documentary about Nan Madol and then go on to work for BBC Magazines, Discovery Channel and news media companies in both hemispheres.

After moving to London, he held senior data and analytics positions in global media companies, as well as starting a chaos magic blog and podcast called *Rune Soup...* which ultimately led to the publication of his first two books, *The Chaos Protocols* and *Star.Ships: A Prehistory of the Spirits*.

Over the course of this journey, Gordon has had the privilege of speaking to some of the world's leading authorities in Assyriology, religious studies, genetic research, Hermeticism, psi research, the history of western magic and ufology.

The overriding mission of his work is an attempt to cohere an evidence-based western magical worldview that combines history, paranormal research, the best available scientific research and ufology.

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