

The Blood of the Saints

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*Blessed are the saints, that their blood is
mingled in the cup, and can never be
separate any more.*

Aleister Crowley,
The Vision and the Voice (12th Aethyr)

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Introduction

We're confident that there has never been a book quite like this one. In the following pages, two magicians present the discoveries they've made over the course of approximately one year.

Has it only been a *year*? The amount of ground we cover, you'll wonder whether that's possible too! All of the articles within this collection appeared originally on our award-winning occult website, *The Baptist's Head*,¹ but have been lovingly revised, indexed and referenced especially for this printed version.

There are lots of books out there on magic, but most are redundant. Ever since Chaos Magic burst onto the scene in the late seventies, with its insistence that the paraphernalia of occultism is arbitrary, and its emphasis on a minimalist, 'empty-handed' approach to magic, there has simply been no point wading through tomes of rituals and spells. Once you've acquired the know-how and confidence, you can simply make up your own.

This isn't one of those out-dated tomes of spells. But although we honour the chaos-magical approach, neither is it a collection of techniques or theorems. We've finished with post-modern magic! With its model of truth as a 'relative' and 'subjective' phenomenon, Chaos Magic is a 'green meme' relic. It's time to move on.

What's the 'green meme'? Well, according to the Buddhist theorist Ken Wilber, the 'green meme' is the level of development that the majority of intelligent people currently enjoy (Wilber 2000b, p. 50). It implies an acceptance of pluralism, an acknowledgement that different traditions have equal value as means of accessing the truth. 'Christianity, Zen, or Voudon: take your pick,' says the green meme, 'they're all equivalent means of answering the same big questions.'

¹ <http://www.thebaptistshead.co.uk>.

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But this book doesn't reflect the views of 'most intelligent people'. The next phase or 'meme', according to Wilber, is the realisation that although there are many paths and people are free to follow whichever they chose, those paths are *not* of equal value, and neither do they lead to the same place. The reason for this is that there are not 'many' truths, but only one. What is the value of green meme 'truth', determined only by a personal choice to believe in it, when weighed against the experience of the absolute, which is consistent across all genuine spiritual traditions from all epochs and cultures? We're talking about *Big Truth*, and the fact that not all paths lead there.

As we hope to demonstrate, it's up to everyone to find a path that suits them in their journey to Big T. Magic can form just one valid path. In our experience, its advantage is that it takes you on your way quicker and more powerfully than many others.

And what exactly is this 'Big Truth?' Pontius Pilate asked that very same question (John 18: 38). He didn't get Big T because, like most people, he expected it must be some form of *idea*. Pilate is the archetypal 'green meme' man. The truth for him was relative; he'd believe in anything, as long as it helped keep the peace in his volatile outpost of the Roman Empire. But, 'for this cause came I into the world,' the Christ told Pilate, 'that I should bear witness unto the truth' (John 18: 37). Unfortunately all that religious crap was lost on Pilate.

A more humorous and recent definition of Big Truth is: *forty-two*. That was the answer the computer Deep Thought took seven and a half million years to calculate as 'the ultimate answer', in Douglas Adams's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979).

Adams is satirising the same misconception: that Big Truth is an idea, which can be summed up in words and passed easily from one person to another. In fact (as all of us probably suspected all along) the absolute truth of life, the universe and everything is too big and subtle to fit any idea or word. Truth, for humans, is instead a mode of being, an incredibly subtle form of action that manifests in *experience*, not ideas.

Introduction

At least, this has been our finding so far. In the following pages we'll show what has taken us to this conclusion. Our ideas—backed-up by experience, but merely ideas nonetheless—have emerged piece by piece, sometimes painfully. There were detours and u-turns and we've chosen not to excise our mistakes from our record, in the hope that others might avoid the same cock-ups that we made.

This means, however, there's no linear narrative through this book. A chronological order turned out not to be the clearest—we tried that! So what we've done is to arrange the articles in sections, primarily according to their length. It sounds bizarrely random, but it seemed to offer the most useful semblance of a structure.

The first two sections contain longer pieces dealing with our personal magical development. 'The Higher Ground', the section that follows, also contains meatier pieces of writing, but on themes slightly at arm's length from our personal progress. These three sections map the general territory in some detail; 'On the Path' contains smaller pieces that add more detail still. The final section, 'Grimoire', contains rituals and operations undertaken during the period, offered as examples of the style of our magical work.

This work—The Great Work, as it used to be called—is still ongoing. Our plan is to publish future maps of new and higher territories as we discover them.

Magic is the science, art and culture of experiencing truth: that's the constant refrain of this collection. What you read here may well seem bizarre, unlikely, deluded, irrational—but only if you haven't yet experienced it for yourself. To that end, we've included full instructions on how to replicate our findings, and we invite you to do so. We hope you enjoy the same degree of success that we've had—and even more.

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Textual Notes

All references to Aleister Crowley's *The Book of the Law* (1976) are included in the main text, and cite the chapter and verse in the following format: e.g. *BOL* III: 63.

'Magic' or 'magick'? Our spelling varies throughout the book. Alan decided at a certain point to draw a distinction between his usage of the two spellings. He sets out what the difference is and his reason for highlighting it in 'Magic with a K' (p. 227, below). Duncan, on the other hand, prefers to avoid neologisms and relies upon a single spelling ('magic'), trusting that the context will make his meaning clear.

Alan's article 'Chinese Whispers: The Origin of LAM' (p. 297, below) was first published as 'Who Let The Greys In?' in *Fortean Times*, no. 231 (January, 2008).

Duncan Barford
Alan Chapman
May, 2008.

ALAN'S MAGICAL RECORD

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Magick is a visionary engagement with the truth, which is both its greatest virtue and gravest danger, for whereas the adherent to a purely contemplative method of experiencing the truth, such as Vipassana or Zazen, must rely on reason alone to ascertain the efficacy of the technique or any progress made, the magician has the added benefit of the visionary *manifestation* of his development on numerous planes.

For the magician, the recognisable stages of the process of illumination are not expressed simply mentally and emotionally, as is the usual case with the ordinary meditator; synchronicity, psychic phenomena, visions and spiritual encounters all inform the magician's career. In addition, the relative nature of magical vision can facilitate exactly the right experience at the right time and in the manner most suitable to promote a rate of development beyond that afforded by conscious deliberation alone.

But magick can easily fool those prone to fascination, and a profound relative expression of the absolute afforded by magical vision can easily be mistaken for the absolute itself. The line between subjective vision and objective delusion is easily crossed, especially as magical vision speaks directly to the imagination. As a result, it is not uncommon to find many magicians (not just novices) preoccupied with magical culture, either lost in the surface features of magical tradition (such as dressing in green and swinging a sword as a means of 'goddess worship') or indulging the magical 'by-products' of magicians long dead (like reading pompous and grammatically confused 'grimoires' in order to 'fertilize the unknown dimensions of consciousness'), as if this were somehow commensurate with the actual practice and experience of magick. The magical community is rife with superficiality, and nowhere is it more apparent than in the contemporary representatives' of Aleister Crowley's Thelema.

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Thelema is perhaps the last great expression of genuine tradition in the West, but today its practice appears to consist of arguing over direct lineage from Crowley and the copyright of his work; dressing, talking and writing in a pseudo-Crowlean fashion; and endlessly debating the specifics of Crowley's magical experiences. How this relates to practising a daily magical routine, acknowledging the fact we live in the 21st Century, and focussing on the specifics of our magical development, escapes me.

In one respect magick acts as a filter. Suitability for the process of enlightenment appears inversely proportionate to the magician's capacity for delusion, and any magician's career is inevitably a progressive perceptual shift from the surface to the deep features of magical experience.

1995

As a teenage magician, I 'confused the planes' and fell for the surface features of Thelema, and certainly found talking about Crowley a damn sight easier than practising pranayama for an hour a day.

I spent a good year or two reading everything Crowley wrote, whilst trying to work out a lazy method of sex magick from his heavily veiled instructions. I wasn't without ambition, however. On more than one occasion I devised and implemented a daily routine of basic magical practice, but rarely did I manage a week without missing a day, or a month without the plan disappearing for good. Magical highlights around this time include hashish-induced dhyana and visions, a UFO sighting, a visitation from a Goetic (or was it an Abramelean?) demon in the middle of the night, ascertaining the identity of a burglar by magical means, and sleep paralysis with an alien 'Grey' at the side of my bed, which I banished using a concentration technique.

As per Crowley's instructions, I kept a magical diary during this time, and it didn't fail to highlight my shortcomings. After one failure too many, and perhaps a bit too much cannabis, I

mustered up some histrionics of my own, swore I'd never fail again, and recorded the following cringe-worthy oath in my diary:

I solemnly swear to I.A.O. that I will attain to Godhead; I further put myself at the disposal of the Secret Chiefs, and swear to play my part in the initiation of mankind. Witness my hand:

[Signed A. Chapman]

10th October 1997

What can I say? I was naive and high.

Nothing is true, everything is permitted

It wasn't long before I'd completely forgotten the oath, and had come to consider the idea of the Secret Chiefs or the Great White Brotherhood an armchair magician's wet dream. I had used my half-baked sex magick technique to conjure for a more practical magical approach, and the result was my discovery of chaos magick. By the time I was twenty, I was post-modern; magick was no longer elitist and the universe existed solely for my personal satisfaction.

The next five years consisted of dealing with the fall-out from the previous five years' habitual use of psychedelics, combined with magical experimentation such as: devising my own deck of cards for divination; evocation of elementals; creation of a mind-reading servitor that produced verbal diarrhoea in its targets; a demented attempt at crossing the abyss using a large hit of salvia divinorum (the elves were very excited to see me); an on/off relationship with street lights; prophesying with the 'pristine' Yi King; and the bog standard sigil-assisted success in job / house / lover hunting.

With my relocation to London came the decision to pursue magick seriously. I joined a hardcore practical magical order, and it was only after observing other talented magicians in ritual that I really began to develop my skills in this

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department. At the age of twenty-six, magick had truly become an art form, and although I acknowledged the mystical aspects of magick, it was largely the innovation in technique, the fun of ritual, and the acquisition of magical power that kept my boat afloat.

It was around this time I started a daily meditation regime that I have maintained ever since, and began developing my first 'serious' relationship with a non-human entity, after a spontaneous possession by my 'patron' deity, Ganesha, which was brought on by the acquisition of a small, iron statue of the Hindu god from a mysterious travelling market.

It was suggested by a friend in the order that I might like to try to gain the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel (KCHGA). I was already familiar with the HGA through Crowley's work, but what really piqued my interest was the concept of the HGA as 'the future magical self'. I was already at the point in my magical development where magical results were occurring without doing the actual magick – in other words, synchronicity was becoming a permanent state. So what might my magical powers be like in another thirty years time? What about in another *thirty life-times*? The future magical self is unbound by time and space and is beyond life and death; the invocation of the HGA was a short-cut to the end result of magical development, and so the sooner I achieved union with my angel, the better!

It's interesting to note that at this point I was hardly a master of magical techniques. My astral ability was weak, and I was virtually a novice when it came to possession. The traditional approach to attaining the KCHGA advocates mastery of every aspect of the self before beginning the operation, yet the idea of the HGA as 'the future magical self' encourages the magician to begin the operation as soon as possible – an acceleration of the acquisition of the very magical powers you're supposed to acquire beforehand!

Right application

I approached the operation of contacting my *Augoeides* (another term for the HGA) with a good deal of hubris. I couldn't understand why it should take the six months traditionally earmarked for the operation, considering any other entity could usually be contacted within a single working.² Bollocks to all the paraphernalia—I was going to do it Austin Osman Spare³ style!

So, my first task was to ascertain the genuine seal of my HGA, which I discovered using automatic drawing. First, I made a sigil with the intent: 'I will discover my Holy Guardian Angel's sigil using automatic drawing'. Then I concentrated on the sigil I'd made in a deep meditative state, for a good ten minutes or so, and once I'd forgotten it I began automatic drawing, allowing my hand to move of its own accord across the page in one continuous line. I must have filled between ten and twenty pages with scribble, before I stopped and looked for a recurring image among the lines. Sure enough, about seventy percent of the pages contained the same image, which I extrapolated into a simple sigil. Hey Presto—I had my angel's seal, with its authenticity magically guaranteed by the first sigil!)

In light of the HGA rituals I've devised since this first *Augoeides* operation, what follows now seems unimaginative and rather lazy (but that's Spare's approach to magick in a nutshell). The technique was very simple: assume the death posture, enter as deep a trance as possible, visualise the angel's sigil, and address it directly, along the lines of: 'I invoke thee, my Holy Guardian Angel, my *Augoeides*, etc.'

² Although I couldn't quite remember where I'd come across the idea (this lack of recall was a recurring feature of the next year or so, and probably had much to do with my early teenage education courtesy of Crowley), I knew there was a danger of mistaking some lesser being for the HGA, which—although wonderful for the lesser being—would most certainly result in madness and death for the magician. Or at least a nasty rash.

³ Austin Osman Spare (1886-1956). British artist and magician, widely regarded as the inspiration behind the modern occult current known as 'chaos magick'. Spare's magick is characterised by its minimalist approach, often described as 'empty-handed magick'.

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I performed two sessions of a half-hour duration before I decided I must be doing something wrong for contact to be taking so long. In all honesty, I had no idea what form contact might take, and although a magician once told me his angel actually manifested in front of him one morning after reciting 'The Bornless Ritual' (Crowley 1995, p. 5-10) everyday for six months, I was pretty sure my chances of success would be greatly increased if I provided a medium for communication. And so, the third time I tried the invocation, I requested my angel to contact me via dream.

That night, 6th February 2006, I woke up wide-eyed and instantly sober, to write down the most mind-blowing visionary experience I've ever had. I won't go into the details of what my angel looked like, his name, or what he showed me, beyond saying the vision was a complete symbolic representation of my future magical career, and a visionary experience of a different order altogether from what normally passes for a dream. To this day I still don't fully understand even the simplest elements of the vision, although much of it appears to be coming to pass.

I was quite pleased with myself, having attained the vision of my HGA within three workings, devoid of all that bullshit spouted by your run-of-the-mill transcendental magician. Wasn't this validation of the idea that magical success is simply a matter of the correct understanding and application of magical technique?

As a result of the operation, my magical ability increased tenfold and my life became ultra-weird, involving contact with a machine intelligence from the future; the appearance of the egg-headed fiend, LAM (see below, p. 204f; p. 297f); bizarre magical messages relayed by Duncan; synchronicities involving *The Invisibles* (Morrison 1996), grenades, and a sighting of Grant Morrison at a bus stop in Granada; and unsolicited visitations by the Aztec god, Tezcatlipoca, which in turn inspired a little astral group known as 'The Cult of the Jaguar God'.

However, despite my increased ju-ju, and no matter how hard I tried, I simply could not repeat the success of that first

HGA vision. How had I turned from a cutting-edge hardcore post-modern magician, who had only recently enjoyed an unprecedented magical success, into a clod, incapable of working a simple bit of sigil magick easily mastered by the average novice?

And yet the weirdness marched on.

The Return of the Cheese

I didn't know it at the time, but the vision of my angel was the bursting of my post-modern narcissistic bubble, and the beginning of my genuine magical development. And I was about to learn that everything I had dismissed as outdated Victorian elitist mystical mumbo-jumbo (i.e. all the crap Crowley had spouted about ego-destruction, grades, Black Brothers and the Great White Brotherhood) was in essence all true. All of it.

After a week or so of nursing a bruised ego, I experienced the KCHGA for the first time. (Actually, it was anything *but* the first time, but that can wait.) I was provided with the answer to the riddle of my 'lost' power within the pages of Alan Moore's *Promethea* (2001): when crossing the abyss, the magician is abandoned, even by his angel.

This was surprising, to say the least, because it implied that not only is the abyss real, but I had absolutely no power over my angel. Once I'd accepted that I might not be top of the magical pecking order, and that I was about to embark upon a process I had not chosen for myself, fear crept in: wasn't I unprepared and unworthy for what lay ahead? Wasn't I supposed to be a master of all practical magick before attempting the crossing? And, if not, wouldn't I end up a stark raving mad black magician if I bugged it up? How was I ever supposed to live up to Crowley's description of a *Magister Templi*?⁴

Despite my feelings of inadequacy, it was now obvious that the invocation of the HGA had created a momentum all of its

⁴ *Magister Templi* or *Master of the Temple*: the grade of a magician after he or she has successfully crossed the abyss.

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own. I was approaching the abyss, and success in the crossing was completely outside my control. According to Crowley and many a Thelemite, I was about to face the most terrifying, nut-crunching magical experience possible, and perhaps come out of the other side a god, or a drooling materialist. (But wait, wasn't I one of those already?)

Hindsight

The truth is, despite my apparent magical prowess in contacting the HGA, and as contrary as it may seem, if I wasn't ready then my angel would not have appeared. Likewise, it was my angel that led me to the abyss. An individual's suitability for crossing the abyss is down to the angel, not the individual, and certainly not down to whether one meets the Demon Crowley's criteria of worthiness.

Although Crowley was in essence correct about a whole lot of things, I was about to discover that he really did ham up the magical developmental process.

The Vision of the Double

Magick has given me frequent recourse to question my sanity. The day I discovered my ego speaking to me on the bus on the way to work, which happened sometime during April 2006, was one such occasion.⁵ I was astonished to discover inside me an entity that wanted to know why it existed. After examining its nature, I replied it was an indestructible metaphor—which effectively killed the conversation.

I've come to consider this event as 'The Vision of the Double': the first magical manifestation of a process described by every genuine magical tradition.

Direct personal experience of the truth, or fundamental insight into the nature of reality, is not a mystical state or a one-off event. Instead, gaining the KCHGA initiates a progressive

⁵ Duncan was to have a very similar experience with what he called 'the root of his being', at the same stage in his development, later in the year. (For details see the podcast he recorded, available from: <http://www.thebaptistshead.co.uk>.)

experience of the absolute, which occurs in cycles.⁶ Although the cycle is essentially endless, given enough time the aspirant will reach a level of development that spells the end of his or her experience of reality as an individual, resulting in the birth of an 'illuminated' or 'enlightened' master. A simple way of explaining this process is to say the ego must 'get out' in order to 'let God in' – classically (but rather misleadingly) also referred to as 'ego-destruction'.

In Thelemic cosmology, the process is poetically described as the magician emptying his or her blood into the Cup of the Goddess Babalon, the Sacred Whore, who receives all dualistic life indiscriminately in its natural progress towards realisation of the absolute. Once the magician's life or ego is received into her Holy Graal and mingled with the Blood of the Saints, the magician becomes a small pile of ashes in the City of Pyramids, under the Night of Pan, on the other side of the abyss. This marks the attainment of the grade of *Magister Templi* within the metaphysical order known as the A.:A.:.⁷ As the process progresses, the ashes are blasted white and placed in an Urn, which carries the inscription of the Word of the magician. This is the attainment of the grade of *Magus*. What happens next is a mystery, but the end of the process is illumination in a permanent sense, and the assumption of the final grade of *Ipsissimus*.

There is a depth and complexity to this symbolism that at first glance seems unnecessary and impractical, especially when compared with maps like the Theravada Buddhist four-path model, but once the metaphors are aligned with actual experience of the process the symbolism becomes not only lucid but profoundly insightful. However, because Thelema is a magical tradition, the symbolism serves a unique role in that it can manifest as visionary experience, providing a direct indication of the progress of the magician. (This happened in my own case, as we shall see.)

⁶ I discuss this process in some depth in 'Crossing the Abyss'. See below, p. 144.

⁷ Please see 'The Nature of the A.:A.:.' (below, p. 210) for more on this.

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Similarly, the Vision of the Double provides an indication of the beginning of the process of enlightenment: my ego became externalised as a first step in transcending (but including) the self in the experience of the absolute. Accounts of similar experiences by magicians in the past can be found in William Blake's poem 'My Spectre Around Me'⁸, and in Austin Osman Spare's 'The Focus of Life: The Mutterings of Aaos' (in Spare, 2007).

Affirmation

I found myself in a very curious place after the Vision of the Double. The validity of Western magick as a *bona fide* magical tradition became a concern for me. I was oblivious to the truth of Genuine Tradition, and the free-form techniques of the post-modern Chaos magical approach were appearing stale and superficial. Fine, I could create a servitor, whack-off over a sigil, bang out an improvised rite for material gain and enter trance at will, etc. But so what? I was assailed by the unshakable feeling that I was wasting my time with magick and missing out on the real goods available from direct lineage traditions, such as Tantra, or those of the African Diaspora. What do we have in the West (I thought to myself) that could compare to the accumulated wisdom and tried-and-tested sorcery of these unbroken ancient traditions? The Mind, Body and Spirit section of a high street book shop?!

My desire for material gain and magical power needed to be addressed, and although I was more than familiar with the mystical aspects of Western magick, I was still buying into the idea of enlightenment or direct experience of truth as a one-off trance-like state, which is termed 'gnosis' in Chaos magick. Being familiar with trance states, it seemed only a matter of time before I would experience the supreme trance state that would mark my illumination. I saw no reason why I couldn't experience this outside of any magical tradition. In other words, the simple and cartoon-like magical culture of Chaos magick

⁸ 'My Spectre around me night & day / Like a Wild beast guards my way / My Emanation far within / Weeps incessantly for my Sin' (Blake 1987, p. 494).

had lost its appeal, and – with no Western magical tradition or teacher to approach – I had no idea where to turn.

In May 2006, Duncan, some other friends and myself, had the misfortune of attending the annual pagan festival, known as 'The Beltane Bash' at Conway Hall, London. The event had absolutely nothing to do with magick, and everything to do with banging drums, swinging swords, and dressing head to toe in either green or black. Perhaps due to our more casual dress sense, the majority of these 'pagans' expressed an attitude to us that was rude, insular and stupid. Imagine our delight when we stumbled upon a talk about Macumba and Quimbanda, given by a former Wiccan, illustrating how elements of genuine European witchcraft are today found only in the Africa Diaspora, as a result of Portuguese witches transplanted during the middle ages. The talk didn't go down well with the Alexandrian and Gardnerian witches who composed the majority of the audience, but it piqued my interest. Might Quimbanda be the tradition I was looking for?

Over the next few months I pursued the practitioner who gave the talk, and eventually attended a meeting of the only Quimbanda house in the UK. To cut a long story short, I discovered that not only could I do already what – in magical terms – they could do, but the view of magic promoted by the tradition was woefully naive. The members of the house were members indeed: arrogant, cruel and selfish. When I let slip that I'd once created a poltergeist, this was denounced by the group leader as 'fucked up'. I was also told that mystical experience should be ignored in favour of pleasing the spirits, leading a materialistic life, and following one's 'destiny'.

After the leader tried to charge me a considerable sum for an introductory course in ancestor work, before he would allow me to learn the 'secrets' of his tradition, I severed my connection with the house once and for all.

I'd learnt a big lesson: magick has nothing to do with a specific magical culture; you *really* can find all the magical secrets in the universe on the internet for free. (Thank you, Chaos magick!). It should be noted that during this period I had

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maintained my daily meditation routine, but had not experienced the Knowledge and Conversation of my angel for the entire time I flirted with Quimbanda.

Although it may appear as if I simply had a crisis of confidence at this point in my magical career, I nevertheless consider this experience a visionary manifestation of a specific stage of the metaphysical process. Before experience of the absolute is possible, the magician must first be able to perceive the difference between immediate sensation and the mental abstraction and construction of objects from those sensations—otherwise known as ‘mental contents’. Genuine magical or metaphysical experience and development does not occur at the level of mental contents or ‘experience’. Progress depends on the magician realising this. Magical culture itself is one hundred percent relative and subjective *content*. I had begun to see the true nature of Western magical culture, and therefore finding my identity within this tradition had become a challenge. It was necessary to perceive this truth in magical culture before I could move beyond defining my self exclusively in terms of content.⁹

Naive Enlightenment

Equipped with a new perspective on the magical act and the function of magical culture, my Augoeides resumed his teaching with the provision of a text: *The Pathworkings of Aleister Crowley* (Crowley & Fuller, 1997). I worked on the material from this book daily throughout the month of November 2006.¹⁰ This exercise led to a metaphysical event I like to call ‘Naive Enlightenment’, otherwise known in Theravada Buddhism as ‘the Arising and Passing Event’ (Ingram 2004, p. 151).

Naive Enlightenment is the fireworks of metaphysics, and although it can vary in intensity and duration, its symptoms

⁹ Duncan had a similar experience at exactly the same stage in his development, only he became overly concerned with the tradition of Buddhism. (See his magical record, p. 118, below.)

¹⁰ Details can be found in ‘The Aim of the Game: Revelatory Magical Results’, below, p. 32.

usually consist of trance states, the dissolution of boundaries, expansion of consciousness, bliss, vibrations, visions, as well as numerous other classic mystical experiences, such as the realisation of divinity. Naive Enlightenment is the pay-off after the long stubborn slog of Affirmation, and is usually so spectacular that many practitioners ignorant of the fact that illumination is a process with stages are often fooled into thinking they have attained actual enlightenment. During my first experience of it, I certainly believed I had encountered the Tao, God and Emptiness, when I had done nothing of the sort. I was swept away by the novelty of it all, and assumed my mystical results were something I would be able to repeat at will. I had no idea I would soon confront terror and confusion.

The Cup of Babalon and the City of Pyramids

On November 24th, 2006, I made my first serious foray into Enochian magick by attempting to scry the 30th Enochian Aethyr with the aid my lazy chela, Duncan. Duncan had already scryed the 30th Aethyr with great success, and I was excited as to what my vision might reveal about my magical development.

We lit some candles, burned some incense and set the microphone running. Duncan read the call as I sat in a meditation posture. Whereas Duncan experienced his vision in the form of a story with characters, a scene and a plot, my Enochian vision was more of a 'stream of consciousness' affair. The general setting was outer space, and although recurring characters featured, there was a continual transformation of the elements of the vision from one into the other. Ten minutes in, something bizarre occurred: the quality of the vision became more refined and I was taken into a golden cup full of blood, which then transformed into a being wearing an ermine robe who informed me that I had been taken from the 30th Aethyr to the 14th. Then I saw a number of pyramids, at times reminiscent of the squares of the Enochian tablets fabricated by the Golden dawn (Regardie 2003, p. 647f).

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Naively, I let the vision continue of its own accord for about forty-five minutes. The result was complete exhaustion. Bizarrely, both the candles we lit had completely burnt down, and the microphone batteries—that should have lasted two hours—were completely flat.

Due to the rich, symbolic complexity of the vision, I decided that what the 14th Aethyr represented was far more important than any idea of actually being taken from one Aethyr to another. I remembered that Crowley had given each of his visions of the Aethyrs a title. The 14th he had called: 'The Vision of the City of the Pyramids. The Reception Of the Master of the Temple' (Crowley 1998a, p. 33).

Ooer!

The next day, I recorded the following in my diary:

Approx. 1.30-1.45pm. I was putting washing in the dryer when it occurred to me that I wasn't identified with Alan. He seemed to be part of the universe or reality, but no more than a necessary cog in a watch. Moreover, it has been a folly to identify with him. There was no anguish in this. In fact, there was no fear at all of what might happen to Alan... This state certainly defeats death; but also the consensual conception of life.

Was I to take these events as visionary confirmation that I had crossed the abyss and become a Master of the Temple?

It was tempting to think so, but despite what the vision suggested, I felt deflated. The experience of non-identification with my personality was certainly interesting, but if that's all that happens with the transformation of a magician into a God, I couldn't see the point in bothering. And what the hell had happened to all the drama and terror of the abyss?

The Encounter with Choronzon

I was right to feel let down, because I hadn't finished the crossing, nor had I fully attained the grade of *Magister Templi*. Experience has since shown me that the grade of *Magister Templi* begins midway through the crossing (just after the Naive Enlightenment).¹¹

At this stage of my development, I'd reached for the first time the *dukkha nanas*, the Dark Night of the Soul, or 'the trough' (in my simple model of the cycle), which comes fast on the heels of Naive Enlightenment. During this stage of the insight cycle it is likely that the meditator will experience periods of fear, revulsion, anxiety, despair, sorrow, confusion and psychosis, all at varying lengths and intensities.

Of course, the magician has the added fun of a visionary engagement with these phenomena, and in the Western Tradition you can expect this to occur as a magical confrontation with the denizen of the abyss: *Choronzon*.¹²

The Vision of Knowledge

A few days after my experience with *Choronzon*, on the 9th of December 2006, I beheld a new magical vision, accessible first during meditation, and thereafter at will.

The best way I have found of describing the vision is to say that it revealed how 'knowledge' is a '5th dimensional object'. In other words, if any thought was the letter 'Y', it was as if I could pull back from it and realise that the three lines that make the 'Y' were in fact the corner of a cube, and that all knowledge was inescapably self-contained and circular.

¹¹ The crossing of the abyss is completed and the grade of *Magister Templi* fully attained with the occurrence of the absolute as a peak experience (also known in Theravada Buddhism as 'Fruition'). Likewise, the grade of *Magus* begins at a similar point in the specific cycle that leads up to the occurrence of the absolute as a plateau experience, which marks the complete attainment of that grade. I expect that the opening of the grade of *Ipsissimus* will occur with the Naive Enlightenment of the specific insight cycle that will lead to the occurrence of the absolute as a permanent adaptation, or the completion of The Great Work.

¹² I recorded an audio podcast all about the fun I had with *Choronzon*. This can be downloaded from: <http://www.thebaptistshead.co.uk>.

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Just after this, I began to enjoy – if infrequently – dreams of a completely different order from usual. They consisted of nothing but an almost diagrammatic, abstract image used to explain a concept inexpressible through normal logic. I say ‘used to explain’, but whomever or whatever is showing these images never reveals itself, nor are any words spoken. I simply observe the image and experience an intuitive understanding, only to find that events in real life reflect the content of the dream a few days later.

Equanimity

Hand-in-hand with the Vision of Knowledge came an inability to meditate. I suddenly discovered that any effort to apply a meditative method was unnecessary, because I could simply sit and experience equanimity at will.

At the time, I believed the Vision of Knowledge was a permanent ability I had acquired, and that I was now beyond having to apply meditative techniques. At last (I reasoned) I had crossed the abyss and had attained some impressive magical powers!

I was disabused (again) of my naivety, about a week later, when I could no longer access equanimity without effort and the Vision of Knowledge was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain.

It must be remembered that I was still largely unaware of the progressive and cyclical nature of the process of insight, and so at this point I began to feel disappointed (again) that crossing the abyss had only my current situation to offer.

I didn’t have long to sulk, however, as my Holy Guardian Angel was on my case, and produced the required exercises to proceed through this stage of the process: G.I. Gurdjieff’s ‘Fourth Way’.¹³

¹³ For an account of my work with the Fourth Way techniques, see ‘The Gurdjieff Experiment: Parts 1, 2 and 3’, below, p. 39f.

The Absolute

The Fourth Way exercises provided by my Holy Guardian Angel brought me to my first experience of the goal of magick. The occurrence—on February 22nd, 2007—of the absolute as a peak experience.¹⁴

Cycles

It was after the mind-job of Fruition that I began to appreciate the nature of the process of illumination as cyclical and occurring in stages, as opposed to the more common idea of mysticism being concerned with trance states.

I began to recognise the similarity between predicted events across the teachings of many magical traditions, most notably the correlations between the A.:A.: grades and the Theravada Buddhist 'Four Path' model.

Most importantly, I had been well and truly disabused of my fantasies concerning the nature of crossing the abyss and the Magister Templi, which arrived hand-in-hand with the realisation of the full extent to which Crowley and company had hammed-up the process of metaphysical initiation, and the redundancy of the majority of Eastern bullshit peddled about enlightenment.

The cycle then began all over again. My second experience of the absolute as a peak experience occurred on 26th March 2007, with a few repeat occurrences over the next day or so.

I went through the cycle one more time before the opening of the grade of Magus.

The Grade of Ipsissimus

In terms of the Thelemic symbolism of the metaphysical process, I have yet to experience the vision of my ashes being placed in an urn carrying the inscription of my Word, and the opening of the grade of Ipsissimus, of which the Thelemic holy book *Liber B vel Magi* has this to say:

¹⁴ 'A Task of the Magister Templi', below, p. 50, gives a detailed account of this event.

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And this is the Opening of the Grade of Ipsissimus, and by the Buddhists it is called the trance Nerodha-Samapatti. (Crowley 1988, p.5)

It appears to me that, in light of the nature of the attainment of A.:A.: grades, nerodha-samapatti here refers to the Naive Enlightenment event of the insight cycle that will lead to the occurrence of the absolute as a *permanent* adaptation, or what the Theravada Buddhists call 'The Opening of the Wisdom Eye' (Ingram 2004, p. 221).

Only time will tell.

At present, I'm experiencing the insight cycle at a much faster rate than has occurred previously, despite the fact that my experience of emptiness is no longer solely dependent on the events of the cycle. Regardless of my intimate understanding of the insight cycle and the process of illumination, direct personal experience brought about by daily magical practice is still disabusing me of naivety on a regular basis, and I have no reason to believe that this will stop, even with the attainment of the grade of Ipsissimus.

The Aim of the Game: Revelatory Results *(22nd November, 2006)*

The prevalence of reductionism in Western thought has had its wicked way with magical practice and has reduced it to a set of techniques used for the manifestation of material results. As such, any method that purports to engender transformative experience within the practitioner (such as an experience of the infinite) is usually dismissed as mysticism.

The arrogance of assuming you already know what the effects of a magical technique will be, before you've experienced those effects, is to deny transformation or revelation. In other words, you've stuck your head up your arse for a lungful of nihilism.

I've been performing the 169 adorations (and the relevant astral work) as detailed in *The Pathworkings of Aleister Crowley* (Crowley & Fuller, 1997) every day for the past month.

At first glance, *The Treasure House of Images* (the core text of the book) looks like nothing more than a bunch of bad poetry. However, what is actually gained from practising the 169 adorations cannot be gleaned from simply looking at the text, and it is very easy to dismiss it due to this lack of vision. But even if you take the time to do nothing more than read out the text of the 169 adorations, you will find:

1. It takes approx. 35-40 mins to read.
2. It is therefore necessary that you sit in a comfortable position.
3. It takes 4 breaths per adoration, meaning you must necessarily go through 676 breath cycles.
4. The text must be read, so you must necessarily concentrate for half an hour.

Besides the effects of adoration itself, you can see that just by reading the text you must practice asana, pranayama and dharana for half an hour everyday!

This makes me wonder what incredibly potent practices I might have dismissed off-handedly in the past due to my presumption that I already know what magic (and various other 'superfluous' or 'antiquated' practices) have to offer.

Ritual

My daily magical practice has been twofold: the recitation of *The 169 Cries of Adoration* at sunrise, and the memorisation of the relevant chapter (determined by my horoscope) from *The Treasure House of Images*, which I recite astrally to my star (which happens to be the Sun, being a Leo) in the evening.

Despite my earlier comments, this work is not simply yoga hidden behind a Western occult aesthetic, but a magical ritual that employs symbolic actions to identify the individual with the unity of all things. The ritual works with a wonderfully complex symbolism: the Sun is identified as the unity of all things; it is also Tiphereth on the Tree of Life, or the Holy Guardian Angel, or the centre of the Self, thus identifying the fundamental nature of the Self with the unity of all things;

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which is further re-enforced by the symbolic union of the individual with the Sun through the adorations.

A lot of people often mistake ritual (or ceremonial) magic as an exercise in psychology. However, the work described above manifests a result outside of the ritual, just like 'genuine magic' does. Moreover, it supplies the greatest material result possible.

At the time of writing I have experienced seven consecutive days of results, although I have deliberated whether or not I should publish them at all, because to do so would make it very easy for detractors to tar me with the 'lying-ego-maniac-with-delusions-of-grandeur' brush.

But if we are to surmount our reductionist arrogance and re-introduce the transformative (and most important) aspect of Western magic back into popular occultism, then we need contemporary examples (and interpretations) of this kind of work out in the open.

As the results have been occurring, I've been keeping Duncan up to date with daily e-mails—no doubt to his irritation. I'll present the results in this format, written more or less within an hour after the respective result occurred.

Result 1

I had a result today from my adoration practice. Here's my diary entry:

Halfway through I realised that if I'm adoring all things through the sun, anything normally considered a break (anything that takes my attention away from reading the text to the sun) could be adored as the sun too (which I did).

At the end I sat and continued to adore everything I experienced (all thoughts, feelings, etc.) This led to a non-dual state of consciousness where I could apprehend love, or unity, in all things. I could see a rich, orange light. I found myself 'letting go' — which led to a total loss of any kind of fear.

This state lasted a while afterwards. It's very strange to realise that unity (or God?) is in everything—all the shitty thoughts, feelings, doubts; all the crappiest, saddest things in existence are Divine. I actually know what Ghandi meant when he said 'God is in the rock.'

Detractor: *Look! He openly admits he thinks he's like Ghandi!*

Result 2

I did the same thing as yesterday, and result number 2 followed. Instead of a rich, orange light, there was a dark light (work that one out!). I experienced something unpleasant. The trance was similar to yesterday, except this time I realised the divinity or unity or whatever in myself.

You know when you look for yourself and you don't find anything? Or when you stop thinking, you disappear? Well this was like the reverse of that: I experienced myself in contrast to the unity. The unity is *real* and I am a sham, and although the unity is necessarily 'in' me (because it is all things) that doesn't stop the self (being dualistic) from really finding that experience unpleasant. You are forced to experience yourself as a *big lie*. It didn't help that the unity seemed to be selfless either. It's like suddenly realising that in truth you're a piece of plasterboard.

The trance went no further than this (I think it's enough to deal with for today). I better get my bliss tomorrow, or I'm kicking off!

Detractor: *He thinks he's enlightened, but he's just a hedonist! And a violent one to boot!*

Result 3

Today's result was slightly different. No unpleasantness, unless you count inability to bear bliss. I won't be kicking off after all!

It lasted a couple of minutes (I think), but it wasn't the full bliss. I think it was a taster, but that was enough for now. I was vibrating, my heart was pounding like a twat, bright lights all

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over the joint, and I saw a crystal-clear vision of the moon. I have no idea what that means.

Detractor: *No one has any idea what you're on about either!*

Result 4

Today's trance was similar to yesterday's, except the smidgen of bliss had gone; however, I think it was a step up in that I experienced the fact that everything exists and does not exist at the same time. More important than that, though, I could see I am a complete sham (I have never existed), but there was absolutely no fear or anguish (as in Result 2). This is hard to describe, but the best term I could think of at the time was 'masterful'. It was a feeling of complete assurance. Later, I realised a better term would be absolute peace.

Detractor: *Masterful?! The arrogance!*

Result 5

I can see a pattern emerging—I get a little bliss, then the next day, when the state isn't so overpowering, I experience something about the nature of reality. Today was more bliss. I found that if I focussed and made an effort to breath slowly and regularly, the experience became more 'substantial'. I can now see that all that talk in alchemy and in Crowley's stuff about being able to bear the bliss isn't simply concerned with the ability to endure the ecstasy, but with ensuring you don't miss the revelation by being swept up or getting lost in it.

Am I getting on your tits yet?

Detractor: *My God—He's trying to rape me!*

Result 6

I tried talking to K¹⁵ last night, thinking I might have reached the end of my adoration work, but he told me to bugger off and keep at it.

¹⁵ K is my Holy Guardian Angel. I've recently begun communicating with him—at his instruction—through the African four cowrie shell method of divination, the Obi. (See Black & Hyatt 1998, chapter 10.)

Result number six occurred this morning: we are functions of a perfect, infinite whole. What usually follows is: 'but we just can't see it because we're blinded by imperfect ideas etc.', but everything is part of that perfect, infinite whole; ideas, or thoughts (what we try to see past or slough off) are functions of, and so inseparable from, the perfect, infinite whole.

I experienced the most intense, 'prophetic' state I've had yet – which I struggled to integrate later. The crux of the experience was realising that my focus on decision-making, which *is* me, only works to create explanations for events (i.e. my whole existence) that has nothing to do with me, or with that decision-making. Of course, I later realised that my discomfort was due to still applying the ideas of 'self' or 'events' to something beyond (but including) reason. I had to make a willed effort at stopping this 'focus', which led to the peak of the state. I think the state was an experience of the Tao.

The strange thing was, although it didn't seem as dramatic as the other results, I got the feeling that they're superfluous – a side-effect – and that what I was experiencing was what was important.

Detractor: *I've killed your cat.*

Result 7

A bit more bliss. It is very distracting. In this state, any thought or feeling (and by this I mean habitual thoughts and feelings – like the sense of being 'Alan') can be dissolved or manifested. I wonder if this is something I'll soon be able to do in everyday life? I also wonder if I'll reach the point at which the material world is created, and – similarly – gain the ability to manifest stuff out of thin air. Such as a giraffe.

When I know I'm not 'Alan', it's very strange. The difference between 'Alan' and who we really are is like dreaming you're an amoeba, only to wake up to discover you're a thing called 'a human being'. Going back to being an amoeba makes the amoeba feel weird as the human being is completely alien. I

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think that's a failure to maintain the realisation that even the amoeba is part of who (or what) we really are.

I'm talking shite, aren't I?

Detractor: *At last, a confession!*

Postscript

To date, then, this is as far as I've got, but I think this work will continue for a while yet. I don't feel it's necessary in future to publish further results from this work – unless I *do* manage to manifest a giraffe – as I think this would be labouring the point .

The Monk: A Creature of Habit *(23rd November, 2006)*

I recently fasted for the first time. I went for twenty-four hours without solid food.

It might sound absurd, but it sneaked up on me. I didn't have time for breakfast at home and went straight into a meeting with a client as soon as I arrived at work. Before I knew it, it was two o'clock. I went out for lunch, convinced I was starving; except I wasn't. It was at this point I realised I was going to fast for the day.

Two weeks before my fast, due to other ongoing magical work, I revised my habits. I decided to eliminate all of those activities I indulge in that have no further benefit beyond the experience itself:

1. Drinking strong coffee.
2. Drinking alcohol.
3. Eating in restaurants / fine foods.
4. Buying books.

Now it could be argued that 4 has many benefits beyond the experience of actually reading, but I've fallen into the habit of buying books for the same reasons I've entertained the other three indulgencies – to lose myself, to get away from something, to 'feel good'.

So: I've removed these habits from my life.

After caffeine withdrawal, and enduring the wonderful aroma of the wine sipped by my girlfriend at dinner, finding no

joy in my lunchtime break at work, and narrowly avoiding buying a number of books that were 'essential to my development', I'm feeling happier now than any combination of those indulgences have ever made me in the past.

I also seem to have ample time to do all of those things I used to struggle to fit into a day, whilst maintaining a full-time job and performing the usual chores. I've been undertaking daily magical work (up to three rituals in the morning, four at night), maintaining a blog, writing a book and keeping up a social life, and still finding myself – at times – with nothing to do but relax.

The fast was the icing on the cake. As I sat at work, the sound of my colleagues munching at the socially allotted time, fully aware of the fact that my body didn't need food yet, the full extent of my usual automation became painfully obvious. Worse still, contemplating the millions and millions of humans all over the world that must be operating in a similar robotic fashion was almost overwhelming.

I've been aware of the intellectual notion of walking through life 'asleep', and I even believed that being aware of it was enough to ensure I was 'awake'. But it is not until you have experienced the arbitrary nature of the habits that define you that you come to know what being 'asleep' really means.

Exercise:

List all of those habits that you maintain but have no benefit beyond the experience itself and stop doing them for a period of two weeks. (You can always start again after this period of time, so you won't be losing those things forever you genuinely can't live without.)

At the end of the two weeks, compare the old habits with the new habits that have formed.

Now choose who you are.

The Gurdjieff Experiment: Part 1 (*16th January, 2007*)

A magical colleague, for a long time, has expounded to me the virtues of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff's esoteric teaching.

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Although some of the platitudes he spouted seemed interesting to an extent, I could never really grasp the bigger picture. In terms of practicality, what constitutes the Fourth Way (one name amongst many for Gurdjieff's approach)?

My interest was piqued so I decided to investigate the man further. Wary of any 'interpretations' of Gurdjieff's work, I avoided the vast library of books written by his students, and picked up the first book in Gurdjieff's *All and Everything* series, entitled *Beelzebub's Tales To His Grandson* (Gurdjieff, 2000).

If you've ever tried to read this book, you'll understand when I say I couldn't understand a frigging word. Apparently, Gurdjieff wrote the book in an intentionally obscure and difficult style in order to make the student work for his teaching.

Bollocks. Why teach but hide the teaching? This pissed me off no end, so I gave up on the Fourth Way.

That was last year. This year, my friend still rattles on about Gurdjieff, but this time he has a book to recommend: *Gurdjieff Unveiled* (Ginsburg, 2005). It's a little slip of a thing compared to the rotund monster that is Gurdjieff's first book, so I recently acquired a copy and quickly worked my way through it.

I cannot recommend this book enough.

The book outlines Gurdjieff's core teachings, but more importantly, the actual exercises taught in his institute. It recommends practising the exercises every day, joining a Gurdjieff group, and reading *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*. Daily practice is fine by me. I once tried contacting the Gurdjieff group in London (as has my friend, on many occasions), but they've never replied, so sod them. But in the cause of actually understanding the method behind the madness, I'm willing to read Gurdjieff's magnum opus. Whether or not I'll actually read it three times, as Gurdjieff suggests, we'll have to see.

So on the 12th January 2007 I began the Gurdjieff Experiment.

The General Principle of the Gurdjieff Exercises

The idea is that unless we are actually 'aware of being aware' we are 'sleeping'. Most people, although they believe they are thinking, decisive beings, are in fact slaves to reaction and conditioning. Eventually, being 'aware of being aware' will lead to the experience of what Gurdjieff called Endlessness, or the infinite godhead.

The aim of the game then is to remain in a state of being 'aware of being aware' at all times, as a means of reducing our identification with these reactions and acting in a decisive manner in accordance with our actual will, and as means of moving closer to experiencing our true identity, which is unity.

An example of a Gurdjieff exercise is to pick a random part of the body, and retain the awareness of that body part at all times, regardless of what we are thinking, feeling or doing.

Results

12/01/07

Chose my left hand, and sought to keep it in my awareness all day.

I've done better than expected; of course, I forget to maintain my awareness frequently, but when I do, it lasts for approximately 10 minutes or so, and it's never longer than an hour before I remember I'm not doing the exercise.

13/01/07

It's remarkable: I make hardly any conscious decisions whatsoever; nearly every action I find myself doing is a result of habit or reaction. When I am conscious of this, I stop myself and make an effort of actually deciding what I want to do. I can see the possible benefits of continued work in the Fourth Way in regards to addiction.

Today, I chose my left foot. Irritatingly, I find my awareness wants to go to my other foot instead, although after a certain amount of repeated effort, this dissipates.

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14/01/07

Right hand, sometimes right foot.

Those rare moments when I'm able to maintain my awareness, I find myself becoming incredibly lucid in everyday consciousness. It reminds me of dhyana.

The practice has had an impact on my meditation.¹⁶ By going into my meditation maintaining awareness of a body part (I must stress this is not concentrating on a body part to the exclusion of all other sensations—you simply 'split' your attention), I found I could drop the body part and remain in the state of lucid awareness. The awareness seemed to spill out of my body and into the room. At this point I used *wu wei*, and found my legs and lower back disappeared. Strangely, this caused my breathing to become laboured, almost as if I were drowning; this was physiological, rather than the result of any emotional state.

15/01/07

I'm finding I can move my awareness around my various body parts a lot easier than I could before the outset. I'm also catching myself 'remembering' who and what I am (as in being a human on a planet doing stuff), which makes me laugh, almost as if at certain points during the day I'm identifying with the body part more than my 'personality' (i.e. my reactions and habits).

I also keep having bursts of 'feeling good'.

How much of this is down to the Gurdjieff practice? And how much of my previous work has gone towards success using the Fourth Way?

16/01/07

Woke up and immediately became aware of my right leg.

However, my effort today has been weak; not only have I frequently forgotten to do the practice, but when I remembered

¹⁶ I already meditate every day, and Gurdjieff also recommends meditation whilst carrying out The Work.

I didn't really put in as much effort as I have done previously. I've also skipped meditation.

Perhaps I shouldn't have got drunk last night.

The Gurdjieff Experiment: Part 2 *(23rd January, 2007)*

Results 17/01/07—22/01/07

I think the initial period of beginner's luck is well and truly over. I need to make much more of a concerted effort to maintain the same level of awareness of a specified body part throughout the day. I'm also having difficulty being aware of the body part for the following reasons:

1. I suddenly discover that I am actually aware of an imagined version of the chosen body part, as opposed to the real thing; and

2. I cannot find the chosen body part—it disappears!

I have encountered three phenomena that I believe are a direct result from the exercise:

1. For the last four days, I find approximately five to ten minutes after waking that I feel really, really good, and for no apparent reason. I remember that I used to feel like this when I was a child, up until the age of about sixteen or so.

2. The experience (mentioned in part 1 of this experiment) of suddenly 'remembering' I am a person and finding this absurd and amusing has now become an experience of 'remembering' I am 'trapped' within the experience of being a person. This isn't so funny.

3. A number of emotional habits have become less engaging or vivid.

I think these three results validate the idea that by splitting the attention, the habitual identification with the mass of complexes we call 'the self' is greatly reduced. Result number 1 begs the question to what extent would I identify with 'the self' by the time I was seventy, if 'the self' appeared to take up my complete attention by the time I was sixteen? No wonder old people are weird and cranky.

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The Gurdjieff Experiment has also had an impact on my meditation practice, the most notable results being:

17/01—I ‘saw’ what appeared to be the ‘inner’ equivalent of the rising sun.

18/01—What I normally experience as the limits of my total awareness became two horizontal vibrating ‘bars’ or ‘beams’, at the top and bottom of my ‘inner’ vision.

20/01—The everyday experience of being a separate entity is a mental construct or nothing more than a habitually experienced idea.

22/01—I experienced a degree of absolute nothingness, but I was still aware of myself much like a shadow on a wall.

Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson

I am currently reading Chapter 12, which is page 98 out of 1,238. Almost finished, then...

Although the first chapter is irritating and far too long, this book, even with its weird literary style, is a lot easier to understand than I was previously led to believe. It is also very funny, both within the actual storyline and due to the unshakeable feeling that Gurdjieff is pulling your leg.

The most interesting idea I’ve come across within the story is that there is a race of aliens that live on the moon that look like giant ants; they are very industrious and have completely hollowed out the moon; and they feed off the energy generated by human activity. In other words, the alien ‘greys’ are etheric entities that live inside the moon, and periodically put humans through abduction experiences in order to extract sustenance in the form of the emotion that is easiest and strongest to provoke: *fear*. Holy shit! I bet Gurdjieff was acquainted with LAM! (See below, p. 204.)

Well, Gurdjieff did say the aim of his book was to destroy, without mercy, any existing beliefs and views the reader might have about the world. Which brings me nicely to my dreams: for the last two nights I’ve dreamt about existence in completely Gurdjieffian terms, feeling as though I completely understand

the universe. Needless to say, I can't remember just how it all fits together, but I can definitely say that this experiment is certainly having an effect behind the scenes.

The Gurdjieff Experiment: Part 3 (*14th February, 2007*)

Results 23/01/07—11/02/07

During this period I implemented three additional Gurdjieff exercises: two supportive 'stop' exercises, to facilitate my continued split-awareness practice; and one 'new' exercise of adopting the perspective of every person I meet.

The two 'stop' exercises involve a conscious reminder to include the body (or a body part) in my awareness whenever I eat (Gurdjieff maintains the Christian practice of 'Grace' is a corruption of this ancient esoteric technique) and whenever I go through a doorway.

To be honest, I thought the two 'stop' exercises would be easy, as I've had no real problem with remembering to split my attention most of the time. However, I failed spectacularly. For three days straight I would remember to 'stop' halfway through a sandwich or three seconds after shutting my front door. I only managed to succeed with these exercises twice.

In addition to my 'stop' shame, I made a very weak attempt at the third exercise—I only kept it up for a day or so.

Despite this, the usual split-attention practice has become somewhat habitual. Although not continuous, I would frequently wake up with a body part already in my awareness. Infuriatingly, as easy as this came, it seemed to take far too much effort to sustained it.

For at least a whole week, I would say that I really wanted to stop the experiment altogether.

Stop

The only thing that swayed me from doing this was the results from my daily meditation:

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27/01/07—During this practice I encountered a very curious phenomenon. The darkness ‘behind my eyelids’ became spherical and was both immense and tiny at the same time. I’d experienced this once before (sometime last year), and it made me feel very strange.

31/01/07—Straight after my meditation I fell into a ‘trance of wonder’; everything appeared miraculous.

01/02/07—It seemed that existence was very much like a stencil, and my consciousness was at either side of that stencil or ‘outline’.

Between the 2nd and 8th I generally encountered the Buddhist Formless Realms, and entered a state of nothingness. I must stress that there was still experience, but an experience of absence. By nothingness I do not mean ‘emptiness’. (For more on this, see below, p. 50f.)

08/02/07—Meditated 3 times (30 minutes each). Encountered the strange spherical phenomenon again, except this time the bottom half of the sphere appeared to be inside out.

No one told me about this

09/02/07—I meditated three times (30 minutes each). The second time something terrible occurred: I found myself going through a number of trances (jhanas or dhyana) when suddenly I ‘popped’ into a trance and the physical world began to ‘shear’ in half. This was horrible. I tried to apply the technique of ‘noting’ the fear that welled up, but I was eventually overwhelmed and I fell out of my asana in a state of absolute terror.

Excuse me?

The day before this experience, I was reading *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson*. I was up to Chapter 18, where Beelzebub recounts his involvement in an experiment with his bird friend from Saturn. They both enter a special contraption that pumps out all phenomena, leaving the two experimenters, both

wearing special suits, to observe the fundamental forces of the universe 'from the outside'. His bird friend ends up floating around, above his chair, 'like-a-puppy-who-has-fallen-into-a-deep-pond' (Gurdjieff 2000, p.165). This was because he 'had made certain parts of his planetary body more tense than was necessary'.

We then have this very curious passage:

Having said this with a smile, Beelzebub became silent; a little later he made a very strange gesture with his left hand, and with an intonation not proper to his own voice, he continued:

'While I am gradually recalling and telling you about all this concerning the events of a period of my existence now long since past, the wish arises in me to make a sincere confession to you... in spite of it all, my essence allowed to creep into my being and to be developed, side by side with the strange experiencings, a criminally egoistic anxiety for the safety of my personal existence.

'However, my boy, in order that you may not at this moment be too distressed, it is not superfluous to add that this happened in me then for the first and also for the last time during all the periods of my being-existence. (Gurdjieff 2000, pp.165-6.)

Looks like someone wanted me to know what the hell I was about to experience!

After remembering what I had read only the day before, I went 'back in', after a ten minute breather, intent on nutting annihilation into next week. Meditation number three revealed that death only exists 'here'. We experience it in life; the 'other side' (what we usually assume is the beginning of death) is neither life nor death, but something which is greater than both.

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Beelzebub told me to do it

The terror never appeared again, and up until today I've been enjoying the feeling of dissolution.

I've been charting my magical progress using many maps, from alchemy to Buddhism to the A.:A.:, but in terms of actually dealing with this absolute terror, and describing what can be expected, I find nothing better than the passages quoted above.

What Gurdjieff appears to be implying, which is borne out through my own experience, is that absolute terror is not uncommon before the first experience of what he calls Endlessness; and, if terror does occur, it will only happen once.

Interestingly, there is an entry in Crowley's magical diary *John St John* (Crowley 2006, p. 74) where he records a very similar incident of fear of dissolution, which again only happens once.

This is a joke, right?

However in *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, Crowley produces the following diary entry, of an event that happened long after the one mentioned in *John St John*:

I feel that I am more likely to be able to convey some hint of the colossal character of this revelation if I simply quote the broken staggering words in which I wrote it down at the time. As will be seen, I did not dare to write what it actually was, but I remember at this moment how I had to invoke the deep-seated habit of years to get courage to drag myself to my diary. I felt like a soldier wounded to death, scrawling in his own blood the horrifyingly disastrous information which he has lost his life in seeking.

5:00 p.m. The meditation of this afternoon resulted in an initiation so stupendous that I dare not hint at its Word. It is the supreme secret of a

Magus, and it is so awful that I tremble even now – two hours later and more – 2:20 p.m. was the time – as I write concerning it. In a single instant I had the Key to the whole of the Chinese wisdom. In the light – momentary glimpse as it was – of this truth, all systems of religion and philosophy became absolutely puerile. Even the Law appears no more than a curious incident. I remain absolutely bewildered, blinded, knowing what blasting image lies in this shrine. It baffles me to understand how my brother Magi, knowing this, ever went on.

I had only one foreshadowing of this Vision of Jupiter – for so I may call it! – and that was a Samadhi which momentarily interrupted my concentration of Sammasati. This can only be described vaguely by saying that I obtained a reconciliation of two contraries of which 'There is a discrimination between good and evil' is one.

This experience has shaken me utterly; it has been a terrible struggle to force myself to this record. The secret comes along the Path of Aleph to Chokmah. I could write it plainly in a few words of one syllable, and most people would not even notice it. But it has might to hurl every Master of the Temple into the Abyss, and to fling every adept of the Rose Cross down to the Qliphoth. No wonder One said that the Book T was in ashes in the Urn of a Magus! I can't see at all how it will affect me at present. Even the Way of the Tao looks idiotic – but then of course that's what it is! So I suppose that's it, all right. And its freedom, in an utterly fascinating and appalling sense, is beyond my fiercest conception. (Crowley 1989, p.840.)

Well, I suppose this gives me something to look forward to.

A Task of the Magister Templi (26th February, 2007)

Although it was far from obvious at the time, Thursday 22nd February 2007 was (to date) the most important day of my life.

Towards the end of last year, through a number of magical revelatory experiences, my meditation practice evolved into what I called *wu wei*, or 'Not-doing'.

After a number of sessions of adopting this incredibly hard-to-describe 'attitude', I began the Gurdjieff Experiment through the guidance of my Holy Guardian Angel. As varied as Gurdjieff's exercises are, the central tenet to all of his techniques is the cultivation of 'being aware of being aware'.

As such, I altered my meditation practice accordingly, switching to a vipassana or insight-based approach; the basis of which is simply maintaining awareness of everything experienced at any given moment, without attempting to control any thoughts or exclude any sensations.

This practice revealed many sensations of which I'm normally unaware, such as the simple but very subtle sensation of 'being someone'. Eventually, I reached a curious point where everything I experienced seemed to be 'in front of me', even the awareness of my back. It is at this point, as outlined in Daniel Ingram's superb *Mastering the Core Teachings of the Buddha*, that I found myself experiencing 'formations' (Ingram 2004, p.173f), which is a good indicator that I was close to 'fruition', or what Gurdjieff calls an experience of Endlessness.

Bananas

Fruition is the aim of the game; it's what makes the years of meditation and magical practice all worthwhile. In Buddhism it is also referred to as 'emptiness', and is not to be confused with the Formless Realms; the former results from insight, the latter from concentration practice.

The experience of fruition or 'emptiness' cannot be described; indeed, it is very misleading to talk of it as something experienced. Ingram says:

In this non-state, there is absolutely no time, no space, no reference point, no experience, no mind, no consciousness, no nothingness, no somethingness, no body, no this, no that, no unity, no duality, and no anything else. Reality stops cold and then reappears. Thus, this is impossible to comprehend, as it goes completely and utterly beyond the rational mind and the universe. (Ingram 2004, p. 177.)

It should go without saying that it takes years of practice in insight to reach fruition; so how can I claim to be on the verge of 'enlightenment', when I only started insight practice a couple of months ago?

First of all, fruition or 'emptiness' is simply the term used in Buddhism for the aim of all magical traditions. I've been practising magic in one form or another for over eleven years, meditating every day for two years, and enjoying the Knowledge and Conversation of my Holy Guardian Angel for one year; secondly, through investigating many models of magical development, I've come to the conclusion they all describe the same process.

For instance, in the Qabalistic or A.:A.: model, once you've crossed the abyss and 'obtained' the grade of a Magister Templi, you are considered a master of the trance of sorrow, with your main task being the renunciation of your enjoyment of enlightenment in order to help those lower than you in the order (i.e. everyone else who hasn't achieved enlightenment).

In the Buddhist Insight Progress model, immediately preceding the first experience of fruition are the *dukkha nanas* ('dukkha' is sorrow or suffering), a series of experiences that Ingram equates with the Christian 'Dark Night of the Soul' (Ingram 2004, p. 156). Once you have obtained fruition, you may become a bodhisattva.

In the alchemical model, the first experience of enlightenment is known as the completion of the 'White Work',

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which is preceded by the 'Black Work', where the 'Gold' is extracted from 'the base material' through a process of putrefaction.

All of these maps predict a difficult period, often attended by a degree of sorrow, suffering or confusion, before the aim of the magical process is first realised.

You are here

After the experience of crossing the abyss, and many other things predicted by the grade of Magister Templi, I had no reason to doubt that I would surely be encountering 'enlightenment' soon enough, as a result of my daily magical practice. However, I found the Qabalistic model falling short in helping me understand what to expect in terms of this 'enlightenment'; and this is where I've found the Buddhist Insight Model invaluable.

In the pages above, I've described a number of trance states I was fortunate enough to enjoy prior to my experience of crossing the abyss. At the time, these states were mind-blowing; I experienced nothingness, bliss, even what I thought was the Tao.

I may have been a little over excited.

The idea that 'emptiness' is completely beyond these states was both exciting and terrifying; how could I avoid building an expectation of fruition, when I was apparently on the verge of an experience so stupendous it's not even an experience?

The end of the experiment

In part three of my Gurdjieff Experiment, I found myself encountering absolute terror during meditation, and a very strange 'spheroid' effect. After my initial encounter with the terror, further meditation sessions led me to believe it wouldn't occur again. However, after returning from holiday, where I neglected to meditate for four whole days, I discovered the weird spheroid and the terror back in full swing.

When I say 'spheroid', what I mean is that the 'darkness' observed with closed eyes would appear to expand into a sphere, being both immense and minute at the same time. As the spheroid grew, so too would my terror; I couldn't shake the feeling that the spheroid would reach a point where it would 'pop' or suddenly collapse in on itself, taking me and the universe with it.

On February 22nd, I had undergone two half-hour sessions of insight, both with the spheroid and terror in attendance. I was distraught; so close to the goal, yet too afraid to take the final step. What was I supposed to do? What was I doing wrong?

I began my third meditation session in a state of frustration, feeling impotent, disappointed with my failure. I started with a few deep breaths, and then gradually relaxed into simply being aware of my body, letting the sensations arise of their own accord. After including my other senses in my awareness, I moved on to including my emotions and thoughts. By this stage I was halfway between normal consciousness and the experience of the sphere; I knew it was coming. Intent on just letting it happen, I made a concerted effort at just being aware. Nevertheless, I felt the terror slowly building. Feeling the inevitability of failure, I redoubled my efforts at just being aware.

Suddenly, I heard a voice say: 'you think awareness is a thing?'

I cannot tell you what happened next.

I felt very weird. It was like the universe was inside out; what I mean is, I could no longer 'be aware' of sensations, because I fully realised that awareness doesn't exist. I was no longer a point of consciousness, because consciousness had nothing to do with me.

Strangely, the spheroid thing was bigger than ever before, the fear was still there, but it wasn't me that was scared. I stayed like this for a while, but it didn't go anywhere.

I felt very bizarre for the rest of the day. Mulling over this strange experience, I wondered if my HGA had provided me

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with a means of overcoming the terror, so I could 'get through' the spheroid and experience fruition.

The next day, I found my meditation had radically changed. I couldn't 'do' anything; how could I practise 'being aware', when awareness doesn't exist? I had come full circle and was back with *wu wei*. So I simply sat and waited.

I sailed effortlessly through a number of formless realms, each one more refined than the next. I've experienced some of the formless realms before, so I recognized the state, but this time there was 'something' in the background that was different. It was the most peacefully still meditation I've ever experienced.

Shortly after this meditation, I entered a blissed-out state that was almost overwhelming in its subtlety. Afterwards, I felt exceedingly ordinary, and yet incredibly grateful.

It slowly dawned on me what had occurred the day before.

Coming Home

On Duncan's recommendation, I'd recently started reading *Coming Home* by Lex Hixon (Hixon, 1989. See review, p. 50, below). Within its pages I discovered that what I had been calling *wu wei* was in fact contemplation practice.

More importantly, I found my experience described in great detail within the works of Heidegger, Krishnamurti, Ramakrishna, Plotinus, and Hixon's description of the Zen Ox-Herding images (See below, p. 139).

On *wu wei*, or what I experienced before fruition:

You have practised self-control, mastered thought, and concentrated on the furthering of experience. This is a self-centred occupation, it is not meditation: and to perceive that it is not meditation is the beginning of meditation... Freedom from the false does not come about through the desire to achieve it; it comes when the mind is no longer concerned with success, with the attainment of an

end. There must be the cessation of all search, and only then is there a possibility of the coming into being of that which is nameless. (Krishnamurti, cited in Hixon 1989, p. 23.)

You want a non-willing in the sense of a renouncing of willing, so that through this we may release... ourselves to the sought-for essence of a thinking that is not a willing...

– On our own we do not awaken releasement in ourselves.

– Thus releasement is affected from somewhere else.

– Not affected, but let in. Releasement awakens when our nature is let in so as to have dealings with that which is not a willing. (Heidegger, cited in Hixon 1989, pp.7-8.)

The 'Ten Zen Ox-Herding Pictures' are a map or model of spiritual progress, with the Ox representing the experience of enlightenment. Picture 1, 'Seeking the Ox' is when we 'imagine the mystery of our True Nature to be an object of search' (Hixon 1989, p.61). In Picture Two, 'Finding the Tracks', the seeker becomes the finder and signs of the Ox's presence are noticed everywhere, however: 'The tracks of the Ox are none other than the seeker's own tracks through his own consciousness' (Hixon 1989, p. 62). 'First Glimpse of the Ox', or Picture Three occurs when enlightenment is realised through the cessation of the search.

On the actual experience of fruition: 'The One is present even to those asleep and does not astonish those who at any time see It, because It is always there' (Plotinus, cited in Hixon 1989, p. 104). On what comes after Fruition, explains Hixon: 'For those who meditate in the mood of impersonal wisdom, there is thankfulness simply for its own sake' (Hixon 1989, p.16). Indeed, as Heidegger wrote: *denken ist danken*. To think is to thank.

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So what?

I've waited all my life for fruition. In *Mastering the Core Teachings of the Buddha*, discussing fruition, Ingram states: 'There are times when it is fun to show off, and this is one of those times' (Ingram 2004, p. 177).

The amount of work that it has taken to get here, as far as I'm concerned, gives me the right.

Magister Templi (3rd March, 2007)

A reader of our website voiced some concern about what I had left 'to do' in terms of magical development. Indeed, before I actually became involved with the A.:A.:—strictly as a developmental model that fits my experience, because I'm not part of any magical group or organisation that recognises such 'grades'—I too considered 'crossing the abyss' as the ultimate goal within the Western tradition; which is strange, considering there are three grades above the abyss.

After reading Daniel Ingram's wonderful essay on arahats (Ingram 2008), I came to the conclusion that the reason 'crossing the abyss' is held in such high regard is due to a general misunderstanding of what is actually involved and of the attributes gained by the aspirant once they have become a Magister Templi (the first grade above the abyss).

Confession

First things first: I have absolutely no doubt whatsoever that I have indeed crossed the abyss—the evidence is overwhelming. I state this solely to avoid any objection on the grounds that perhaps I am deluding myself.

Despite the fact I'm very much aware of the bullshit circulating the occult scene concerning what it means to be a Magister Templi, thanks in most part to those that have absolutely no experience of what they are talking about, I must confess: there is a small part of me that's a little disappointed with my 'attainment'.

I first read of the Magister Templi when I was about 15 or 16, primarily through the works of Mr Crowley. Of course, he didn't exactly under-play the virtues of attaining the grade, and –even though he never really misled the reader in terms of what to expect– he certainly fostered a climate for encouraging bullshit.

Bullshit such as:

1. A Magister Templi (MT) can no longer act, think or feel the same way they did before they crossed the abyss.
2. An MT is in a permanent state of samadhi.
3. An MT can turn him or herself invisible and levitate.
4. An MT is an ascended master.
5. An MT is a great world teacher.
6. An MT cannot act like an absolute asshole (unless of course he's doing it to teach you a great spiritual truth).

As a teenager, a little part of me bought into this myth, and it's that part of me that now feels a little disappointed with the actuality, a little embarrassed at making such a 'stupendous' claim, and a little chuffed that I can make the claim; but this is all okay, because that part of me is still 15, which I think is also the mental age of the people who genuinely buy into this crap.

The Truth

I didn't witness the destruction of the universe.

I didn't undergo a sudden, traumatic transformation into an ascended master.

I haven't gained any extra magical powers (such as levitation).

I still don't have any followers. (*Damn.*)

If I had to reduce it down to one thing, I would say that I experienced (through a slow, gradual process) the absolute for the first time.

As a Magister Templi, I can tell you:

1. Most of the time I feel exactly the same as I did before the crossing.
2. I still haven't met the Great White Brotherhood.

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3. I still act like a tit when I'm pissed.

4. I still act like a tit when I'm not pissed.

5. When I meditate, I practise being 'above the abyss' (i.e. I can, at will, experience the world in a qualitatively different way, and I don't have to be meditating to do this) and what I experience is progressively changing. In other words, I'm still developing—I have not reached 'enlightenment', whatever that is.

6. Curiously enough, I am undergoing revelatory experiences as predicted by the grade of Magister Templi within the A.:A.: system. Although designated 'tasks', these experiences, such as understanding the trance of sorrow, are occurring without conscious intent, as if the grades were part of a natural process.

7. Although I've stated that a part of me is a little disappointed, and I've not really described anything that sounds as marvellous as being able to levitate, the whole experience is far more amazing than I could have possibly imagined.

It took Aleister Crowley six years to gain the next grade above Magister Templi, and even longer before he obtained the final grade. Crossing the abyss is just the beginning!

A Tribute to Robert Anton Wilson (*19th March, 2007*)

Last night, I attended *A Tribute to Robert Anton Wilson* at the South Bank, with music from Mixmaster Morris, incredible visuals courtesy of Coldcut, readings by Alan Moore, and anecdotes from Ken Campbell and Bill Drummond.

If you were there, you may have noticed a wanker stand up at the end in a pathetic attempt at starting a standing ovation. No doubt you laughed when no one joined in. I would have too, were it not for the fact I was that wanker. But I didn't really mind making a tit of myself; Alan Moore had just blown my head off with a poem about Bob.

Earlier that same morning, I was lamenting the infrequent and nonsensical imagery I had scryed in the 29th Enochian

Aethyr—such as a single-storey 'monastery' with no roof, and a big triangular wedge that seemed to be moving at high speed.

Imagine my surprise when, seven hours later, I saw them again as part of Coldcut's visuals. It turned out that the 'monastery' was in fact a schematic of a CIA building, and the wedge was a B2 Bomber. I had no idea Enochian visions could be prophetic.

Visions aside, the highlight was most definitely Alan Moore's oration. I've been a fan of his writing for a while, but his delivery of the spoken word is just as impressive. Moore ended his poem by recounting the time he saw a vision of the real illuminati, a brotherhood of enlightened individuals, sworn to realising the liberation of each and every one of us. Amongst their ranks, dressed in white robes, was Robert Anton Wilson.

A-fucking-men.

The Undeclared Knowledge (24th April, 2007)

My magical experience seems to corroborate many of the core principles in the founding text of Thelema, *The Book of the Law* (Crowley 1976).

Dictated by Aleister Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel in 1904, the text heralds the dawn of the Aeon of Horus, the Crowned and Conquering Child, and can be considered the 'official statement' of the new occult forces that will rule the world for the next two thousand years (at least, according to Crowley).

In many places, I find the prose and cosmology of *The Book of the Law* to be not only beautiful—especially in Chapters 1 and 2—but also invaluable in terms of magical insight. However, the text does contain what appear to be quite inhumane and (let's face it) fascist sentiments. The goddess Nuit states:

Let my servants be few & secret: they shall rule the many & the known. (*BOL* I: 10)

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Illuminati anyone? Obviously the gods don't care much for democracy.

The god Hadit, consort of Nuit, tells us:

21. We have nothing with the outcast and the unfit: let them die in their misery. For they feel not. Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched & the weak: this is the law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world...

48. Pity not the fallen! I never knew them. I am not for them. I console not: I hate the consoled & the consoler.

49. I am unique & conqueror. I am not of the slaves that perish. Be they damned & dead! Amen.
(*BOL II*)

I wonder what they made of *Live Aid*? If you think the first two chapters are bad, you should read the last.

Boo Hoo

Rather interestingly, especially for those that consider *The Book of the Law* to be little more than the product of a deranged mind, Crowley's revulsion to the text is actually noted by 'the voice' itself:

10. O prophet! thou hast ill will to learn this writing.

11. I see thee hate the hand & the pen; but I am stronger. (*BOL II*)

Indeed, Crowley spent a good part of his life avoiding his responsibility as Prophet of the New Aeon; even the 'Wickedest Man in the World' found the book a little on the offensive side.

Despite the fact over a century has passed since the inauguration of the new aeon, devout Thelemites still struggle with the less than savoury aspects of the book, as illustrated in a

recent thread on the thelemic on-line forum *Lashtal*, which asked 'is Thelema a form of benign fascism?'¹⁷

Perhaps Crowley-loving comics genius Alan Moore would have answered in the affirmative, if his interview for *Blather* in 2000, is anything to go by:

I admire the prose style of *The Book of the Law*, that's about all I admire about it. I'm sure that there probably is great wisdom there and I'm pretty certain he did channel it from somewhere but I don't think it was from the genuine Angel of the Aeon! It was probably something pretty fucking big and scary but no, no, I could never accept [it], it's too mad and cruel, it's too heartless, it's too inhuman, I'm not interested in that. If that's what godhood's all about then I'll settle with what I've got. (Kavanagh, 2000)

It's easy to see that *The Book of the Law* poses a problem; is it really possible to accept the profound magical insights without agreeing with the rest of it? Are we perhaps missing the bigger picture due to a fault in our understanding? As the book says: 'There is great danger in me; for who doth not understand these runes shall make a great miss' (*BOL* II: 27).

Wife swap

The Book of the Law is not the only supposed 'angelic communication' that smacks of inhumanity.

Between 1582 and 1587, Dr. John Dee, astrologer to Queen Elizabeth I and all-round genius, with Sir Edward Kelley, alchemist extraordinaire, communicated regularly with a number of beings that claimed to be angels. During this time, the angels transmitted to Dee and Kelley the angelic language Enochian; a rather vague eighteen-day magical working; a vast number of complicated tables, sigils and specifications for

¹⁷ See: <http://www.lashtal.com/nuke/PNphpBB2-viewtopic-t-1769.phtml>.

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equipment; a complete system of angelic evocation (otherwise known as 'Heptarchy magic', the manuscript of which is still unpublished); a complete map of the known world, and the angels or genii therein; a book called Liber Loagaeth, which was intended to usher in a new aeon; and forty-eight 'calls' or 'keys', thirty of which are used to scry the 'aethyrs', with the purpose of the remaining eighteen remaining unknown (although perhaps they are to be used for the vague eighteen-day working, but if this is the case, the instructions from the angels are contradictory and confused).¹⁸

On numerous occasions, as related in Dee's magical record of the communications, the angels appear callous, deliberately obscure and deceitful. Despite Kelley's protestations, the angels ordered he break his celibacy and take a wife; they tricked Dee and Kelley into travelling around Europe; berated and cursed Dee when he showed little faith in the angels; commanded Dee to admonish the Kings and rulers of Europe for their sins (which he did—it's amazing he wasn't executed); and, finally, the angels instructed Dee and Kelley to swap wives. This they did, and it brought about the end of their relationship.

Given Kelley's background as a necromancer and petty thief, many historians are inclined to believe that Kelley faked the angel communications (Kelley acted as the scryer, or conduit for the angels' communications) and that he had designs on Dee's wife from the start.

However, as with Crowley, Kelley was no fan of the information he channelled. He would frequently become enraged with the angels, and would refuse any further contact, only for Dee to talk him around each time. When the angels claimed their system of magic to be more powerful than any existent, it was Kelley who pointed out it was no different from the common magic he already knew. Indeed, if Dee and Kelley were able to contact the angels through their own invocations, why is the Enochian system required at all? It's worth noting that Dee and Kelley never used the system dictated by the

¹⁸ For a detailed account see Tyson (2005).

angels (although they did make the equipment), because they were forbidden to do so, until the time came when they would be granted permission. But that time never arrived.

The Key to it All

Due to the angels' vague or omitted instructions, all the magic available today that purports to be Enochian is based on guesswork, with the worst examples being a bastardisation of a number of magical systems.¹⁹

However, the scrying of the aethyrs is perhaps the most explicit component of Enochian magic, and the one that requires the least amount of invention; you simply read the key (one call fits all), inserting the appropriate name of the Aethyr and the governing angels, then sit back, close your eyes, and enjoy the show.²⁰

It's been reported by many a magician that when scrying the aethyrs there is on occasion the inescapable feeling of being tricked in some sense. Although I have experienced this once or twice, the results have never been anything but very good in terms of my magical development. It has also been remarked that there are a number of Goetic names in some of the 'seals' that are placed on the 'Table of Practice' (see Tyson 2005, p.66f) – although this isn't required for the scrying of the aethyrs. Just to clarify: the Goetia is a system of magic that calls upon a group of demons who like to fuck people over. Does this perhaps explain the deceitful nature of the so-called 'angels'?

The truth is far more bizarre: the only reason the Goetia is in anyway linked with Enochian magic is because Thomas Rudd, a 17th Century mathematician, in what can only be described as a fit of sheer insanity, decided that any letter 'B' found within the Enochian system must represent a Goetic demon whose name begins with the same letter. No Goetic name or seal appears in any of the original communications to Dee and Kelley, but—

¹⁹ For instance, see The Golden Dawn's deranged arrangement of The Watchtowers and its bizarre use of the eighteen keys for evocation (Regardie 2003, p.624f).

²⁰ Full instructions are available in Crowley et al., 2002.

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thanks to Rudd—they are now included in a number of books on Enochian magic.

Goetia aside, it's when we get to the English translation of the call or key used to scry the Aethyrs that we find something genuinely Enochian, that's a little on the dark side:

The Earth, let her be governed by her parts, and let there be Division in her, that the glory of her may be always ecstasy and imitation of orgasm. Her course, let it run with the Heavens; and as an handmaid let her serve them. One season, let it confound another, and let there be no creature upon or within her the same. All her members, let them differ in their qualities, and let there be no one Creature equal with another. The reasonable Creatures of the Earth, and Men, let them vex and weed out one another; and their dwelling-places, let them forget their Names. The work of man and his pomp, let them be defaced. His building, let it be a Cave for the Beast of the Field! Confound her understanding with darkness! For why? It repenteth me concerning the Virgin and the Man. One while let her be known, and another while a stranger: because she is the bed of an Harlot, and the dwelling-place of him that is fallen. O ye Heavens arise! The lower heavens beneath you, let them serve you! Govern those that govern! Cast down such as fall. Bring forth with those that increase, and destroy the rotten...
(Crowley 1998a, p. 28-9)

The similarity in viewpoint between this call and *The Book of the Law* is compelling!

Considering that the four Watchtowers of The Great Table in the Enochian system are said by the angels to be 'gates' from the manifest world to eternity, is it also a coincidence that *The Book of the Law* contains the following passage?

There are four gates to one palace; the floor of that palace is of silver and gold; lapis lazuli & jasper are there; and all rare scents; jasmine & rose, and the emblems of death. Let him enter in turn or at once the four gates; let him stand on the floor of the palace. (*BOL* I: 51)

What are the chances that under the guidance of intelligences claiming to be 'angelic', both Dee and Crowley would instigate the two greatest magical movements (Rosicrucianism and Thelema respectively) of the last five hundred years?

Big Ball

There is of course a very simple answer to the problem of both *The Book of the Law* and the nature of the Enochian angels: the universe, and this magic, is simply not very nice.

Sometime last year, as a result of practising Gurdjieff's 'Fourth Way', I encountered a terrifying phenomenon during meditation. Out of the darkness of my closed eyes, a strange 'spheroid' would form and steadily grow bigger and bigger, at times both infinitely large and infinitely small. No matter what my attitude, no matter how well-prepared, my reaction was always absolute terror with an impending sense of doom.

Each time the trance of the 'Big Ball' occurred, I would try to sit longer than I had the time before, and each time I believed I had finally 'got past it'.

It is not uncommon to experience trance-states when scrying the Enochian aethyrs, but the appearance of the Big Ball during my vision of the 29th aethyr came as a surprise. After the Big Ball 'dissipated', the vision of the aethyr returned and an angel (dressed in a grim reaper outfit) told me that my sense of self, or ego, was preventing my magical progress. That morning, I performed an impromptu *Chod* rite²¹ on the train on the way home, hoping this would address the Big Ball once and for all.

²¹ Chod rite: 'a ritual rehearsal of death in which the death-self is invoked to manifest its knowledge and wisdom' (Carroll 1992, p.114f).

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Madimi

My daily meditation practice and the succeeding vision of the 28th Aethyr (where I was shown the fallacy of death) were thankfully Big Ball free.

The morning after the vision of the 28th Aethyr, I decided to have a go at the 27th. And that's when the sneaky Big Ball bounced back.

Interestingly, the trance of the Big Ball developed beyond what it had presented previously, and revealed itself as a breakdown of perspective or of space. Duncan, who was seated to my right, became incredibly minute and at the same time incredibly close, whereas I had grown to a great size. I did not find this unpleasant, but it was a little disorientating.

Suddenly, the trance ended and I was back in the vision; I was floating in space, against a backdrop of beautiful stars and nebulae, when a naked girl, floating inside a blue bubble, appeared in front of me. She seemed to age rapidly and decay, then re-form. I asked her who she was, to which she replied: 'Madimi' (at which Duncan exclaimed: 'Oh shit!').²²

I then enjoyed the greatest bliss I've ever experienced in my life. For the rest of the vision, no matter what incredible things were going on in front of my eyes, I wanted Madimi to come back.

For a good number of hours after the vision, I felt as if I were a cosmic principle. I knew that the bliss I had experienced during my encounter with Madimi was the bliss of the continuity of existence. Even those things we consider sorrowful are necessarily a part of this continuity, and are therefore included in (or, more correctly, are no different from) this bliss.

A task of my present grade, according to the A.:A.: magical developmental model, is an understanding of 'The Trance of Sorrow' (see Crowley, 1991a). Through the use of the Enochian Aethyrs, I had come to realise the folly of suffering and the

²² Madimi was the spirit that instructed Dee and Kelley to swap wives. See Woolley 2002, p. 287f.

essential bliss of existence. I feel as though I have accomplished this 'task'.

An Initiated Perspective

I'm not surprised to find my Enochian experience expressed very simply and beautifully in *The Book of the Law*, when Nuit proclaims: 'And the sign shall be my ecstasy, the consciousness of the continuity of existence, the omnipresence of my body' (*BOL* I: 26). And where Hadit states: 'Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains' (*BOL* II: 9).

Before I continue, I would just like to make it crystal clear that I am no apologist for *The Book of the Law*, nor am I a Thelemite. What I am about to say is based on my own magical experience.

Let's re-read the quotations given at the beginning of this article, but this time in context, with a few parts highlighted:

21. *We have nothing with the outcast and the unfit: let them die in their misery. For they feel not [bliss]. Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched & the weak: this is the law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world. Think not, o king, upon that lie: That Thou Must Die: verily thou shalt not die, but live. Now let it be understood: If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever. Nuit! Hadit! Ra-Hoor-Khuit! The Sun, Strength & Sight, Light; these are for the servants of the Star & the Snake...*

46. Dost thou fail? Art thou sorry? Is fear in thine heart?

47. *Where I am these are not.*

48. Pity not the fallen! *I never knew them.* I am not for them. I console not: I hate the consoled & the consoler.

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49. I am unique & conqueror. I am not of the slaves that perish. Be they damned & dead! Amen.
(*BOL II*)

The law of 'the servants of the Star & the Snake' (i.e. initiates) is 'the joy of the world' (bliss of existence); suffering, fear, death and failure do not exist for Nuit/Hadit ('Where I am these are not') or 'the servants' (the initiated). There are no 'out-cast' and 'unfit', or 'wretched' and 'weak' in bliss.

'Compassion', 'the wretched & the weak' and 'the slaves' are therefore all a result of suffering. To 'stamp down the wretched & the weak' is to 'stamp down' suffering, sorrow or the impartial and uninitiated (old) view of existence. To 'hate the consoled & the consoler' is to hate the blasphemy of a universe that does not include the bliss of the continuity of existence.

Although appearing to be very cruel, *The Book of the Law* is in fact telling us that we live in a universe that is essentially blissful and that suffering is an illusion; the voice of the book wishes to destroy that illusion.

Of course, how many people will come to the actual experience of the bliss of the continuity of existence? If devout Thelemites struggle to understand this aspect of *The Book of the Law*, what chance is there that Humanity as a whole will ever accept Thelema?

Predictably, the book has an answer: 'Let my servants be few & secret: they shall rule the many & the known' (*BOL I: 10*).

At least the author was realistic.

Repent! The beginning is nigh!

Although it is true that the angels manipulated Dee and Kelley for their own ends, as Aiwass did Crowley, I believe those ends are not secret, nor 'evil'. On the contrary I believe, based on experience, that both the Enochian angels and the author(s) of *The Book of the Law* are concerned solely with the enlightenment of mankind.

Now let's take another look at the problematic call of the thirty aethyrs, the part relating God's command to the angels upon creating the world, which says: 'let there be Division in [the Earth], that the glory of her may be always ecstasy and imitation of orgasm' (Crowley 1998a, p. 29).

Let's take a massive liberty and consider this in terms of what Nuit tells us in *The Book of the Law*:

29. For I am divided for love's sake, for the chance of union.

30. This is the creation of the world, that the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution all. (*BOL I*)

Is it unreasonable to conclude that both angelic transmissions, despite their apparent inhuman and cruel elements, actually teach the end of suffering? Does not Thelemic and Enochian magic inevitably lead to the actual experience of this?

It is only due to a defect in our existence that we suffer, and it is only through a defect in our understanding that we 'make a great miss' (*BOL II: 27*) by failing to see the purpose of Thelema and Enochian magic.

After all, is not the aim of all magic synonymous with that of the call of the aethyrs, when we demand of the angels: 'Open the Mysteries of your Creation, and make us partakers of THE UNDEFINED KNOWLEDGE' (Crowley 1998a, p. 29).

The Magister Templi and the Arahat (*8th May, 2007*)

On March 26th, 2007, I wrote to Daniel Ingram (aka 'Dharma Dan'), an arahat of the Buddhist Theravada tradition, to ask his advice regarding fruition. I discovered that not only was Dan willing to help, but he displayed an insatiable interest in all things related to 'enlightenment'.

What follows is a full-blown 'geek-out' regarding meditation and developmental models. As such, the conversation is littered

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with technical terms. Please see Dan's book *Mastering the Core Teachings of the Buddha* (Ingram, 2004) and my article, 'The Nature of the A.:A.:.' (p. 210, below) for clarification of some of these terms.

The Timing of Fruition

ALAN: I hope you don't mind me asking you for a little advice, Dan, but in light of the fact good teachers are hard to find, I feel you're the only person I know qualified to give that advice. On the 22nd February, I experienced my first fruition. A couple of weeks ago I went through the *dukkha nanas* again, in quite a bad way. I actually felt psychotic. However, I went through the whole thing in one night as a result of a HGA ritual. If I'm correct, the insight progress cycle is fractal; so I assumed this was a 'little cycle' within a much bigger one, leading to second path at some point in the far future.

However, after reaching equanimity, I didn't experience fruition, so I assumed I'd made a mistake in locating where I was.

Now, this might sound like a pair of pendulous testicles, but I may have experienced second fruition this morning, meditating on the train on the way to work.

Very much like the first fruition, this experience wasn't very shocking. At first, I became detached from the karma (I know that's a cheesy term, but 'inertia' or 'tendency' doesn't quite cut it) that makes me think all will be revealed in the future (especially when I'm dead); and after that I became detached from the karma that freaks me out when I consider the fact I actually exist (one of my favourites). Something happened then: I realised that 'form is emptiness' (I know this is a quotation straight out of the Heart Sutra Model, but I can't think of a better way of expressing it; yet if it is that, how does this relate to second path?).

DAN: The question about form being emptiness regarding that model is: do you know this as an intuitive feeling, or is it just as obvious in real-time as colour or form? For the anagami,

it is progressively very obvious in real-time. Second path is sort of an odd one to try to describe. It is something past stream entry, and involves cycles, cycles, and cycles, an appreciation of how progress is made, but explaining exactly how things are different in real-time is not very easy for most.

ALAN: At first it didn't occur to me that it might be second path, but something has changed. And I have that 'smooth' calm aftermath feeling that occurred after the first one, as well as a repeat performance of being able to sail effortlessly through the jhanas, almost despite myself. Is it possible I've gone from stream enterer to once-returner in almost exactly a month?

DAN: Yes, it is definitely possible. Everyone is different and people make progress at wildly different rates. I don't think that issues of timing should be a big hang-up, just a small caution. I went from second path to third path in just a few months, largely off retreat, and it freaked out my teachers just because of the timing, which was missing the point. I had crossed the A&P and gotten into the Dark Night of second path within a week and a half or so of getting stream entry, but I couldn't land it until about six months later.

The Next Day

ALAN: This morning I had a repeat performance of fruition—and my consciousness is currently diffused in the background. I also appear to have sensitive eyes (is that common?).

DAN: The siddhi side-effects of practice can vary widely between people, even more than issues of timing. What exactly do you mean by 'sensitive eyes'?

ALAN: The nerves at the back and top of my eyes feel frazzled. Anyway, if I am indeed correct that repeat fruitions of your current path occur in Review, whereas the next path occurs when you achieve fruition after going through the Dark Night again, I think I'm pretty sure of where I am in terms of the Buddhist developmental model.

DAN: Well, in the end we each are left alone trying to figure these things out for ourselves, though there is something to be

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said for the external reference points of maps and friends, however inexact.

Dan grills Alan on the Western developmental model

ALAN: Throughout my magical / spiritual development, I've employed as many models of development as I could possibly lay my hands on: alchemy, qabala, the Fourth Way, the Ten Zen Ox-Herding Images. I've found your book *Mastering the Core Teachings of the Buddha* indispensable during this period for providing information regarding where I am in the Theravada insight progress model.

It's obvious from your writing that you're aware that all of these models appear to be describing the same process. For instance, when I achieved the Knowledge and Conversation of my Holy Guardian Angel, I began my first insight cycle.

DAN: It has been interesting to try to line up KCHGA with the insight maps, and the A&P and stream entry are the two obvious choices, though I found the details ambiguous. I think that the A&P is a great fit for Tiphereth, and stream entry for Ain. I have a friend who thinks he is somewhere past Adeptus Major, and he was very helpful but not definitive, as the emphasis of these maps is so different. What's your favourite source material for the Thelema / Golden Dawn / A.:A.: / Qabala-based maps?

ALAN: The model that fits my experience most closely is the A.:A.:. However, when I set out to achieve the KCHGA I did so simply as a means of improving my magical ability. It was shortly after contact was made that my angel seemed to disappear. (I couldn't repeat the success of the first extended working.) I chanced upon a text that mentioned the HGA must leave the aspirant to cross the abyss alone (Moore, 2001), and that's when what I'd always considered an antiquated schema revealed itself to be an actual developmental model. For instance, the grade of Magister Templi (someone who has crossed the abyss) is that of one who is a master of the trance of

sorrow, which lines up very nicely with the knowledge gained from the Dark Night.

In terms of lining up the progress model with the Qabalistic / A.:A.: model, the KCHGA wasn't an A&P Event for me; shortly after my angel buggered off, I went through twelve days of trances involving lights, bliss, vibrations, etc., which I equate with the A&P Event.

I then found myself crossing the abyss, which wasn't terribly bad. When I reached the other side (confirmed by a number of distinct events as predicted by the model) I found myself as a Magister Templi. I was confused, because as much bollocks abounds regarding the 'grade' of MT as there does regarding an arahat. A couple of months later I had fruition. I always thought that an arahat would be the equivalent to the grade of Ipsissimus, but how the four-paths model fits with the three grades, I can't say for sure.²³

Although I have found the A.:A.: model very accurate, it is virtually useless when it comes to detail. I've come to think of crossing the abyss as the first time through the Dark Night, as it would be improper to say you cross the abyss each time you attain one of the grades above the abyss. It's also true that a specific event occurs that verifies the crossing.²⁴

DAN: What practices from the western traditions do you consider to have been the most helpful to you?

ALAN: Without doubt, gaining the KCHGA. When you've made contact, all guidance comes from the HGA. By this I mean you suddenly find exactly what you need regarding information and practice at just the right time. The progress made in relation to the amount of work put in is incredible! However, a running theme has been dedication to meditation in one form or another – vipassana, Fourth Way, zhiney,²⁵ etc.

²³ I have since resolved this problem. Discussion of it lies beyond the scope of this book, but I intend to return to it in future writings.

²⁴ Namely, the encounter with Choronzon. See 'Crossing the Abyss', p. 144, below, and also Duncan's account of his encounter, below, p. 125.

²⁵ *Zhiney*. Tibetan term for a type of meditation that cultivates one-pointedness of mind. Also referred to as *samatha* (in Sanskrit) or 'concentration practice'.

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I also can't stress enough that you can get the results of meditation through magical ritual. I experienced my A&P trances from worshipping the sun 'as the sum of all things' and then flinging myself into it 'astrally'.

DAN: What is the core essence of the western traditions that can be distilled to its practical best to add to the body of accessible teachings, in your opinion?

ALAN: Again, the HGA. However, the available material regarding how to go about attaining the KCHGA is very poor indeed. That could be said for magic in general.

DAN: Do you think that a clear source is written on these things, or does that remain to be done? I have looked around and find it a very mixed, complex bag, but perhaps I am missing something or looking in the wrong place, or just have insufficient initiation or knowledge of that tradition.

ALAN: To be honest with you, most people who have written on the Western Tradition don't have the actual experience. Texts based on experience (such as Crowley's) tend to require a good few years of study to fully comprehend. However, I'm attempting to rectify this by re-interpreting material (especially Crowley's stuff) based on my actual experience.

DAN: I invite you to join the movement towards frank discussion when you feel ready.

ALAN: Thanks Dan. I'm doing my best on The Baptist's Head website to clarify exactly what magical attainment is, some of it inspired by yourself. (My article on the Magister Templi was a direct result of your essay on arahats.)

It's a shame that a lot of people believe there is no such thing as magical attainment / enlightenment, to the extent they will deem any claim of attainment a joke or a bad case of ego-inflation.

DAN: Thanks for your questions and insights. Let me know if you have any further thoughts and let me know how things go, if you wish.

Postscript

What a very nice, yet unusually hardcore Buddhist Daniel Ingram is.²⁶ Despite the fact he works long and erratic hours as an emergency physician, he took the time to reply in great depth to an unsolicited e-mail from a lunatic magician half the world away.

I was overwhelmed by Dan's generosity and his unapologetic, frank and irreverent approach to enlightenment. I also found his interest in the Western Tradition an indication of a genuine promotion of enlightenment, regardless of what form it takes.

That Pure Religion *(18th May, 2007)*

I am at a crossroads.

Three days ago, I was at another crossroads, on a traffic island in the middle of bustling Covent Garden, making an offering to Papa Legba.

Earlier that evening, I had the good fortune to attend Stephen Grasso's sold-out talk, 'Magic at the Crossroads', which he delivered to an enraptured audience at the hub of the London occult scene, Treadwell's bookshop.

At the conclusion of the talk, I accosted Stephen regarding the specifics of the initiatory process as it relates to his tradition, Voudon. Before I knew it, I was gaining some first-hand experience.

I know what you're thinking: the parasitic insect Loa from the Hell Realms must've seen me coming.

Buggin' Out

My previous experience of the African Diaspora is limited to Quimbanda, more specifically to the sole Quimbanda 'house' operating in the United Kingdom.

²⁶ For more information on Daniel Ingram, visit his website: www.interactivebuddha.com. A three-part audio interview with Dan is available at: www.buddhistgeeks.com.

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Although demonstrating a great deal of magical know-how, I found the members of the 'house' to be arrogant, cruel and patronising. I was told that magical revelation was inconsequential, and my previous decade of magical experience irrelevant.

After this apparent dismissal of the metaphysical process, and thus of genuine tradition, with the views of the 'house' often being expressed as those of the 'actual' tradition, I was left wondering if Quimbanda, and possibly other African traditions, were also essentially ignorant, closed-minded and naive.

Is it really possible that 'The Religion' (an umbrella term used by the adherents of African traditions for the Diaspora itself), the oldest in the world, does not recognise the initiatory process? Is Western academia actually correct in its opinion of African magic as nothing more than a superstitious view of the world?

Humans

Unfortunately, for the posturing Quimbandeiro and Western psychologist alike, the magical developmental process, regardless of what model or myth is used to describe it, is fundamental to the magical act itself, and not any specific culture or tradition.

No tradition has a monopoly on the magical act or the magical developmental process, and it's not possible for a tradition to be closed-minded, superstitious and ignorant: only humans have that honour.

Bounty

For a meat-puppet whose strings have been pulled by evil parasitical forces from beyond the nether world this last eight or so years, Stephen Grasso is remarkably coherent and (dare I say it) *nice*.

After my experience at the Quimbanda 'house', I found myself pleasantly surprised by Stephen's generosity when

discussing his tradition, and his opinion of certain individuals who use the African Diaspora as a power-trip.

It was also a privilege to take part in Stephen's offering to Papa Legba.

Airfix

A lot has happened in the time between my first foray into the African Diaspora and my experience at the crossroads three days ago. I've made significant magical progress, which I've tracked and cross-referenced using a number of developmental models; I've completed the White Work of Alchemy; achieved Second Path in the Buddhist Theravada model; crossed the abyss; and attained the grade of Magister Templi in the A.:A.:.

As impressive as that sounds, all of these achievements more or less equate to the same thing: the White Work is identical with First Path of Theravada, both of which go towards the completion of a 'task' of the Magister Templi.

However, I've had trouble working out how crossing the abyss, which appears to be a distinct event, relates to the other two models, and why the other 'tasks' of the MT appear to be describing an office or role with no equivalence found in any of the other models.

Whenever someone asks me what I 'am' in terms of my magical practice, I often find myself answering 'a magician.' This is unfortunately vague and always requires further explanation.

Before obtaining the Knowledge and Conversation of my Holy Guardian Angel, I was of the opinion that the A.:A.: was nothing more than a short-lived irrelevant Victorian occult order, and the concept of crossing the abyss and the attainment of magical grades the worst kind of ego-mania.

Imagine my surprise when I found myself not only crossing the abyss, but attaining a grade within the A.:A.: as an apparent result of attaining the Knowledge and Conversation of my Holy Guardian Angel.

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Pop Goes the Weasel

That night at the crossroads, Stephen mentioned that although he is part of a genuine lineage, he has 'less' direct lineage than some. I remarked that it's spirits that dispense initiation, not people, with which he emphatically agreed.

I don't now why it hadn't occurred to me before, but I suddenly realised why the initiatory process of the A.:A.: fails to equate fully with other developmental models.

I can say I have completed the White Work and achieved second path because the alchemy and Theravada models adequately describe the results I have gained from the practices I choose to perform. However, I crossed the abyss because *my angel took me there*.

I attained the grade Magister Templi because the Enochian angels initiated me into that grade, which I officially accepted under the guidance of my Holy Guardian Angel and through my encounter with the entity Choronzon.

In other words, I was initiated by spirits into a spiritual tradition. And it appears as though that spiritual tradition is Thelema.

Crap

I hate the word 'Thelemite': it conjures up purple shirts, unicursal hexagrams, bad haircuts, Qabalistic mental masturbation, endless quotations from *The Book of the Law* and a complete ignorance of practical magic—oh, and don't forget using '93' as a greeting because, apparently, 'do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law' is too much effort these days.

Thelema is a religion. I used to consider religion as magic that doesn't work, but now I've come to realise something: Tantra is a religion; Buddhism is a religion; Voudon is a religion; Gnosticism is a religion; Sufism is a religion; Paganism is a religion; Wicca is a religion; need I go on?

The root of all magical traditions is the root of all religion: experience of God, realisation, infinity, emptiness, enlightenment, the One, nothingness, etc.

In that case, I'm as religious as they come.

Accursed

In the A.:A.: tradition there is a grade known as Magus. The task of the Magus is to proclaim his or her 'word', which is his or her magical law or truth. In a Thelemic holy book concerned with the grade of Magus, we are told:

[T]he curse of His grade is that he must speak Truth, that the falsehood thereof may enslave the souls of men. (Crowley 1988, p.4)

Crowley's word is of course 'Thelema', and I believe we have the curse of the Magus to thank for the stereotype of the Thelemite.

I've considered declaring myself a Thelemite, in an attempt at rehabilitating the tradition in light of my own initiated perspective. However, informing the 'Doley-Crowleys' they neither understand nor have direct experience of their religion is unproductive, and not worth the barrage of quotations and Qabalistic sums that would undoubtedly prove me wrong. After all, does not *The Book of the Law* say: 'Success is thy proof: argue not; convert not; talk not over much!' (*BOL* III: 42).

(Oops.)

The Road Ahead

I've come to realise I don't need a new label to describe myself: I am simply a magician. What has changed however is my understanding of what it means to be a magician.

It is not enough any more to approach magic as a strictly human activity.

It is not enough any more to approach magic as just an experiment, and its various traditions as a pick 'n' mix of techniques and models.

It is not enough any more to see magic as a means to an end.

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Genuine initiation is conferred by spiritual agencies, not through group affiliation or membership fees. A magician, in the real sense of the word, is essentially religious in nature.

The beauty of magic is religious in aspect, and the beauty of being a magician is in the direct experience of divinity.

I once heard a Sufi claim the manifest universe is Allah celebrating himself, and to do likewise would result in the realisation of Allah within ourselves. At the time, I really couldn't see the point of celebrating divinity for its own sake, but I am increasingly finding I feel the need to do so as a direct result of magical practice.

Magic is the embrace of my divine lover, the holiest of holies, the secret heart of my existence. Magic is my service to the Queen of Heaven, the blue-lidded daughter of sunset: not for any material result or for enlightenment's sake—although she grants these to her chosen—but for the sheer joy and beauty of it. Magic is my love for He of the Broken Tusk that will persist until the day I die.

It might appear as though I've found religion, but I persist: I have simply realised the beauty of magic.

Is it not amusing I have Voudon to thank for this realisation?

Abrahadabra Without Tears *(22nd May, 2007)*

I have come to consider my experience of 'the consciousness of the continuity of existence' (see above, p. 67), as my first encounter with the Egyptian goddess of space, Nuit. This shouldn't come as a surprise, considering the phrase I use to describe the experience comes straight from Nuit herself (*BOL I: 26*).

Over the last week or so, I've attempted to deepen my relationship with Nuit using the instructions given in *The Book of the Law*.

Invoke me under my stars! Love is the law, love under will. Nor let the fools mistake love; for there are love and love. There is the dove, and there is the

serpent. Choose ye well! He, my prophet, hath chosen, knowing the law of the fortress, and the great mystery of the House of God. (*BOL I: 57*)

The invocation is therefore to be sexual in nature. Practically, this means 'offering' the pleasure of any sexual act to Nuit: this should be a constant attitude throughout the act as opposed to a simple case of dedication. This doesn't mean one shouldn't get lost in the pleasure, but that the attitude should be one of Nuit being a partaker in the pleasure, as a lover i.e. constant mindfulness of Her. As related in numerous places in *The Book of the Law*, the more pleasure, the better!

My incense is of resinous woods & gums; and there is no blood therein: because of my hair the trees of Eternity. (*BOL I: 59*)

For this I mixed together Myrrh and Storax, although the number of different incenses that can be described as 'of resinous woods & gums' is virtually endless. As her joy is to see your joy (*BOL I: 13*), a good rule of thumb is to use incense that you personally find pleasurable.

The Five Pointed Star, with a Circle in the Middle, & the circle is Red. My colour is black to the blind, but the blue & gold are seen of the seeing. Also I have a secret glory for them that love me. (*BOL I: 60*)

Using a piece of expensive paper, about the size of a standard photograph, and a pack of 'glitter pens', I drew a golden pentagram on a blue background, with silver and gold dots (representing the stars of space) and coloured the pentagon at the centre in silver, with a red circle in the middle. Once dry, I placed the pentacle in a clip frame and placed it on my altar.

But to love me is better than all things: if under the night stars in the desert thou presently burnest mine

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incense before me, invoking me with a pure heart, and the Serpent flame therein, thou shalt come a little to lie in my bosom. For one kiss wilt thou then be willing to give all; but whoso gives one particle of dust shall lose all in that hour. Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of the earth in splendour & pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy. I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe, and covered with a rich headdress. I love you! I yearn to you! Pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous, I who am all pleasure and purple, and drunkenness of the innermost sense, desire you. Put on the wings, and arouse the coiled splendour within you: come unto me! (*BOL* I: 61)

Over the course of the week, I endeavoured to be mindful of Nuit whenever doing anything pleasurable: eating rich food, drinking fine wine, having sex (solo or otherwise), etc.

Once I'd acquired the necessary ingredients, and cobbled together an invocation from the various descriptions of Nuit given in *The Book of the Law*, I performed a formal invocation, omitting the headdress (couldn't find one) and opting to invoke Her under conditions other than 'under the night sky' or 'in the desert, because the only time available to perform the ritual was during the day, and there aren't too many deserts in London. However, I found addressing Nuit via the pentacle satisfactory.

It should be noted that Crowley put together his own working based on the instructions given in *The Book of the Law*, entitled 'Liber Nu' (Crowley, 2008a). I find a lot of his instruction to be based on his own assumptions, such as colouring the pentacle black, and the revelation of a sigil to paint in the middle of the pentagram. In the text, Nuit states only that she has a 'secret glory' for them that love her: why this should be a sigil, I have no idea. So I decided to discover this 'secret glory' for myself.

Results

The following results occurred previous to the formal working, but during the period of dedication of day-to-day pleasures leading up to the invocation proper:²⁷

1. During meditation, and being mindful of Her, I was blessed with a vision of Her as She appears in the Stele of Revealing, and given the instruction (visually) to extend the silver of my pentacle from the central pentagon and to the five arms of the star. This I did.

2. On May 20th, I awoke at 5.55 am, then fell back into a dream where I 'understood' that a list of seemingly disparate concepts and injunctions given in *The Book of the Law* all pertain to 'the body of Nuit'. This dream seemed to go on forever and consisted of no more than a rather vague view of the list and the attendant understanding. However, the dream was not unpleasant. This kind of dream isn't new to me: it first occurred just after I crossed the abyss, the defining characteristics being a complete lack of narrative and an understanding of a difficult subject that then departs once the dream ends.

Once I did wake up, all I could remember was 'do what thou wilt' was one of the items on the list, but how this related to Nuit I couldn't recall.

3. Including the time I awoke, I encountered the number 555 three times that day. I later discovered that 555 is the number of Hadit, Nuit's consort. Why I should encounter his number was a mystery.

After the formal working:

4. The ritual itself was okay. Beyond feeling like I'd taken a small dose of LSD, which persisted for a few hours after the ritual, nothing significant occurred.

5. Upon retiring to bed I began to meditate and became acutely aware of the fact that 'I', or my consciousness, is 'playing' at life because it chooses to. The 'knots' of phenomena

²⁷ I undertook this working with no real goal in mind beyond worship of Nuit. I had no real idea of what to expect.

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that it usually identifies with are of its own design. This 'state' of mind was very liberating.

6. The night of the 21st saw a repeat of a seemingly never-ending 'lesson' in understanding a magical concept: this time, it was the word Abrahadabra, and how half of the word relates to Nuit and half to Hadit. Of course, on waking I couldn't exactly recall how.

Strange fruit

Today, I have come to realise the understanding imparted in the dreams of the two preceding nights, and the significance of the 555 synchronicities. I'm toying with the idea that perhaps this type of dream is similar to a 'download' of future events; or perhaps the knowledge given in this kind of dream can only be consciously assimilated once everyday events have been engineered to 'present' the information to the conscious mind.

Either way, I'm convinced dreams of this nature are a form of direct communication with a non-human intelligence.

Here follows an elucidation of the results of the working.

555

555 is the number of Hadit, the 'winged globe' and voice of Chapter Two of *The Book of the Law*. Let us consider what Nuit and Hadit have to say about each other:

Firstly, Nuit states:

1. Had! The manifestation of Nuit...
8. The Khabs is in the Khu, not the Khu in the Khabs.
9. Worship then the Khabs, and behold my light shed over you! (*BOL I*)

Then Hadit tells us:

1. Nu! the hiding of Hadit.

2. Come! all ye, and learn the secret that hath not yet been revealed. I, Hadit, am the complement of Nu, my bride. I am not extended, and Khabs is the name of my House.

3. In the sphere I am everywhere the centre, as she, the circumference, is nowhere found.

4. Yet she shall be known & I never. (*BOL II*)

Khabs roughly translates as 'starry sky', and Khu as 'spirit'. So, according to *The Book of the Law*, we are not spirit inside the 'starry sky' or matter (the conventional Western religious view), but matter inside spirit. By worshipping the body (or manifest universe, Nuit) we are worshipping Hadit, who is omnipresent, hidden, unknowable and *not*. I believe the manifestation of 555 is corroborating evidence of the injunction *BOL I: 9*: the knowable universe is immanently spirit or 'emptiness'.

In light of the above, I met Crowley half-way and painted the number 555 in the centre of the star on my pentacle of Nuit.

Abrahadabra

I'm not keen on gematria, and I think the gods know it.

A cursory on-line investigation of the word Abrahadabra threw up a slew of qabalistic interpretations of the word, and a fair few contenders for the title of 'Son of the Prophet'. If all the 'Son of the Prophet' is going to do is churn out yet more frankly useless numerological proofs, I do hope his arrival is the one prophecy made by *The Book of the Law* that doesn't come to pass.

The word Abrahadabra is a magical formula for obtaining the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, as well as the official Word of the Aeon (not to be confused with 'Thelema', which is the word of the Law). Its number is 418. So although not completely without merit, I struggled to see how the word specifically related to my work with Nuit.

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Do what thou wilt

In *Magick without Tears* (Crowley 1991b, chapter 15), we are informed that the phrase 'To me!', when spelt in Greek as TO MH, shares the same number as Abrahadabra, which is 418.

Woo.

However, in the same chapter, Crowley goes on to say that 'To me!' is an injunction to perform all actions in accordance with the True Will.

Suddenly both of my dreams came together as a single message.

It's easy to assume that Nuit is a jealous entity, bearing in mind her command 'seek me only'. Consider also Her threat:

If this be not aright; if ye confound the space-marks,
saying: They are one; or saying, They are many; if
the ritual be not ever unto me: then expect the
direful judgements of Ra Hoor Khuit! (*BOL* I: 52)

However, Nuit also states: 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law' (*BOL* I: 40), and: 'thou hast no right but to do thy will... Do that, and no other shall say nay' (*BOL* I: 42-3).

If we consider the fact that the True Will is the natural 'orbit' or 'path of least resistance' for any given individual, then any action that isn't in accordance with the True Will is an act at odds with the manifest universe.

'Do what thou wilt' is the same injunction as 'To me!': in other words, 'Do what thou wilt' is fundamental to 'the body of Nuit'.

In light of this, it makes perfect sense to 'worship then the Khabs' by dressing 'in fine apparel'; eating 'rich foods' and drinking 'sweet wines and wines that foam!'; taking our 'fill and will of love as we will, when, where and with whom we will!' How obvious it is now for Nuit to state: 'I am above you and in you. My ecstasy is in yours. My joy is to see your joy.'

Abrahadabra is the worship of Nuit through 'do what thou wilt'. Nuit is therefore the manifest and knowable half of

Abrahadabra; and Hadit, as imparted in the 555 synchronicities, is the hidden but inseparable other half of the formula (the fact that 'had' is in the middle, or the 'heart' of the word should have given it away really).

It makes perfect sense then that Abrahadabra is the Word of the Aeon, for it offers a complete magical understanding of existence.

I find it quite remarkable that both of my dreams required the other for elucidation, and I count the resulting deeper understanding of the first chapter of *The Book of the Law*, the mystery of the relationship of Hadit with Nuit, and the Word of the Aeon, to be a satisfactory result.

More importantly, it is only by Her grace that I have come to this initiation. I am therefore thankful to the Queen of Infinite Space and the Infinite Stars thereof for taking it easy with the arithmetic.

Death (*11th June, 2007*)

Two days ago I scryed the 26th Enochian Aethyr. During the vision, I fell into the Eye of God and was but a minute, shrinking spark of consciousness in the bottomless abyss of His pupil.

There were moments when I found the Terrible Immensity and Gaze of His Eye intolerable. The trance was the most intense I've ever encountered, with the peculiar effect of placing the contents of my Temple, which included Duncan, inside my head.

I understood that the Eye in the Triangle is God looking at Himself: and the Eye is Human.

The next day, during meditation, it suddenly occurred to me that if there is a meaning or a reason to life, might it not be the one thing that is the crown of every existence? Might it not be the obvious conclusion to all life, that ultimate elephant in the room: Death?

Is not Death the resolution, and so fulfilment, of all potentialities?

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Somehow, and most probably as a result of my vision of the 26th Aethyr, my attitude towards death had changed.

Finishing my meditation, I discovered a number of missed calls and a voicemail from my mother, informing me that my father had been taken into hospital.

Last November, my father was diagnosed with an aggressive form of lung cancer. I used magic to keep him alive: indeed, it's the only reason he was out of hospital in the first place. Thanks to me, he had been making what seemed like a remarkable recovery.

I was in control.

After all, isn't the mark of a good magician the ability to satisfy every whim? Can we not get laid at a frequency beyond what our genetics would normally dictate? Can we not win the job over a thousand more qualified candidates? Can we not defy death and cure the incurable?

But how many times must we get laid before sex is no longer an obsession? How many times must we win the job before we realise no amount of glamour or money is to our satisfaction? How many times must we heal the sick only to discover we cannot delay the inevitable? And for just how long will we sulk when we don't get our own way?

I have found materialism to be the worst kind of idealism, and rituals to manifest a specific event the clumsiest and most naive kind of magic. Materialism is the inability to exercise acceptance, and magic with a material aim is a short-sighted solution at best.

It's surprising, to say the least, that I've found the results of mysticism to be the most pragmatic. The transformation of the undesirable into the desirable, of Sorrow into Joy, by working upon the very substance of reality itself, is the greatest magical result possible.

I do not want my Dad to die. There will be a great sorrow when he is gone. But, perhaps, there may be a joy to see him go.

I Am the Snake (21st June, 2007)

In 'Abrahadabra Without Tears' (above) I related the magical results obtained through the instruction given in the first chapter of *The Book of the Law*. What follows is a record of results obtained with the instructions from Chapter Two.

Hadit

Whereas Nuit is the goddess speaking in Chapter One, Hadit, her consort and Lord, is the voice of Chapter Two. Explicit instructions are given in Chapter One for the worship of Nuit; how are we to worship Hadit? He has this to say regarding his bride: 'Yet she shall be known & I never' (*BOL* II: 4). And of himself:

7. I am the Magician and the Exorcist. I am the axle of the wheel, and the cube in the circle. 'Come unto me' is a foolish word: for it is I that go.

8. Who worshipped Heru-pa-kraath have worshipped me; ill, for I am the worshipper. (*BOL* II)

It would appear, then, that Hadit is implicitly involved in the worship of Nuit: to worship her is to partake of him. This is evident in the 555 results outlined in *Abrahadabra without tears*. I will therefore continue the worship of Nuit as outlined in Chapter One.

Snake

Hadit elucidates on the nature of the worship of Nuit (and so himself):

I am the Snake that giveth Knowledge & Delight and bright glory, and stir the hearts of men with drunkenness. To worship me take wine and strange drugs whereof I will tell my prophet, & be drunk thereof! They shall not harm ye at all. It is a lie, this

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folly against self. The exposure of innocence is a lie. Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this. (*BOL II: 22*)

The greater the intensity and duration of the pleasurable acts performed in Her name, the greater the degree of worship. We are not to fear excessive hedonism or the apparent damage such behaviour might have on our health.

Verses 35 to 43 list a number of feasts to be observed—the general gist:

Aye! feast! rejoice! there is no dread hereafter. There is the dissolution, and eternal ecstasy in the kisses of Nu. (*BOL II: 44*)

The instruction is simple: we are to have a good time in Her honour, and to hell with death.

Kundalini

Hadit's description of himself as the 'Snake that giveth Knowledge & Delight' is reminiscent of Kundalini. Furthermore:

I am the secret Serpent coiled about to spring: in my coiling there is joy. If I lift up my head, I and my Nuit are one. If I droop down mine head, and shoot forth venom, then is rapture of the earth, and I and the earth are one. (*BOL II: 26*)

In other words: if the sexual energy goes up (the spine) instead of down and out (regular orgasm and ejaculation) then an experience of the union of Hadit and Nuit, or Samadhi, will result.

There is help & hope in other spells. Wisdom says:
be strong! Then canst thou bear more joy. (*BOL* II:
70)

In light of this, and the fact that the function of kriya²⁸ is to strengthen the body for the movement of intense energy, I believe Kundalini Yoga to be a perfect supplementary practice to the worship of Nuit.

I will therefore perform half an hour of Kundalini Yoga (a set of seven kriyas) daily for the duration of this practice.

Direct Instruction

I've voiced my dislike of all things magically mathematical elsewhere, but this is an obvious instruction that cannot be ignored: 'Thou shalt obtain the order & value of the English Alphabet; thou shalt find new symbols to attribute them unto' (*BOL* II: 55).

Fair enough.

I am also told to: 'Write, & find ecstasy in writing! Work, & be our bed in working!' (*BOL* II: 66)

No problem there.

Sex magic

Taken literally, certain passages of Chapter Two seem to give instruction in sex magic:

67. Hold! Hold! Bear up in thy rapture; fall not in swoon of the excellent kisses!

68. Harder! Hold up thyself! Lift thine head! breathe not so deep – die!

69. Ah! Ah! What do I feel? Is the word exhausted?

70. There is help & hope in other spells. Wisdom says: be strong! Then canst thou bear more joy. Be

²⁸ *Kriya*: Sanskrit for 'action', 'deed' or 'effort'. A term used to refer to a specific technique or practice within a yoga discipline, and also to the outward physical manifestations of awakened kundalini energy.

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not animal; refine thy rapture! If thou drink, drink by the eight and ninety rules of art: if thou love, exceed by delicacy; and if thou do aught joyous, let there be subtlety therein!

71. But exceed! exceed!

73. Ah! Ah! Death! Death! thou shalt long for death. Death is forbidden, o man, unto thee.

74. The length of thy longing shall be the strength of its glory. He that lives long & desires death much is ever the King among the Kings. (*BOL II*)

If we take death to mean orgasm, this appears to be a description of the technique of 'Karezza', or prolonged sexual activity. This technique will therefore be employed during all sexual acts.

Practice

In summary:

1. Continued worship of Nu through excess of pleasure, namely by drinking, food and sex;
2. Daily practice of Kundalini yoga;
3. Development of the English Qaballah.

Results

After a week of implementing 1 and 2, I have begun to frequently experience the feeling of 'self' in phenomena normally regarded as 'not-self'. This appears to be building in intensity, and is most apparent during my daily meditation.

I have no idea how this experience, or what it may be leading to, fits in with the Insight Progress Model (perhaps Nerodhi Samapatti?²⁹).

In terms of the technical aspects of Kundalini Yoga, I have discovered that the ability to perform a kriya with any degree of competency takes a good deal of practice: it is only after a week

²⁹ 'And this is the Opening of the Grade of Ipsissimus, and by the Buddhists it is called the trance Nerodha-Samapatti' (Crowley 1988, p. 5).

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or so of daily practice that I can keep the 'breath of fire' regular and easy.

An account of the results I have obtained for point three, I intend to publish separately and at a later date.

DUNCAN'S MAGICAL RECORD

The Secret of Crap Meditation

I've been attracted to Buddhism for a long time. More than ten years ago, I attended a Buddhist centre where they taught me how to meditate, so I took their courses on dharma and progressed to their 'advanced' meditation group. I also sat regularly at home, every morning and evening, paddling in the shallows of the dhyanas (or 'trance states') and trying to cultivate compassion.

But soon it turned nasty. I'd made progress, yet the meditation started getting tough. All I discovered inside were uncomfortable feelings that stopped me concentrating: anger, depression, resentment, self-loathing. When I asked for advice the teachers told me not to be attached to my thoughts; just note their presence and let them pass.

This didn't help. I started to wonder if the teachers knew squat. Many—I noticed—were ex-Catholics, who it seemed to me had taken up Buddhism as a guilt-free alternative. Most seemed to be putting on an act of being 'spiritual'. *Yet they must be experiencing the same as me*, I reasoned. *Or else they're suppressing their feelings*. Indeed, there was a lot of talk at the centre about 'negative emotions'. *How can anyone believe you shouldn't have certain feelings?* I wondered.

Finally, I realised I simply didn't fit in. These people were religious, whereas I didn't have any religious inclinations. So I stopped being a Buddhist.

I don't believe there's anything wrong with Buddhism or Buddhists. But I wish one of those teachers had said to me something I read and realised only recently:

Many people start meditating and then get frustrated with how much suffering and pain they experience, never knowing that they are actually starting to understand something. (Ingram 2004: 54)

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[S]uffering is almost a time of rejoicing, for it marks the birth of creative insight. (Wilber 1985: 85)

Recently I sat on the cushion for seven hours, and got nowhere. *Holy fucking shit* were the first words I uttered as I stood up. No bliss. No transcendence. A silent room, and me trapped inside the bag of turds that is my mind: bored, tired, awful.

But here's what I wrote in my notebook afterwards:

All deviated and conditioned states of mind arise from thoughts, because thoughts link to one another and carry attention away. Dreams do this too; the only difference is the style of linkage... I habitually personify or characterise the object of my attention. States of mind take on an appearance as if they were people; they seem to have a 'character'. This is because my ego identifies with them and so they appear to be things like itself. If things would lose this personalised form I would see them more clearly.

My mind seems like a bag of turds, because that's what it is! Permanently distracted, clinging to a deluded notion of self, and projecting that false image onto other things. With a mind like that, of course it's going to feel unpleasant when I become aware of it. But I've realised this doesn't mean there's nothing to be learnt from the discomfort. In meditation, learning things the hard way seems to be the only way there is.

Bastard Buddhists! Why didn't they tell me that ten years ago? I could be enlightened by now.

News from The Abyss

Don't tell him, but Alan's getting on my nerves with his mystical attainments. What *bollocks!* Hopefully he'll burn out soon, go mad, and that'll be the end of it.

Whilst he's having sex with angels, I'm stuck in The Abyss, from where I'll croak quietly on behalf of the rest of us, who might be in a phase where things are moving more slowly, because—oh yes—at the start you make such wonderful progress. Up you soar, and things go on getting better. Then it all dries up, and you discover it's time to do the actual work that entitles you to the place you found yourself in at the beginning. Only problem is, you don't understand how you got there. Maybe it was a side-effect of some technique; maybe Divine Grace. But God, most surely, is giving you His Finger now.

What a Mighty Finger He has.

My Holy Guardian Angel working started off with a bang, and huge synchronistic fireworks (described in detail, below, p. 67). The daily practice is based around formal meditation in a Buddhist style, and this too attained a rapid climax as I blasted into dhyanic realms I'd never sampled before.

But since then, it has gone quiet and very dark.

The Angel has withdrawn, making it clear I must not invoke him. I am to continue with the work unassisted; it's down to me to span the yawning abyss between him and myself. The miserable git has deserted me in a state of mental turmoil. Now, each time I sit, I'm confronted by the puny weakness of my concentration; the inability to resist identification with every fleeting impression; and, most of all, a dark amazement at the volume of fripperous crap that trickles diarrhoea-like through my mind. This torrent of noisy fantasy makes me question how I function during my waking hours. My ego is clinging onto identity with all its claws, refusing to give up.

In alchemy there is the concept of 'the dry path' and 'the wet'. The 'dry' is the route of quick, dramatic attainment, but the materials can turn poisonous, and the large amount of heat required puts the vessel under risk of explosion. The wet is a surer bet, but progress is slower because the process is more laborious. It requires less risk and artistry, but is a far bigger pain in the arse.

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I'm on the 'wet' path, I believe. All paths can arrive at the same destination, and having any path is better than none. My mind is disintegrating, but the path seems to be preventing me from spinning out entirely. About the 'wet', it has been written: 'This operation takes a great deal of time and effort, but it is beautiful to look at' (Salzta, 2008). Alan should perhaps note that the dry is described as: 'reserved of God for his poor, contemned, and abject saints' (Philaethes 2004, ch. 19).

Some time ago, I booked myself onto a meditation retreat. Four days from now, I'll be heading over the wintry Welsh border. I guess it'll be a very wet path that takes me there. The house rules include no talking, no looking at anyone, no communication, no books or notepads allowed. You hit the meditation mat at 4am and keep going until lights-out at 9.30pm. There's the odd break for exercise, instruction and food, although I bet there won't be much food; they have that quaint Buddhist habit of not eating once it gets dark. (And you have to sleep with your hands over the duvet.)

I'll be there for ten days, unless I freak out. I'm not noted for my cuddly-feely disposition, but it's the 'no contact' rule that frightens me worst. I'm going to miss my girlfriend. After a couple of days, I'll want my Mum and Dad too. And our cat that died four years ago. Before it ends, probably all my teachers from primary school.

I'm hoping for a breakthrough, but I'm trying not to kid myself. The abyss is as big as my ego can make it, and I may not be at the bottom yet.

Duncan is Out of the Office

So I bid farewell to the comfortable sleep of mundane existence, and set off tomorrow on a meditation retreat, which (shhh, don't tell the Buddhists) is part of a wider magical intent.

It won't be pretty. 'Enlightenment by boredom,' is how a bodhisattva I know described it. 'You better have some personal issues to keep you occupied,' she added.

My flat reeks of Abramelin incense. In my temple room tonight I banished, cast a sigil to ensure my good health for the duration of the retreat, then invoked the HGA and asked for a divination on the outcome of the retreat. The result:

URUZ (inverted): Weak will; psychological problems.

JERA: Harvest; reward for effort.

TIR: Success; taking up a cause; reward for will-power.

The next part was the hardest. A condition of the retreat is that attendees abandon personal practices and dedicate themselves to the technique being taught. So I renounced my HGA, and with him my status as a magician. I took off my magical ring and left it on the altar with the angel's sigil, vowing that this be in the service of learning something that will take me closer to him.

I felt like Prospero in *The Tempest*. Very strange, to give up on something I've been labouring towards, especially when the presence of the angel feels so strong. But now it's done, and for the next ten days I will have entered into the silence.

The One Who Walks In Hatred

One who walks in hate does not look long at an object, as though he were tired. When he is affected by the humours, he quarrels with others often. Even with very good things he is not pleased. Thus he rejects all things. Towards other objects of sense also he behaves in the same way. Thus it may be known that one is a walker in hate. (Upatissa 1995, p.58-9)

I'm back from ten days of vipassana meditation. I hit the meditation cushion for ten hours per day, between 4am to

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9.30pm; nine days in total silence, with no food after noon, except for a couple of far-too-tiny pieces of fruit. (Ouch.)

I went into the retreat with a magical intent: to deal with issues impeding my progress in gaining Knowledge and Communication of the Holy Guardian Angel. But what happened proved unexpected.

The original problems with my meditation practice were cleared up in the first two days. They seem embarrassingly obvious now. Firstly, I'd been craving for mystical states, which is a sure-fire guarantee they won't occur. Secondly, I'd been focusing attention on gross rather than subtle objects: another no-brainer.³⁰

But nine days of verbal silence brought home something more obvious: I'm a *hateful* bastard. I was shocked by how much of my internal monologue is occupied with slagging off others. This constant torrent of bile became painfully loud in my head. *Fine*, I thought, *I'll stop it*, but was horrified to find I couldn't. It's a deep habit against which I'm helpless. I'll have to put in some serious work to change.

The vipassana technique itself I found amazing. It equips you with a perception of extremely subtle sensations throughout the body, and trains you to maintain equanimity towards them—no matter how painful or seductive they are—with an awareness that, like all perceptions and their objects, sensations are impermanent.

I seemed to be making good progress, and was beginning to feel that Buddhist dharma made all this occultist malarkey look childish. I'd reached the point of deciding I was a Buddhist rather than a magician, until—somewhere between the eighth and ninth day—I mentally crashed out of the course.

I'd sat and felt my body dissolve into a depersonalised mass of quantum fluctuations. This was *reality* and I experienced it as *true*. But then, somehow, the technique became no more than a

³⁰ In other words, I should have been focussing on things that are hard to perceive. Not 'the breath', but the tiny, specific, exact sensation of the breath entering at the very tip of my nostrils. Focusing on subtle objects cultivates a more intense state of concentrate than on big, woolly objects.

self-deluding exercise in withstanding discomfort. The truth: I was sitting on a cushion getting a sore arse, pretending I wasn't bothered about getting a sore arse, and convincing myself that by not being bothered about getting a sore arse I was becoming enlightened.

I experimented by sitting for an hour and visualising Baphomet, rather than doing the technique, and assessing the difference in my tolerance of the discomfort. There was none.

Meditation is magic, I realised.

There are techniques, but there is also intention. One sits with intention, focusing energy and will in a particular direction, but in a special way that doesn't create attachment or craving.

Is this a definition of magic, or of meditation?

'Dharma is so scientific,' the DVD image of S.N. Goenka informed us repeatedly throughout the week. I was helpless under my vow of silence to retort: *No, it isn't!* It might be, if Buddha had said: 'Try this; but I'm not going to tell you what happens.' But he didn't; he couldn't give us a method without specifying beforehand its intended effect, because without intention dharma leads nowhere.

There's no such thing as dharma, unless I decide there is, or I make a dharma of my own.

I'm no Buddhist; I'm a magician who uses Buddhist techniques.

Am I Lost?

My current location, should you need me, is between Hod and Tiphereth on The Tree of Life; somewhere along the path designated by the Hebrew letter *ayin*.

Since my Holy Guardian Angel (HGA) smuggled *ayin* into a dream whilst I was on a meditation retreat (see below, p. 123) I've been meditating plenty, but have been feeling lost.

Ayin is the 26th path on The Tree of Life. The most useful description of it I've found is in an article by Bill Heidrick:

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Strong is the rational mind of Hod, too strong to permit free use of its strength. The path of Ayin sets before the reasoning mind an image of its excesses. Earth-bound reason must give way at times so that higher and more comprehensive plans may be accomplished. Before this path is travelled, the mind in Hod is like a well-meaning police officer who is too much concerned with the letter of the law and not enough with the spirit. The path of Ayin opens the eye of reason to let it see purpose behind method. Hod then becomes a true servant of the safety of the mind, applying its rules for thought in some cases and not applying them in others. (Heidrick, 1992)

It still makes my scalp tingle to contemplate how acutely relevant this path is to my situation and personality.

Having realised that I've never attained a true understanding of how I am separate from my thoughts, recent work has helped me to the point where routinely my sense of identity fades. Often now, whilst meditating, I don't know who I am. Sometimes I notice a stray thought concerned with looking forward to the end of the meditation, so I can re-discover who I might be. Once, it seemed, I was an old man about to die, confronting his death by meditating. This idea startled me into reminding myself I was Duncan. It would be nice to have the opportunity to meditate when I die, but I was relieved to discover that death wasn't as imminent as it had seemed.

I feel lost, because I'm off the usual maps. The experiences don't fit the standard Buddhist model of access concentration followed by dhyanas 1-4, formless realms 1-3, and then the cosmic money-shot. Sometimes I wonder if I'm even at the first of these. Or maybe I'm so covered in cosmic jism I can't tell. Even Ken Wilber's more general model of I-I, The Witness, and One Taste (Wilber 2000a) doesn't seem to fit.

For me, sometimes, there is that silent, crystalline, blissful, dhyanic-melting realisation of boundlessness; but I am still me, and there is thinking.

Sometimes there is no thinking, yet no melting or bliss either; just silent nothing, yet the nothing is conscious.

Sometimes there is me and there is thinking. But 'me' is almost the same as the universe, and the thoughts and the 'me' are very big, expansive, gigantic.

And then sometimes it only seems I am aware and meditating, until I realise I'm doing nothing of the kind. What I mistook for my mind is a bubble inside something else. I am trapped inside this bubble of non-awakening.

It is difficult to say whether I've made progress.³¹

I know that I have thoughts, and in the same way that I have other perceptions yet am not the perceptions that I have, so it is senseless to assume I am my thoughts. Yet my thoughts persist in seeming to be me.

When I stop thinking, 'I' disappears. Yet I am conscious of this 'I' vanishing, so it must be an illusion; it *can't* be me.

What I find especially hard is how thoughts arise that assist my meditation; the kind of little jolts that say: 'hey, you're too sleepy'; 'focus your attention more finely'; 'you've wandered'; and yet even whilst they help, supposedly they're part of the identification with thought that I am seeking to escape.

How can these thoughts not be 'me' or 'mine'?

But I have enjoyed an insight recently that enabled me to see how thought is simply the consequence of having a mind. Thinking is what minds do; it's the mind's response to everything. Mind can only conceive of things as thoughts. It can only conceive of myself as a thought. In fact, God bless it, it can only ever *conceive*.

Before I wrote down these observations, I believed I was lost or hadn't succeeded in finding my way onto the edge of the

³¹ It was later pointed out to me (by Alan) that the descriptions above match those traditionally accorded to the higher dhyanas and the formless realms. In other words, I was trying to match higher states that I was experiencing onto the lower levels of the model, and completely confusing myself in the process!

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map. Now I'm starting to wonder, that having been directed along the path of *ayin* by my HGA, if I'm not making my own personal map of what is my own personal path, and which is – currently – *terra incognita*.

The Door

My parents' house had a door that was inset with panels of glass, coloured yellow and blue. The sun used to shine through and make pools of colour on the carpet.

In early childhood, I thought the door was alive, perhaps because of its bright colours and its height, the same as a grown-up. I have ancient memories of a presence connected with that door: male, imposing, usually kindly but sometimes stern. When the light shone through, there were moments of silent wonder. As I grew older, and learnt to ignore such things, its presence felt more like a visit from a ghost.

Two days ago, I had a vision of my Holy Guardian Angel. He walked toward me from my parents' garden as I watched from the other side of this half-forgotten door. His image was stained by the yellow-gold of its glass.

I can't communicate the rush of understanding this provoked. I sensed that my angel was in the glass. The presence in the door dating back to my childhood *was* my angel. He and I have always been united. Back then, I perceived him as the door; these days, I perceive him in the image of a seraph. He is, of course, neither.

Sigmund Freud referred to the 'navel' of a dream: an element in a dream's symbolism that cannot be deciphered, because it reaches too deeply into the unconscious (Freud 1985, p.671). It simply means too much. That door is one such 'navel' of my memory. It does down all the way. Its presence is entwined about my being; almost indistinguishable from it.

The door seems as if it was placed there in my infancy, like a time-bomb, precisely so that one day its memory would detonate. I can't shake the feeling that I'll remember its presence at the moment of my death.

This is mystical bollocks, but I suspect others can identify impressions of their own that serve a similar function. This vision marked my arrival at Da'ath on the Tree of Life. The day after, as I meditated, I intentionally visualised the door. Once the image was established, I passed through, and on the other side enjoyed union with my angel.

Listen To The Yellow Blob

I was meditating this morning when a small yellow blob with a black centre appeared.

'Hello Duncan.'

I decided to ignore it.

'It's okay,' the blob insisted. 'I'm an old friend. We used to know each other well, only I reached a level of attainment where I had the chance to enter another dimension. The price was that I've been removed from your history. No one in your reality remembers me.'

Isn't it funny how, sometimes, you can just *tell* it's not a good idea to get involved in something.

Three Spirits

Like Ebenezer Scrooge, I've been visited on subsequent nights by three spirits. The first was a woman who looked like a corpse. I turned away, but sensed she was only seeking attention and love. When I turned around and gave her these, I felt her happiness and release. She dissolved with gratitude.

I didn't cope so well with the second spirit. It was a giant male face, golden-brown. Repulsive. It was also unbearably dull, and I couldn't bring myself to love it. Morosely, it hung about for a time then faded unsatisfied.

'Aha. Another one,' I thought, when the third spirit came. It was a doll with sharp teeth that lived inside a box, as full of desire as the others, but with a hint of violence. I hugged it close and gave it what it needed. It lingered, until I feared I couldn't shake it loose, but at last it faded. It went satisfied, yet without gratitude, which annoyed me slightly.

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They might be elementals. I'm not sure of their nature or motives. I wondered if I were being vampirised, but I've noticed no ill-effects.

Toward the end of a recent meditation session, I felt something new: part of my mind had begun to meditate independently. It was doing it without any effort on my part. I seemed to see the back of the vampire doll retreating, walking away. It had installed this new facility.

Since meditating extra-hard, my dream-life has changed. There's no consciousness throughout the dream-state, but the first glimmers of lucidity are there. The dreams have a continuity and intensity that feels more like waking-life. Rudolf Steiner warns that when this happens we should proceed with care:

[N]o true mystic will ever make his experiences in dreams the basis of any authoritative account of the higher world. Such dreams must be merely considered as providing the first hint of a higher development... During our dreams we are actually in a world other than that of our senses; but with undeveloped spiritual organs we can form none other than... confused conceptions of it... It is only in so far present for us as, for instance, the world of sense could be for a being equipped with no more than rudimentary eyes. That is why we can see nothing in this world but counterfeits and reflections of daily life. The latter are perceptible to us because our own soul paints its daily experiences in pictorial form into the substance of which that other world consists. It must be clearly understood that in addition to our ordinary conscious work-a-day life we lead a second, unconscious life in that other world. We engrave in it all our thoughts and perceptions. These tracings only become visible when the lotus flowers [i.e. the chakras] are developed. (Steiner 1947, ch. 7.)

Another mantra Steiner often repeats is to pay attention to *feelings* as much as to thoughts. Freud, similarly, noted that in dreams emotion is less ambiguous than ideas (Freud 1985, p. 595f). Feelings don't represent anything; they just are. Anger, in a dream, might arise in a context or be directed against an object that makes no sense to the waking mind, but it's a safe bet that the feeling is relevant to whatever the dream is expressing in the means it has available.

In their different ways, these spirits came looking for love. The ones that received it found release and dissolved into formlessness. One of them perhaps gave me a gift in return. I hope to find out what these spirits were, but on an emotional level – for now – the way to deal with them seems clear.

Meditation: The War Against Sleep

This time around my meditation cycle has been all about sleep. My body has found a way to nod off, without my head dropping and startling me awake, and it's a dangerous development. Over the weeks I've waged epic battles against unconsciousness. Sometimes I win, but more often it does.

I find myself in states where I cannot tell if I'm waking or dreaming. It's a kind of quiet reverie, in which I'm capable of investigating the state, so I watch, and try to ascertain what the hell is happening.

Probably this started because I've begun practising dream yoga. As so often happens, there was dramatic success on beginning: three lucid dreams in the first two days. Since then, progress has been less noticeable. I hope my sensitivity to the transition between waking and dream is improving. But I'm wavering between the idea that this 'dream-awake' state is a sign of progress, or merely laxity arising from poor concentration.

Thoughts inside this state flow like heavy treacle. When awake, withdrawing attention from thoughts makes them fizzle out; but in the dream-awake state it causes them to flourish. It's

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like a slow, quiet voice reciting nonsense; like the dead who the hero listens to on headphones in Philip K. Dick's novel *Ubik* (Dick 1998), or the thoughts of the dead spaceship captain in the film *Dark Star*. Willing the thoughts to stop doesn't work, because in the dream-awake state the conscious will is compromised.

Tibetan dream yoga teachings suggest that when we dream our mind withdraws from the sensory world and becomes ensnared by karmic *prana*, an energy-source arising from our unskilful responses to past situations, which the mind 'rides' into the lower chakras. Or in Western psychological terminology: when there's no stimulation from the external world, the mind is driven instead by its conditioned reflexes.

No wonder it feels like wading through sludge.

This state allows insight only in sudden bursts. Abruptly, the heaviness might drop away, and I'll drift in space, resting in the Witness³² for a precious instant. Or other realisations will flash from darkness, before the lid of the trash-can again slams shut.

Yesterday, there was a breakthrough. In any state of mind there's no point sitting and willing it to stop; that's not meditation. I could find no path from the dream-awake state to the more familiar state of waking, but what I did discover is that sensations in the dream-awake state have the same characteristics as those in the waking state: they're impermanent, they cause suffering and they're empty. Realising this makes them fizzle out. Trouble is, they're denser and more persistent than waking thoughts, and because the conscious will is not as strong in this state, it takes far more effort.

I'd say that I'm looking forward to the fight ahead, except that 'fight' is precisely the wrong word, because this is exactly the type of dualistic ignorance from which the sense of struggle arises in the first place. There has been one important realisation, at least: that no matter whether I'm waking, dreaming, or asleep, these are only different aspects of the very same thing.

³² 'The Witness': a stage in Ken Wilber's model of the stages of enlightenment (Wilber, 2000).

Jesus Creepers!

I note with interest Alan's transformation into a Thelemic religious nutter. (See his magical record, above.) Meanwhile, I've had Our Lord and Saviour on my case, and I'm not sure what to make of Him.

But before He dropped by, there was a far less sublime visitor. It seemed related to the little yellow blob who dropped by a while ago (See above, p. 107), only this time it was like the inside of a shoebox lid, possessing only the 'western' and 'northern' edges of its flange, as highlighted in this no-doubt helpful diagram:

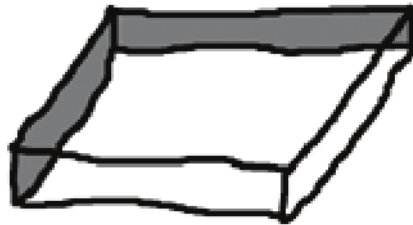


Figure 1: Strange 'shoe box lid' creature.

One flange was red. The other, white. The creature spoke, and tried to convince me that some conception of mine was wrong, or that something in my meditation practice was incorrect. It seemed sincere, but I was suspicious and ignored it. Although now I really wish I'd written down what it said.

Anyway—the first time Jesus came to visit, he was walking toward me over the water. I heard a voice speak, granting me the realisation that 'Christ walking on water' is not to be taken literally; it doesn't mean that Jesus owned inflatable sandals, but is to be taken as a representation that He attained the state of equanimity through meditation.

The next day I found myself walking in Gethsemane with Christ, just after His resurrection. A voice again helpfully explained that 'walking with Christ' is not to be taken literally, but when one walks with Him in this form, then one is approaching fruition in one's meditation.

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A couple of days ago—guess who? I wanted to ask if He was stalking me, but He reached and placed something in my heart. My meditation became easy and full of light. Again, we were in the garden after His resurrection. I touched his arm, at which point I became acutely conscious of my body, and it dissolved into a million buzzing sensations.

Christ entered into me and we became the same thing. Then He urged me to go out into the world as Him.

No thanks, mate. I thought. *I know where that leads. Fuck that!*

Tempted by Lucifer

Posthumous re-appearances of Rudolf Steiner are not unheard of. After the suicide of the sceptical historian of the occult, James Webb, a female psychic to whom Webb had been particularly close was grieving, feeling guilty over his death. ‘Why didn’t you help him?’ she berated herself, when suddenly a voice piped up: ‘I did!’ and Rudolf Steiner’s face appeared before her (Lachman, 2001).

Webb had been commissioned to write a book about Steiner shortly before he took his own life. (In the event, Colin Wilson wrote it instead. You’d best avoid Wilson’s effort; it’s a stinker.) Considering that Webb wrote many snide comments about Steiner, as well as spreading the rumour that Steiner shagged at least one of his followers (Lachman 2007, p. 136), it was really rather nice of the good Doctor to do whatever he did for Webb.

I think he helped me too, the other day. I was performing a Qabala meditation, visiting the sephira of Binah, and hassling whatever spirits happened to be around into telling me how I might overcome the difficulties I was experiencing in my meditation practice. A spirit called ORIO, in the form of a raven, suddenly told me—apropos of nothing—that Rudolf Steiner was wounded and needed help. If I was ever to find enlightenment, I must heal him. The spirit showed me a vision of Steiner, hobbling along with a stick.

At this point I was overcome with disgust and boredom at this whole cheesy spirit-Qabala-magic-psychic bollocks, and instead of politely accepting it as a vision, instead I walked up to the image of Steiner and addressed it directly.

'What's the matter with you?'

He looked up, smiled, and seemed pleased to see me.

Without words, he reminded me of the spirit woman he'd seen in his childhood, who spoke to him briefly before she walked into a stove and vanished. She'd told the young Steiner: 'Try now, and later in life, to help me as much as you can' (Lachman 2007, p. 13-4).

Steiner said he was now giving me the same message. I must help him, because when he died he had no chance to transcribe his experiences at the moment of death. Could I do that for him? Somewhat nervously, I agreed.

Well, I performed a ritual and obtained a vision—the details of which I won't go into here—but that wasn't the end of the story.

Later, I was meditating at my usual time, when I noticed something that had been becoming more apparent over the previous few days—an impression of 'nothingness' within every sensation. So I focused on the nothingness, and something rolled inexorably toward my consciousness. The more I focused, the stronger it grew, although it gave the impression it was coming anyway, regardless of my effort.

It started as a sensation of hardness and pressure between and behind my eyes. I'd had sensations like this before, but this little baby was pumping out bliss in indescribable quantities, flooding my mind and pouring over my body. The more I turned my mind to emptiness, the harder it pumped, until it reached a stage where even though my mind had wandered a little, it was still pumping; and once, I even became sleepy and my head nodded, but the bliss was still flooding into me from my third eye.

It was almost unbearable, yet at the same time it was making concentration easier. I reached a point where I could see my

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body and self were as empty as everything: just waving ribbons of pulsating sensation.

The alarm sounded for the end of the session. I had an appointment across town; I must make my tea and get ready. Did I have to wave goodbye to my bliss factory? That little pleasure-pebble in my head showed no signs of abating its flood of cosmic jism. *This might be my chance for a night of insights*, I thought. What the fuck? If I sat right through, maybe I'd be enlightened in the morning! I knew for sure that in this state, boredom, cramp and hunger couldn't touch me.

I wondered if it were a reward from Steiner. But then I started to think: maybe it's a test? From a Steinerian perspective, there was no doubt this heady bliss could be read as a temptation by Lucifer.³³

Thinking it over, and sincerely hoping that I wouldn't regret it for the rest of my life, I opened my eyes and got up off the cushion. I went to make a salad.

In any case, it was interesting to watch how the whacked-out state integrated with normal consciousness. It was still there, but faint behind the heavy buzz of everyday thoughts.

I found myself thinking about an incident told to me by a long-time Zen practitioner, which he witnessed first-hand. One day in the zendo, one of the students failed to rise at the end of the meditation. A few of his colleagues tried to rouse him, but he wouldn't respond. Eventually, growing worried, one of the students went to fetch their roshi. The roshi came into the hall, examined the seated student for a moment, then nodded sagely and left. He came back with a large pair of ritual cymbals. Smashing these together behind the student's head instantly did the trick.

Luckily, my appointment across town was at Razorsmile's unique, incomparable Hermetic Meditation Group.³⁴ After the

³³ Lucifer has the ability to influence the astral body of human beings. He manifests in human behaviour as rampant idealism, unhealthy imagination, fanatical zeal, and an inappropriate linkage of spiritual aims with material goals. If you practise magic, you will need to watch out for him.

³⁴ See <http://www.razorsmile.org>.

opening rituals and chanting we sat to meditate, and I was shocked to discover my bliss-pebble was still there, pumping just as strongly.

If I'd chosen to remain at home, I would have sat for hours, bathed all night in a bliss almost unbearable. But I would've missed out on what it feels like to take a state like this around with you, in the background of normal consciousness.

After the meditation our group sat again for a path-working. The bliss was still going strong. Toward the end, however, I'd clocked up about three and a half hours of meditation throughout the day, sitting in the same position, and unpleasant aches were building in various parts of my body. It was interesting also to watch the pain building to a tipping-point where I was becoming aware of my desire to be free from it, rather than bathing in unmitigated pleasure.

It has been three days now, and the feeling in my third eye is still there whenever I sit—although it has moderated and feels more 'integrated'. Would I be an arahat by now, if I'd skipped dinner and the meditation group, and had sat in my temple room all night? Somehow I doubt it.

Get thee behind me, Lucifer!

The Rise and Fall of Kundalini

The kundalini serpent lies curled three and a half times about the base of the spine. There are various physical and spiritual exercises we can perform to wake her, and encourage her to rise up the *shushumna* (or spinal column) lighting the six chakras of the body in her wake, plus the seventh—called *sahasrara*—which is positioned above the crown of the head.

If she reaches *sahasrara* without hindrance, then enlightenment is said to occur.

'Kundalini rising' is the model most of us are familiar with, and may have experienced. When I attained the Knowledge and Communication of my Holy Guardian Angel, I experienced an unexpected and partial kundalini awakening (see below, p. 129). There was an intense sensation of moving energy that

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started around my prostate, then overspilled and rose into my lower belly, building before rising again. It reminded me of an etheric 'Try Your Strength' machine. It felt like someone had smashed the knob with the hammer, and the astral indicator was flying up, lighting each chakra as it passed. But the bell of enlightenment didn't go ding, because the energy rose only as high as my heart.

David Rankine explores this idea of partial kundalini risings. He describes the special qualities of each stage of kundalini awakening (Rankine 2004, pp. 97-100). He seems to be urging us not to view these as failed attempts, but as experiences that indicate something interesting in their own right.

I imagine that tantric purists may quibble with Rankine's view. In which case, Rudolf Steiner's proposals will really throttle their serpent. According to Florin Lowndes, what we find in Steiner's writings is a model wherein kundalini awakens first in the crown chakra, and then descends down the body into the heart:

The crown chakra contains a kind of duplicate of the heart chakra... the heart chakra is concealed within the crown chakra as an organ of thinking. Because the direction of chakra activation is reversed, the structure of the chakra organism will also be transformed, and the heart chakra will become the conscious organ of the new kind of thinking. The reversed kundalini path... causes the thinking heart chakra concealed within the crown chakra to situate itself first in the forehead chakra, and from there to pass through the throat chakra into the chest region where it will reintegrate in the actual heart chakra. (Lowndes 2001, pp. 44-5)

Sounds weird? (As if the notion of an astral snake shooting up your back wasn't wacky in the first place!) What needs to be borne in mind is Steiner's idea that the human being is in a

constant state of evolution, striving to return to the spiritual realm in a never-ending quest for perfection.

Back in the day (Steiner seems to be saying) before human beings were universally capable of realising themselves as conscious individuals, it made perfect sense to lead kundalini upwards toward the crown. That's what 'enlightenment' used to mean: becoming individually conscious. But these days, every idiot on the street is an 'individual'. Most of the irritations of contemporary life are caused precisely by people expressing this precious 'individuality'.

The modern Westerner, according to Steiner, should seek enlightenment not in becoming conscious or individual (we've done all that, and look where it's left us) but in taking these qualities down from the crown and into the heart. Steiner saw the necessity for a new type of thinking that he called 'heart-thinking', in order to scrape us through the challenges that confront us in this age. Guiding the kundalini down into the heart will enable a new 'spiritual organ' to grow there, upon which this 'heart-thinking' can depend.

Yes, well. Monkey see; monkey do.

I wish I could remember whether I had read Florin Lownde's book before I recorded the following in my meditation journal:

25-07-07 5:34pm Awareness came to rest on the crown of my head. The sensation there became something subtle, and even subtler. A fine, gossamer nothing. Impressions of light: bright white, tinged with mauve. The nothing lifted me into it, and I took on its nature. I seemed to breathe in and out through the top of my head. Sometime later, another stream of energy seemed to pass down my nose. Deep and ecstatic.

Two weeks later, it was the turn of my ajna chakra (or 'third-eye') to join in the game. (See above, p. 112.) Since then, my throat chakra has kicked off: I've felt as if I've been wearing a

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collar, or there's a pebble lodged behind my Adam's apple. (Interestingly, at this point I also caught a nasty cold.)

The only conclusion I'm prepared to draw from all this is that the chakra model is like anything else in magic: you can work it how you like. Choose an objective, and work the chakras in a way that helps you realise it. When I was working for the KCHGA, the kundalini went up. The reason my kundalini is now 'going down' is because I'm attempting to realise different magical goals. No doubt, many purists will cringe at this, but that never stops us, does it?

A Personal Account of the KCHGA

Honeymoon With An Angel

Thursday 13th July, 2006

Without knowing why I began fasting at 10pm, intending to finish the fast at 10pm the next day.

Friday 14th July

8pm. Meditated, then burnt incense. For the first time I invoked my Holy Guardian Angel. I asked for its sigil, and for a message to be delivered through a dream. And I realised that this working was the reason I had been fasting.

A sigil was presented to me at once. Also, a name: GEUR; and a vision of a creature that was blue in colour, energetic, bird-like, wise. Yet because this had happened so quickly and easily I became suspicious.

I broke the fast at 10pm, as planned. But my dreams that night were vague and forgotten by morning.

Saturday 15th July

I dreamt of a golden angel on top of the church in my home town, threatening to fall and destroy me and all the buildings.

Wednesday 26th July

Invoked GEUR, and asked him to confirm his identity by communicating with me through a dream that same night. I burnt Abramelin incense, and offered him the purity of my body by commencing a month-long abstinence from orgasm.

Afterwards I meditated, but felt sleepy. GEUR came and said: 'If you name the place where you meditate each time before you sit down, then I'll ensure that the quality of your meditation is better.'

I agreed to this.

Thursday 27th July

Spent the night at my girlfriend's. I was disappointed when I woke because the only dream I remembered seemed routine: an ex-girlfriend had started to attend temple meetings. At least, she looked the same as my ex, and had the same name, but she was a lesbian. I seemed to spend the whole night working out if this woman was really her. Toward the end of the dream, I thought: 'Let it go. Maybe it's her, maybe not. I just need to accept her as a person in my life, and take it from there. Let go of my preconceptions.'

The only strange thing was that as I'd fallen asleep, a rhythm had started pulsing through my head. It went: 'dah-dah-dit', and repeated itself a few times. My girlfriend had her hand on my arm. Oddly, the last time it sounded through my mind, she tapped out the same rhythm on my arm with her fingers. This striking coincidence jolted me awake, but then I quickly fell asleep.

As I was making breakfast, my girlfriend came down to put out the rubbish. 'I had a really vivid dream last night,' she said, which irritated me, because mine had been so dull.

As I sat thinking about what my dream could mean in terms of the HGA, I remembered the rhythm and the weird coincidence. I noticed my girlfriend was writing down her dream—and finally the penny dropped.

'What did you dream?' I asked.

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She'd found herself in a magical room full of striking objects, where ideas also swirled around like streaks of light. Inside the room sat a guardian at a desk. He handed her a blue statue, of an old man holding a staff. 'Do you know who this is?' the guardian asked.

She answered: 'St. Peter,' but she didn't really know who the blue old man was. The guardian smiled. She knew it wasn't a test. She sensed her answer didn't matter; the guardian was simply trying to provoke thoughts.

Although the answer 'St. Peter' had various significances for her, the dream also affirmed my vision of my HGA: the blue, wise man. The dream I'd had about my ex suggested I should drop my preconceptions and open myself to experiencing others as they are. It was only when I opened myself to my girlfriend's dream that I received the full message from the HGA.

It seems he likes to work on an 'interpersonal' level; my dream and hers were two parts of the same message.

Oh yeah—'dah dah dit'? I looked it up. It's 'G' in Morse code. The initial letter of GEUR.

Tuesday 1st August

Invoked the HGA and asked him to show me how I can awaken to him.

That night I dreamt the family cat spoke: 'Mummy, I just keep finding, finding, finding meaning in the world, and I have to say it.'

I asked GEUR if there was anything I could do to communicate with him better. His answer: *use the runes*.

The practice of refraining from orgasm continues, and is becoming challenging.

Withdrawal Across the Abyss

Wednesday 2nd August

Invoked GEUR. Very tough to get him to respond. I sensed something was wrong and asked him via the runes what his message was:

(KENAZ inverted.) An ending. A loss or an offer that will be withdrawn.

I immediately realised he was about to withdraw across the abyss. I would have to take myself over to him!

What will come after this?

(GIFU.) Partnership. Cementing of a long-term relationship.

How do I get from one to the other?

(WUNJO.) Joy. 'Coming to oneself.' The object of affection. Activity with a happy result. Joy in one's work.

According to the source I consulted, KENAZ, GIFU and WUNJO run consecutively in the futhark, which added to the sense of a true and natural progression.

Sunday 6th August

Has the work on cultivating WUNJO begun well?

(OTHEL inverted.) You will have to face alone whatever lies ahead. There is no avoiding karma.

Should I continue these regular invocations?

(ISA.) 'Time out.' A cessation of activities. A freeze.

What is the most immediate issue I face in gaining union with you?

(MANNAZ inverted.) No help. You are your own worst enemy. Self-centredness.

Sunday 17th September

Having read Crowley's *John St John* (Crowley, 2006) I'd acquired a much clearer idea of what I could do in order to attain the Knowledge and Communication. My magical diary records my feelings of trepidation concerning the sheer amount of work that lay ahead. I also listed an arsenal of techniques for orienting myself toward union with GEUR:

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1. Morning prayers to GEUR after banishing. A restatement each morning of my determination to attain union.
 2. The burning of incense of Abramelin.
 3. The performance of a Kundalini yoga kriya formulated by Siri Datta, entitled 'Becoming Like Angels' (Datta 2003, p. 162).
 4. Mantra, repeated inwardly as often as possible: GOBINDAY MUKANDAY UDAARAY APAARAY HAREUNG KAREUNG NINAARMAY ARKAAMAY.
 5. Meditation, performed in a space named and consecrated to GEUR.
 6. Waiting. Whatever I do is done with the consciousness of waiting for his arrival.
 7. Dedication. Whatever action I perform is done with the consciousness that it is working towards making possible the arrival of GEUR.
 8. Hanged man pose: lying on the floor with hands bent behind the back, right leg straight, and left leg bent so that the left shin crosses behind the right knee.
- Already, I note in my journal a startling increase in the efficacy of my daily magical workings. I start a separate notebook to log in detail the HGA work.

Tuesday 10th October

The practice settles down into rising early in the morning, dedication of myself to GEUR, some kundalini warm-up exercises, and then a meditation session. The mantra is recited inwardly whilst walking to work and walking home, then more dedications and a meditation in the evening. The mornings start earlier and earlier as the meditation sessions get longer.

The going gets tough, and in the journal are all the classic signs of 'the long dark night', where the aspirant is swallowed by the abyss in his or her attempt to cross it.

Saturday 14th October

GEUR was invoked as part of a group working and asked whether it was appropriate for me to undertake a vision-quest using the hallucinogen *salvia divinorum*. The answer is

ambivalent, unclear. I smoke the salvia anyway, but experience no effect whatsoever. Two colleagues take a toke from the same pipe, and experience mild visions.

Wednesday 18th October

To get over the hump of difficulties in my meditation, I rise early, undertake ninety minutes of hatha yoga, then spend the day from 9am to 5pm meditating in hourly sessions, with an hour break for lunch.

At the end I have made no progress and feel devastated.

It's at this point I realise that something drastic is required, so I make arrangements to attend a ten-day silent meditation retreat, starting on November 28th.

Thursday 30th November

Two days into the retreat, and the problems in my meditation have cleared up quickly. I realise that I have been craving for altered states, which is a sure-fire way not to attain them. Also, my object of concentration wasn't refined enough.

After three days meditating on the breath, the retreat moves on to focus on the vipassana technique. At first, I am dedicated to taking this approach.

Drastic Action

Sunday 3rd December

A dream, of a woman who on the edge of town had started a waste disposal company called 'AYIN WASTE DISPOSAL'. I stood outside, reading the name, thinking: 'I cannot break down this name into anything else, or associate it with anything'. I heard a voice saying: 'STOP TRYING'.

When I woke, I realised that AYIN is a Hebrew letter. It was frustrating, because I had no access to the outside world and couldn't look up AYIN, which I knew would designate a path on the Tree of Life and a tarot card. (See above, p. 103.)

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Wednesday 6th December

My progress with the vipassana technique started to wobble. I realised that I had progressed as far as I could for a while. I began to feel bored and discontented.

Thursday 7th December

The bottom dropped out of my confidence. I didn't trust the technique or the organisation. The technique seemed to boil down to sitting, getting cramp, and then pretending you're not bothered about getting cramp.

The course was taught mostly by audio recordings and videos of Mr. S.N. Goenka. I grew sick of his hypnotic way of talking: repetition, slowness, being forced into a passive position.

At the beginning of the retreat, I wondered if I should be a Buddhist rather than a magician, because the aims and techniques of Buddhism seemed far more serious and worthwhile. So now I was in a spiritual crisis!

I decided to obey the instruction in the dream: I stopped trying. I stopped practising the vipassana technique, as an experiment, and just sat. Immediately I went into trance. I had the idea that I must go into the woods and invoke the HGA, because the dream I was from him.

Later, when I was supposed to be meditating, I sneaked into the woods. Aware that I was breaking the vows I'd taken at the start of the retreat, I banished and invoked. *Thwack!* A blackbird landed on the fence, watching me. Speaking to my angel, I addressed myself to the bird. I told the angel what was on my mind. It all felt right. The ritual seemed to demonstrate to me that firstly I am a magician, not a Buddhist.

Friday 8th December

Walking in the same wood, I heard another *thwack*—and thought at first that someone was throwing things. A few minutes later, I heard it again—and saw a blackbird land on the ground. Maybe it was the same one as yesterday. It stared at me, as if to say: 'don't forget'.

Sunday 10th December

I came away from the retreat with a new meditation technique, and had gone through a conversion and re-conversion experience, from magic to Buddhism and back again.

Once I was home, I looked up *ayin* and discovered it is the path from Hod to Tiphereth. I took this as a pointer to the next phase of the work. It seemed stunningly apt. Hod is where I am most of the time—it's the rational and intellectual sphere. I often allow ideas to stand between me and experience too much. The path from Hod to Tiphereth (where the HGA traditionally resides) is about casting off habits, intellectualisation, ideas, language. The tarot card associated with *ayin* is The Devil, which concerns the theme of oppression by structures and habits.

Shafted By Choronzon!

Wednesday 3rd January, 2007

I seem to be making significant progress with my meditation, but I'm puzzled, because my experiences don't fit any of the traditional maps. I can't see how my experience fits the traditional Buddhist model of the four dhyanas (or trance states) which indicate successively deeper states of meditation.

Alan points out that my descriptions match descriptions of the formless realms—even deeper states beyond the dhyanas. It seems I've been experiencing the formless realms all along, and trying to map these experiences onto the (lower) dhyana states.

Saturday 6th January

I dream of an evil spirit in my house, which I banish with the name of GEUR. I realise that, whilst meditating, on two recent occasions I've remembered dreams from years ago that I hadn't thought of since—all of them about demons.

I suddenly have the urge to fast again—for twenty-four hours, water only. I sense that something is afoot. At 9pm I sit down with the intention of meditating for as long as possible.

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Very soon, I start to feel awful. My mind feels like it's falling apart and I cannot concentrate. I'm weak and delirious. I decide to talk with GEUR:

What should I be doing?

(EHWAZ.) Change. Things are as anticipated. You are close to success.

Will you send me a dream instead of my having to meditate?

(NIED.) Have patience. There are delays and constraints which, although tiresome, will work out in their own good time. Do not hasten or worry.

What will be the outcome if I just give up and go to bed?

(GIFU.) A gift. A fortuitous outcome.

I find this hard to understand, but the book on runes that I consult also states that GIFU sometimes appears merely to indicate that a problem has emotional roots rather than roots in reality.

I decide to give up. Before I leave the cushion I receive a fleeting vision of the Goddess Athena. She rises up, and raises me with her. Then she is gone, but I see her shield. Just her shield, protecting me.

After going to bed I have a nightmare about millipedes in my parents' garden, born from watermelons filled with a red fluid. Someone hands me a watermelon and before I can react a millipede leaps out and sinks its teeth into my throat.

Sunday 7th January

I wake feeling wasted, ill and disheartened. Was this an attack by Choronzon, and have I been shafted by him?

Over lunch I watch an interview with Hubert Selby Jr., included on the DVD of the film *Requiem for a Dream*. Selby is asked: 'What is the meaning of suffering?' He thinks a while, then answers: 'To inform us that our perception is skewed.' To my amazement, Selby then proceeds to talk about *ayin*. As well as a Hebrew letter, *ayin* also means 'eye' and 'fountain'. In other words, the eye is not a passive organ but—like a fountain—it creates, it gives out. The world is created by the eye.

The Final Push

Wednesday 10th January

A vision of exquisite beauty, as I meditate in the early morning.

The sound of birdsong comes to me through the rain. All sensations are poised, beyond true or false. Arising and passing, beyond true and false, is what makes them beautiful.

I do not realise it at the time, but this is the attainment of Tiphereth.

Alan points out in an email how it was my throat that was attacked in the dream of the millipedes. The throat chakra corresponds to Da'ath on the Tree of Life, which is the hidden sephira of Knowledge. Its meaning is revealed to the aspirant in the process of crossing the abyss.

Thursday 25th January

I decide that a final push is needed to take things to the next level. I resolve to learn the ritual of 'The Bornless One' (DuQuette & Hyatt 2000, p. 55f) and practice it every morning.

In the evening I set up the temple, banish, burn Abramelin incense and perform The Bornless One for the first time, simply reading it from a book. Even so, it has a palpable impact. I invoke GEUR and he comes at once. Immediately his presence is unusually strong.

Can I call on you now whenever I want?

(OTHEL.) Help is available from older people and friends. One is consumed by a vision or an ideal.

(That's a yes, then!)

Have I crossed the abyss?

(JERA.) Events must come to fruition in their own good time. Energy and care. Harvest.

What do I do next?

(LAGAZ.) Follow your intuition. The tide has turned in your favour. A significant event or prophetic dream.

Will you send me a dream?

(SIGEL.) Of great power.

Will it be tonight?

The Blood of the Saints

(WYRD.) You can be certain that something unexpected will come to you.

Attempting a more direct method of communication, I closed my eyes, pressed my thumbs to my ajna chakra or 'third eye', and concentrated.

I received a vision of a door that used to be in my parents' house. This door was inset with panels of glass coloured yellow and blue. I re-lived old memories of a presence connected with that door: male, imposing, usually kindly but sometimes stern. When the light shone through, it used to look amazing.

In the vision, GEUR was behind the door. He walked toward me from the garden, as I watched. His image was stained by the yellow-gold of its glass.

There was a rush of understanding. The presence in the door I had felt as a child was my angel. He and I have always been united.

This marked my arrival at Da'ath.

I felt a weird presence in my lounge, after closing the temple, but like the idiot who gets killed in the first scene of a horror movie, I decided it was nothing and didn't re-banish. I went to bed and had an anxious dream about pine cones that 'didn't offer enough protection', and then a big spider chasing a small spider. Both of them fell, landed on my throat, then crawled quickly and hungrily toward my chest.

Friday 26th January

Woke up feeling very ill, with something nasty in my throat. I recognised this at once as another attack by Choronzon and decided that this time I'd kick his arse.

I dragged myself into the temple, banished, invoked Athena and GEUR for protection, then I did some kundalini exercises to stimulate and heal the throat chakra. Finally I sat and meditated.

I visualised the door that had appeared in my vision. Once the vision was established I passed through the door. I sat beyond, in my parents' garden, meditating. Choronzon hovered above me—a giant spider in the sky, pulsating against a

background of storm clouds. I could hardly believe it, but I started to feel drowsy, sleepy and dull – with all this going on! I realised it was caused by Choronzon, trying to confuse me, so kept going, determined not to give in and this time to succeed.

Finally, after a long and hard struggle, I began to awake to myself within the meditation. Choronzon instantly dissolved, and then I felt GEUR enter me. There was a sensation of extreme bliss and swirling blue light. This was followed by a vision of a seaside town, which seemed strange and subtle: every item, every object in this town represented something other than what it was. Unseen beings lived in this place; there was a sense that it was a place 'reserved' for them, and perfect. And then, to cap it all, a kundalini experience! The snake stirred, woke, and travelled from my prostate up to my chest. I wouldn't describe it as 'pleasant', exactly, but it was powerful. Maybe she would have travelled further up, if Choronzon hadn't knackered my throat chakra.

The door in my vision was the key to understanding (Da'ath) necessary to carry me across the abyss. The secret revealed in Da'ath was that the angel has always been with me. I met the angel a long time ago. Except it's not an angel; it's all the things the door represented to me as a child, and more besides.

I also realised that every act of meditation is a re-enactment of union with the angel.

Monday 5th February

The meditation continues, including Qabala meditations³⁵ on the sephira Binah, which I find I can now attain quite clearly.

My thoughts seem very real: brittle, crystalline, floating in front of my face. I see the buzzy wavelets of stuff that compose reality, and realise how all sensations and perceptions have a thought-like nature. Everything is composed of one kind of stuff.

Looking back, although it's tempting to believe that union with the angel is a discrete event, it isn't entirely so. I had

³⁵ For an example, see p. 317, below.

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perhaps attained it by this point, yet important work remained to be done in the meditation practice.

The Mystic Afterglow

Monday 12th February

The sense of awareness that I focus on as an object in my meditation – it isn't mine!

Friday 16th February

A matronly woman appears. She presents me with an award for doing so well. But I smell a rat, re-focus, and obliterate myself. She immediately vanishes also, and my mind becomes so empty there is no attachment to any thoughts. It is like taking a step behind myself. So empty. This is better than any 'award'.

Saturday 17th February

After I had stabilised my awareness, I called on GEUR in my meditation and visualised the door.

After a time, I sensed GEUR pulling my awareness into myself, away from the nothingness on which I was focusing.

I pushed it back again.

In response, he pulled it into me once more.

So I pushed it back...

It seemed funny. Stupid. A game. Sometimes he made his move surreptitiously, so it took a moment for me to realise the awareness was back in me. But there was definitely a sense of agency: I was up against another being, with whom I was pushing awareness back and forth. It was absurd. We were both playing a joke on the whole notion that awareness has to be on 'one side' (me) or 'the other' (the universe).

After the meditation, I walked into town. As soon as I stepped outside—WHAM. I realised my perception of everything had altered. My sensations were vivid, hallucinogenic. I was acutely conscious of existing, but with no hint of terror. I wondered how this could be, and double-checked that I wasn't secretly terrified, but there was only

wonder and astonishment at the beauty of everything in the world.

Thursday 20th February

Meditating, I realised I was about to meet Primal Awareness.

I was outside a dark doorway in a hot, desert country. I was there to interview Him. He was waiting inside. But then I simply realised that Primal Awareness and I were the same thing. There was no need for an interview; I would only be interviewing myself. I had nothing to do, nowhere to go; there was bliss and hilarity. It was obvious that awareness had nothing to do with 'me', because 'all this' was already 'it'.

Primal Awareness is a subtle non-thing that permeates all. One must do precisely nothing in order to become aware of it. This was simultaneously the most mind-shattering and stupidly mundane realisation at which I'd ever arrived. Everything in the universe was conscious and whole; and I understood exactly how to do nothing, in a way that wasn't trying to do nothing.

Yet even whilst this happened I was still fighting off the piffle and blather of my everyday consciousness. It was only an isolated moment of realisation. But the way that the gibbering of the mind had to be ignored—or, rather, quietly overlooked—taught me much about what this realisation truly was, and how the knowledge it conveys can be hidden in plain view so well.

This was the point at which I reached what is called in vipassana meditation 'first fruition'. And it's at this point that the phase of The Work known as The Knowledge and Communication of the Holy Guardian Angel reaches its attainment.

THE HIGHER GROUND

The Magical Progressive Experience Model

Based on the study of numerous traditions, models, personal accounts of enlightenment, and most importantly my own personal experience of the process, I've come up with a new model of enlightenment.

After presenting the model, I'll attempt to show how it relates to the three most useful maps I've found so far: the Theravada Buddhism Four Path model, the A.:A.: grading system, and Ken Wilber's states of integral spirituality.

It should be noted that I am initiated into the tradition of the A.:A.:, and so—as useful as the grades may be in mapping the stages of development—they are for me the actual *means* of enlightenment. (It's my belief there is a peculiar means of enlightenment for each individual.)

Enlightenment is progressive and engendered by numerous magical practices, most notably meditation, contemplation, centred prayer and the invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

The process of enlightenment is magical, entailing that the perception of what is experienced during the process is largely relative and subjective. For instance, the magician may experience a cycle of recognisable stages if working within the Theravada model (stages such as 'the dark night' and 'equanimity'), or may undergo a series of tests or ordeals, such as 'crossing the abyss' or the 'ordeal x', if working within the tradition of the A.:A.:.

At first, enlightenment occurs as a *peak experience*: a short, intense glimpse of Emptiness / God / Truth. It is not a trance state. What appears to occur during this event will mostly depend upon the practice used to achieve the peak experience, and the tradition of the magician. However, the results of the peak experience are universal: diffusion of consciousness in the 'background' of reality, increased compassion, feelings of bliss, etc.

Enlightenment as a peak experience will reoccur until enlightenment becomes a *plateau experience*. Emptiness /

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God / Truth, once experienced as a one-off event, now becomes progressively more obvious during normal waking consciousness. This is not a trance state either, but the acquisition of an additional awareness. At this point, just as it is still possible to experience complete identification with mundane reality, it also becomes possible during meditation to experience complete identification with absolute Emptiness / God / Truth. Some traditions mistakenly identify this trance state as enlightenment itself, but it should be noted that this experience is not essential to completing the process of enlightenment.

With time, enlightenment develops from a plateau experience to a *permanent adaptation*. When this occurs, Emptiness / God / Truth is identified with reality itself, and duality ceases for good. It should be noted that the cessation of duality might at first occur as a plateau experience in its own right, before developing into a permanent adaptation.

What's the point?

The greater the degree of enlightenment, the smaller the capacity for suffering. However, enlightenment does not change anything beyond the relationship of the magician to his or her experience. For instance, Theravada Buddhism makes use of a model that describes Ten Fetters or bonds that the process of enlightenment gradually breaks (Upatissa 1995, p. 318). With the occurrence of enlightenment as a plateau experience, or 'third path' (*anagami*), the magician is said to have abolished 'sensuous craving' and 'ill will'. This does not mean that the magician is incapable of experiencing 'sensuous craving' and 'ill will', but that the occurrence of these experiences (which still occur as regularly as they used to) no longer causes suffering.

The greater the degree of enlightenment, the greater the apprehension of objective truth. This does not mean the magician acquires any kind of specific knowledge, or all the knowledge in the universe. Enlightenment is not an acquisition of information, but a growth in non-rational awareness.

The Higher Ground

Although it can be said that the enlightened person has full comprehension of existence itself, it is wholly dependent upon the ingenuity of that person whether or not this is articulated in any meaningful sense. Enlightenment does not make you clever.

The greater the degree of enlightenment, the greater the magical power. Enlightenment will not allow you to walk through walls, teleport, change physical form or size, live forever, fly, materialise objects out of thin air, turn invisible, travel through time, shoot lightning bolts out of your arse, etc. It will, however, improve your regular magical ability no end, and may supply a few new 'psychic' abilities for good measure. Meditation too becomes increasingly more mind-blowing and exciting.

Theravada

In Theravada Buddhism, enlightenment as a peak experience is called a *fruition*. When this first occurs, the meditator attains 'first path', and goes on to attain 'second path' through repetition of the peak experience. When enlightenment becomes a plateau experience, the meditator is said to have achieved 'third path'. At this point, the trance known as *Nerodhi Samapatti* (also known as *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* and *Nirvana* or *Nibbana*), or 'Cessation of Thought and Feeling', becomes possible, although this trance state is not necessary to achieve the next path. With the permanent adaptation of enlightenment, the Wisdom Eye opens and the meditator achieves fourth path, becoming an *arahat*.

The A.:A.:

In the A.:A.: three grades delineate the process of enlightenment. The grade of Magister Templi is achieved with the first peak experience of enlightenment. This grade covers the period of time that enlightenment remains as a peak experience. The grade of Magus is attained with the first occurrence of enlightenment as a plateau experience. With the

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permanent adaptation of enlightenment, the magician becomes an Ipsissimus,

in which meditation success shall be That which was first adumbrated to Him in the grade of Practicus (which reflecteth Mercury into the lowest world) in Liber XXVII, 'Here is Nothing under its three forms...' And this is the Opening of the Grade of Ipsissimus, and by the Buddhists it is called the trance Nerodha-Samapatti. (Crowley 1988, p. 5)

On a personal note, the day after the fruition that marked my attainment of third path, I scryed the 25th Enochian Aethyr (known as 'VTI') and discovered that the preceding ordeal was my initiation into the grade of Magus.

Wilber

Ken Wilber gives four categories of events in his developmental model: *psychic*, *subtle*, *causal*, and *non-dual*. Wilber's model, although progressive, doesn't recognise the development of enlightenment from peak to plateau to a permanent adaptation.³⁶ However, enlightenment as a peak experience is described by Wilber as a psychic event he calls 'cosmic consciousness' or nature mysticism. Some of the trance states peculiar to the meditator who experiences enlightenment as a plateau experience, which Wilber describes as 'deity mysticism', are classed as subtle events. The actual experience of enlightenment as a plateau experience belongs to the category of causal, and consciousness of Emptiness / God / Truth continuously in real time is known as 'The Witness' or 'Big Mind'. For Wilber, complete identification with absolute Emptiness / God / Truth, which is what he means by 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi', marks a definite point in the development of enlightenment. The occurrence of enlightenment as a permanent adaptation, and the cessation of

³⁶ In this section I am referring mostly to ideas presented by Wilber in *One Taste: Daily Reflections on Integral Spirituality* (2000).

duality, is an event that belongs to the non-dual level, which Wilber refers to as 'One Taste'.

The Ten Zen Ox-Herding Pictures

The Ten Zen Ox-Herding pictures present a wonderfully simple model of the progress of enlightenment.

Developed in twelfth-century China, they depict the quest for enlightenment as the search for an elusive ox that roams wild in the rainforest. The ox symbolizes the intrinsic nature of consciousness, or the experience of Emptiness / God / Truth.

The Ten pictures are presented opposite, with a translation of the traditional description for each image, plus my own commentary.



Figure 2:
Seeking the Ox.

In the pasture of this world, I endlessly push aside the tall grasses in search of the ox. Following unnamed rivers, lost upon the interpenetrating paths of distant mountains, my strength failing and my vitality exhausted, I cannot find the ox. I only hear the locusts chirring through the forest at night.

This is the beginning of the process: the meditator practices daily and, through a great deal of discipline, has developed his or her awareness to the point of being able to distinguish between sensation and thought, which is the basis for further understanding.

Equivalence: The attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel (in the A.:A.: system), will kick-start this process.



Figure 3:
Finding the
Tracks.

*Along the riverbank under the trees, I discover footprints! Even under
the fragrant grass I see his prints. Deep in remote mountains they are
found. These traces no more can be hidden than one's nose, looking
heavenward.*

The meditator's persistence is paying off: various trance states and insights occur, and it appears at last that the meditator is indeed on the right track to enlightenment.

Equivalence: The Arising & Passing event, or 'naive enlightenment', of Theravada Buddhism. Crossing the Abyss of the A.:A.:



Figure 4: First
Glimpse of the
Ox.

*I hear the song of the nightingale. The sun is warm, the wind is mild,
willows are green along the shore, here no ox can hide! What artist
can draw that massive head, those majestic horns?*

Equanimity is reached, and enlightenment as a peak experience occurs.

The Higher Ground

Equivalence: fruition and the attainment of first path (*Sotapanna*) in Theravada Buddhism. Nature mysticism or a psychic-level event in Wilber's stages. The attainment of the grade of Magister Templi in the A.:A.:



Figure 5:
Catching the
Ox.

I seize him with a terrific struggle. His great will and power are inexhaustible. He charges to the high plateau far above the cloud-mists, Or in an impenetrable ravine he stands.

The meditator must persist in his or her practice and repeat the peak experience of enlightenment.

Equivalence: The repetition of the Insight Progress cycle in Theravada Buddhism.



Figure 6:
Taming the Ox.

The whip and rope are necessary. Else he might stray off down some dusty road. Being well trained, he becomes naturally gentle. Then, unfettered, he obeys his master.

Enlightenment as a peak experience is repeated.

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Equivalence: With repeat experience of fruition, second path (*Sakadagami*) is reached in Theravada Buddhism.



Figure 7: Riding the Ox Home.

Mounting the ox, slowly I return homeward. The voice of my flute intones through the evening. Measuring with hand-beats the pulsating harmony, I direct the endless rhythm. Whoever hears this melody will join me.

Enlightenment as a plateau experience occurs for the first time.

Equivalence: third path (*Anagami*) in Theravada Buddhism. The attainment of the grade of Magus in the A.:A.:. Events occur during meditation that belong to the subtle and causal stages of Wilber's model.



Figure 8: Ox Forgotten, Self Alone.

Astride the ox, I reach home. I am serene. The ox too can rest. The dawn has come. In blissful repose, within my thatched dwelling I have abandoned the whip and rope.

Emptiness / God / Truth becomes progressively more obvious in real time; enlightenment is no longer an elusive one-off event, but an everyday reality.

Equivalence: Wilber's Witness.

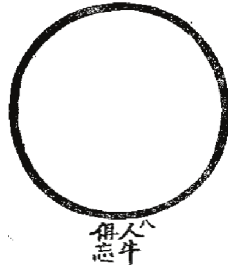


Figure 9: Both
Ox and Self
Forgotten.

Whip, rope, person, and ox—all merge in No-Thing. This heaven is so vast no message can stain it. How may a snowflake exist in a raging fire? Here are the footprints of the patriarchs.

Enlightenment has become a permanent adaptation. Complete identification during meditation with Emptiness / God / Truth becomes possible.

Equivalence: Nerodhi Samapatti in Theravada Buddhism. Nirvikalpa Samadhi, a causal level event, in Wilber's model. The 'opening' of the grade of Ipsissimus in the A.:A.:.



Figure 10:
Return to the
Source.

Too many steps have been taken returning to the root and the source. Better to have been blind and deaf from the beginning! Dwelling in one's true abode, unconcerned with that without—the river flows tranquilly on and the flowers are red.

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The duality between the world and Emptiness / God / Truth is abolished.

Equivalence: the opening of the Wisdom Eye, and the attainment of fourth path (*Arahat*) in Theravada Buddhism. Wilber's 'One Taste' or non-dual stage. The attainment of the grade of Ipsissimus in the A.:A.:..



Figure 11:
Entering the
Marketplace
with Helping
Hands.

*Barefooted and naked of breast, I mingle with the people of the world.
My clothes are ragged and dust-laden, and I am ever blissful. I use no
magic to extend my life; now, before me, the dead trees become alive.*

The process is complete. Hurrah!

Crossing the Abyss

In the Western sacred tradition of magick there is an event known as 'Crossing the Abyss', which marks a certain milestone in the magician's magical career.

Due to the histrionics of Aleister Crowley and the general degeneration of the Western Magical Tradition since his death, many contemporary magicians usually regard the abyss as a metaphor for going through a period of depression, losing a job or significant other, or as a catch-all term for any kind of initiatory crises, or as nothing more than a fictitious magical attainment dreamed up by Crowley as a device for inflating his ego.

However, based on my own personal experience and that of others, I can tell you that crossing the abyss is only a metaphor insofar as it describes a specific, unique, one-off and personally verifiable magical event peculiar to the tradition of magick (although there are equivalents found in other traditions).

What is the Abyss?

The abyss is that which divides the relative from the absolute. Any experience whatsoever is relative, being an expression of a relationship between one thing and another. Quantum physics, transactional psychology and post-modern thought all tell us that we are born relative creatures in a relative world, with our everyday reality being a unique construction based on our own peculiar conditioning, habits, biology and environment.

Sadly, it appears as though this realisation is as far as most magicians get in terms of understanding the world, hence their attitude to crossing the abyss as just another arbitrary metaphor for just another relative and subjective experience, because—after all—aren't all magical techniques, traditions and experiences of equal value?

Well, no, and this is what crossing the abyss is all about. One plane of relative experience is the 'mystical' or 'profound'. The language used to describe mystical or profound experience is known as metaphysics, and crossing the abyss is part of the metaphysic of magick. Just like every other plane, the metaphysical is dynamic—our experience of it is progressive, and we can grow and develop at the metaphysical just as our bodies grow and develop at the physical level of experience from foetus to adult.

To cross the abyss is to begin a metaphysical process that will lead from a reality composed solely of relative experience to one that includes the absolute for the first time. It is the beginning of magical maturity.

It should be noted that crossing the abyss has sometimes been equated with the destruction of the ego, but this is misleading. Yes, metaphysical experience transcends the

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relative self, but it is *inclusive*, not destructive or dismissive. If we are first aware of our hand and then of our body, would it be correct to say the hand is destroyed by such a growth in awareness? The same is true of the growth in awareness from ego to absolute, and this illustrated in those magicians, gurus or holy men who attain enlightenment or the completion of the Great Work yet still remain egotistical, sociopathic shit-heads.

What is the Absolute?

It's important to understand that there are many metaphysical events besides the absolute, such as various trances, states of absorption caused by concentration exercises, visions, psychic and magical experiences. None of these events, including those experiences that result from the absolute, are the absolute itself.

A general rule: if it comes and then goes away again, it is most assuredly relative.

Being beyond the relative and subjective, the absolute is not really an experience as such, as there is no experience or experiencer to speak of, but to refuse to talk about it on these grounds is firstly to risk failure to recognise there are techniques and an identifiable process that can lead to the absolute; and secondly, to reduce the Great Work or enlightenment to nothing but the intellectual realisation that words are inadequate to account for reality. I will therefore refer to the absolute as 'an experience' purely for convenience's sake.

The absolute occurs as part of the metaphysical process, which proceeds in stages, and it isn't something that can be practised like a trance state and experienced at the whim of the ego. At first, the absolute will occur during the process as a peak experience, or as a momentary 'blip' in reality. As stated earlier, what happens during the 'blip' cannot really be accounted for in language, but the most useful term I've found to describe it is the Buddhist Theravada concept of 'emptiness', although the experience really isn't anything like an absence, a negation, a void or a nothingness. I urge you to go and experience it for yourself and you'll see what I mean!

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The results of experiencing the absolute may include, but are not limited to: overwhelming bliss, a sense of coming home, an increase in compassion, the realisation of the truth, perfect happiness and all-round good times. Now, if that isn't reason enough to want to cross the abyss then I don't know what is.

Eventually the magical developmental process will lead to the occurrence of emptiness as a plateau experience, when emptiness becomes progressively more obvious during real-time, fading in and out of the background of reality, regardless of whether you are in the temple meditating or eating your lunch in the canteen at work.

The final stage of the process is the occurrence of emptiness as a permanent adaptation, i.e. instead of identifying with an unknown, the self finds its centre of gravity with emptiness. The divide between the relative and the absolute is abolished and the Great Work is accomplished.

In the metaphysic of magick there are three grades that designate the three stages of the process. After crossing the abyss and the occurrence of emptiness as a peak experience, the magician becomes a Magister Templi, or a Master of the Temple. When emptiness occurs as a plateau experience, the magician attains the grade of Magus; and with the permanent adaptation of emptiness, and the accomplishment of the Great Work, the magician assumes the final grade of Ipsissimus.

How do you cross the abyss?

There is only one act a magician can perform to cross the abyss, and that is to gain the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. The Holy Guardian Angel is the embodiment of the absolute. The Holy Guardian Angel is a means by which the relative self or ego can interact on its own terms with that which is above the abyss.

Once the knowledge and conversation is attained, or the magician has entered into a dialogue via vision and synchronicity with the angel, the magician will be led through the developmental process, which occurs as a cycle with stages,

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with the angel providing the right teachings and techniques at the right time. This usually means a daily meditation practice, but when I crossed the abyss I went through the first cycle using a daily ritual of sun worship. As a relative entity, it follows that there will be methods relative in their usefulness for each magician at each stage. In other words, different strokes for different folks.

So how do we actually gain the knowledge and conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel?

Being the absolute, it doesn't follow that the relative self or ego can command the angel to appear or make contact; rather, it is the angel that must initiate the conversation, for the angel transcends but includes the magician. The correct attitude to be adopted, then, is one of surrender—the magician must open himself up to the absolute, to give up all he has, has been or will ever be in favour of the knowledge and conversation of his angel. The relative self or ego must take a back-seat if it is to begin the process of union with the absolute.

A devotional ritual involving the surrender of the self to the angel should therefore be constructed and performed daily, for the rest of your life, or until instructed otherwise. Note that the surrender must be genuine—if the relative self or ego doesn't really want to let go then you are wasting your time. Of course, for most people this does take practice, hence the rather lengthy traditional invocations of the angel such, as the one given in *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (Mathers, 1976).

It may be that the relative self has a number of issues preventing the correct practice of surrender, and these will need to be addressed before success in the work can be expected. Similarly, if the magician has no real magical skill or experience, how is the angel to affect communication?

Before attempting to gain the knowledge and conversation the magician should have a good, solid grounding in the basics, especially divinatory methods, dream and visionary work, plus a degree of intimacy with synchronicity.

In Crowley's order of the A.:A.: we find a magical syllabus for practising magick peculiar to each plane of experience in order to prepare the magician, and grades are conferred based on the acquisition of competency at each level.

However, it should be made explicit that these grades do not describe the metaphysical process, unlike the three grades above the abyss. The grades below the abyss are simply designations of magical competency within certain areas, and are only ever conferred by man; those grades above the abyss describe a process independent of the accomplishments of the relative self or ego, and can only be given, as it were, by the absolute.

In other words, you do not need to engage with Crowley's A.:A.: grading system, or attain each of the grades below the abyss, before attempting to gain the knowledge and conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. The absolute and the metaphysical process are not a system, and they are not dependent on any syllabus or on any person's opinion of it—even yours. If you want to join the A.:A.: proper, you need only gain the Knowledge and Conversation.

Since Crowley's day, practical magick has moved on somewhat, and if you want a good solid practical magical education in order to prepare yourself, you could do a lot worse than taking up the pseudo-tradition of chaos magick for a few years.

How do I know I'm crossing the abyss?

To recap, crossing the abyss is to go through a metaphysical process, starting with the acquisition of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, and ending with the occurrence of the absolute, or emptiness, as a peak experience.

The division ('the abyss') between the relative and the absolute will then have been crossed for the first time, and as this can only ever be said to occur once, the crossing of the abyss is necessarily a one-off event. While it is true that the metaphysical process doesn't end there, and that the magician

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will cycle through the same process again and again, the attainment of the experience of the absolute is akin to losing your virginity—you can never go back, nor can you say you lose your virginity each time you have sex thereafter.

If it helps, you can consider crossing the abyss as being deflowered by God.

The metaphysical process is made up of a three-part cycle, consisting of a plateau, a trough and a peak. It is the successful completion of the first cycle that constitutes crossing the abyss. Of each part of the cycle, you can expect the following:

The plateau is a period of novelty, where magical practice is interesting and progress is steady. Insights come easy, and the plateau culminates in an event I like to call 'naive enlightenment' (known in Theravada Buddhism as 'the Arising & Passing Event'). Naive enlightenment can include, but is not limited to: trance states, dissolution of boundaries, visions of bright light, feelings of bliss, oneness, vibration, love, great enthusiasm for non-dualism, the belief you've experienced God / the Tao / the Truth, the belief that enlightenment has occurred as a single event, as opposed to a process.

The trough quickly follows naive enlightenment. Suddenly, practice becomes difficult and unpleasant. The success enjoyed during the plateau is gone, and the magician can experience any number of negative emotions at varying degrees of intensity, in regards to perception itself. The trough can include, but is not limited to: feelings of fear, disgust and hate, desire for deliverance, psychosis, unpleasant bodily sensations and sleepiness. The trough is sometimes referred to in other systems as 'the Dark Night of the Soul', and can last anywhere from a few hours to a number of years, the latter usually as a result of buying into the naive enlightenment event.

The peak arrives along with a gradual equanimity towards phenomena: peace is made with perception. Magick is no longer the slog it was during the trough, and a certain feeling of mastery prevails. The peak reaches a climax with the occurrence of the absolute as a peak experience, and this marks the

attainment of a grade, being the grade of Magister Templi if it's the magician's first time through the cycle.

The cycle then begins again, and it usually takes a few more cycles with peak experiences before the absolute occurs as a plateau experience and the next grade is attained.

So far, so good. Everything I've said isn't too dissimilar from many other developmental models, but what sets crossing the abyss apart is the fact that it is a magical event. As such, the cycle doesn't just manifest in an emotional or perceptual way, but on many other planes of experience too. During the crossing you can expect all kinds of bizarre synchronicities, magical visions, manifestations and interactions with entities.

It goes without saying, however, that there will be one entity you will certainly have to deal with during the crossing, and that is the denizen of the abyss, Choronzon.

Choronzon can be considered the embodiment of what is experienced during the trough: fear, disgust, and most especially confusion. How Choronzon will manifest, both as an entity and on other planes, is unique to each magician, but how to deal with him is the same for all: he should be met with silence and acceptance, and the same goes for the fear, paranoia and confusion that will arise in his presence. Your angel will provide instruction concerning any specific rituals that might need to be performed.

It is often said that crossing the abyss is a terrifying event—but this isn't necessarily the case. The trough can last anything from a few minutes to a number of years, and can vary greatly in intensity with each individual. Apart from my encounter with Choronzon, crossing the abyss wasn't really all that terrifying.

You might be wondering why, if you can achieve the Great Work or enlightenment through other much simpler, less poetic systems of attainment, such as vipassana or Zen, you would consider attempting the Great Work the magical way.

The answer is simple: the Holy Guardian Angel is the fastest, most efficient means of metaphysical development. Working with the angel means progress is no longer a question of

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conscious deliberation; the angel is in the position of knowing your self better than you do. Who better, then, than your angel in providing instruction?

The fact that the magician undergoes transformation on the basis of magical vision does not mean the magician is any less engaged with fundamental insight, or simply dealing with the content of his mind—rather, the relative self is afforded the opportunity of dealing with the process of insight on its own terms in a dualistic fashion. This is in stark contrast to the life-denying asceticism of most systems of purely meditative practice.

In conclusion: the abyss is the divide between the relative and the absolute. To cross the abyss, the relative self must engage with the absolute, by attaining the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel through a habitual ritual of surrender. Once this is attained, the magician will begin the metaphysical process of union with the absolute, which occurs in cycles made up of three stages.

The first time through the cycle is known as crossing the abyss, and the magician can expect to go through a novel plateau (with a trance event known as 'naive Enlightenment'), followed by a trough (including an encounter with the denizen of the abyss, Choronzon), and finally a peak, with the occurrence of the absolute for the first time.

The magician will then have attained the grade of Magister Templi.

With repetition of the cycle, eventually the absolute will occur as a plateau experience, and the grade of Magus will be attained.

Further repetition will eventually lead to the occurrence of the absolute as a permanent adaptation, the Great Work will be completed and the magician will have attained the grade of Ipsissimus.

Obviously, there is a lot of work involved. So what are you waiting for? Go and get deflowered!

Scrying the Aethyrs: Individual or Collective?

Alan and I have begun to scry the Enochian Aethyrs. We've made a thorough tour of Aethyr 30, and have checked out No. 29. We've discussed publishing the results, but aren't sure if they would interest anyone.

The recipe for a boring ritual is when the person leading waves their arms and intones magical words, yet it's all happening inside that person's head, and no one else has a clue. The key to a successful group working—in contrast—lies in giving everyone involved an insightful experience, no matter if it's another person's intent being satisfied.

Our method with the aethyrs has been for one person to put themselves into trance and to scry; another person delivers the Enochian Call and, along with the remainder of the party, questions and guides the scryer through his or her vision. But we've had some controversy over the status of the results obtained.

During our investigation of the 30th Aethyr, the Greek letter λ (lambda) appeared, a symbol for 'unity'. Our group was composed of people new at working together. This seemed to me significant, but should the symbol be taken as a message for the whole group, or just for the scryer?

I'm inclined to the former. It made sense in the context, and the style of working tends to produce something that the scryer wouldn't have obtained on their own. In fact, I was the scryer on this occasion, and having the others question and guide my vision resulted in unexpected results. However, the fact remains that the vision originated from me, and our subsequent sessions have shown that the style of the imagery depends heavily on the scryer. Someone like Crowley, well-versed in Qabala, is capable of intricately meaningful visions.³⁷ Whereas I'm liable to produce something with more than a whiff of *Star Trek* or Ray Harryhausen's *Jason And The Argonauts*.

Although it's always possible to relate magical results to the individual, different types of ritual open-up the possibility of

³⁷ See *The Vision and the Voice* (Crowley, 1998a).

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more group-oriented results. If we imagine a ritual as having a direction and a content, here's how different forms of ritual are oriented toward either an individual or the group:

	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Content</i>
<i>Visualisation</i>	individual	0
<i>Pathworking</i>	individual	group
<i>Group Scrying</i>	group	individual
<i>Group Evocation</i>	group	group

Figure 12: Types of working and their group / individual orientation.

In *visualisation*, the course that the vision takes and its symbolism is oriented by the individual. In a *path-working*, an individual guides the group, and each member of the group supplies their own reaction or content. In '*group scrying*', the term I've chosen to describe our method of working the aethyrs, an individual supplies the imagery, yet the group can shape what direction it takes. A *group evocation* is for me the clearest example of magical results gained almost exclusively through a group process, and would include activities such as goetic evocation, séances, possessions, etc. On these occasions any person's reactions can guide or determine the reactions of the other participants, in a snowballing effect. For example, during a particular goetic evocation, several members of our group heard the demon running about the edge of the circle. I didn't hear it myself, but others did, so I assumed that the demon was probably there.

I'm not claiming any of these ways of working or interpreting results is more valid than another. You can always content yourself with an 'individual' approach on any level, but each introduces a progressively higher limit on the influence that group processes can play.

Enoch, Enoch: Who's There?

As detailed above, the nature of things Enochian has been giving our noggins a flogging.

Whereas Duncan is unsure whether visions obtained from the Enochian aethyrs (by an individual, but in a group setting) apply to the whole group or just the scryer, I've always assumed the vision is for the scryer only. After all, the mass of literature that has accumulated around the subject posits the Enochian system as a method of gauging personal magical development, and as a means of discovering what must be done next in order to progress.

But I do agree with Duncan that there is something on the sneaky side when it comes to the visions. By this I mean that at times you feel as though certain entities encountered are lying to you, or at least harbouring a hidden agenda.

It's also true that anyone familiar with *The Goetia*³⁸ will recognise a few names among Dee's talismans (although these aren't used with the aethyrs). From experience, I can categorically state that Goetic demons certainly *do not* have your best interests at heart. However, if you cannot trust the Enochian entities without further evidence of their intent beyond what you see and experience in the visions, then you never will. So: what's the point of working with the system at all?

It was only after Duncan mentioned to me that he has recently been contemplating the nature of the division between himself and others (around the same time as he conducted his vision of the 30th aethyr) that I realised I've been looking at the Enochian system from the viewpoint of a moron.

So let's look at it from the viewpoint of a magician.

The Angel Connection

First off, my Holy Guardian Angel wants me to scry the aethyrs. I have absolutely no doubt that Enochian is therefore a necessary experience in my magical development.

³⁸ A system of magic based on the evocation of 78 demonic spirits. See Crowley, 1995.

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However, this doesn't mean the Enochian entities mean well. It wasn't so long ago I learnt the hard way a very big lesson about the nature of demons, after an event that my HGA got me involved in.

Like all magical acts, scrying the aethyrs involves a decision. To what extent has my Enochian experience been influenced by my decision to scry the aethyrs for my own personal development?

Is it possible to scry the aethyrs for the development of a group? Can you scry the aethyrs to develop your understanding of a chosen subject? Or to perform divination?

Of course, I've not considered the actual practicalities of this, but it must be remembered that the 'standard' Enochian rituals did not exist until Crowley made them up.

Innovation aside, however, I cannot help feeling that using the system for anything other than your own initiatory development is akin to using a sledgehammer to crack a walnut. For instance, in terms of a vision for the group, I cannot see what could be developed beyond the relationships within the group or its method of working, none of which come close to the value of personal revelation.

Evidence

In my experience, I have yet to encounter a stereotypical angel. I have encountered a cyberman³⁹, Little Red Riding Hood, The Beast 666, a giant magician, a number of talking statues, various gods, but no angels. Although I did see what I thought were three Cherubs, yet they didn't have wings.

I couldn't escape the feeling that some form of intelligence was using symbolism relevant to me. At first I thought it was simply using symbolism exclusively from my own experience, but then encountered symbolism I had never come across before, which led me to believe the Enochian entities have access to information beyond the narrow confines of my mind.

³⁹ A robotic creature from the BBC Television science fiction series *Doctor Who*.

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Furthermore, the complexity of the symbolism is staggering. It took almost two days study of the transcript of the vision to appreciate how alchemy, Thelema, Qabalah, astrology, theology, history and numerous pop-culture mythologies were all woven together in a completely harmonious fashion, re-enforcing each other. I didn't have the necessary scholarship or understanding of these various symbol systems without reference to relevant sources. And this is where we come to the crunch: what were the symbols re-enforcing?

Simply, I was shown *where I currently am* in my initiatory development – most prominently in terms of the alchemical and Thelemic / Qabalistic versions of the magical process. I was being gauged.

In other words, I got what I expected; so it's all down to intent, then, isn't it?

Far Out

The thing is, I also got some results I didn't expect. Whilst having the vision, I entered a number of trances, very similar to the trances obtained from yoga or other magical practice.

When this happened, the quality of the vision improved. I don't mean that my visionary ability improved, but the nature of the vision itself became more refined and less 'fake'. I was also told by the entities I encountered that I was in a different aethyr, higher than the one I intended to scry.

This all seems to suggest that the higher up the aethyrs you go, the closer you get to God (in a mystical sense).

On top of this, I believe the experience of the aethyr not only acted as a yardstick, but actually augmented my development, both in my ability to understand the various symbol systems encountered (which happened in the days following), and in my attainment of revelatory states (which manifested the next day as a spontaneous trance, a step up from anything I'd experienced before).

This was not part of my intent in scrying the aethyrs. In fact, I had always assumed scrying was passive.

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The Nature of the Beast

So conscious intent aside, what the hell *are* the aethyrs and their occupants?

I think the only way to proceed in obtaining a satisfactory description of the Enochian aethyrs is to look at what we actually do when performing the operation, and what we actually experience.

The operation consists of reciting a 'call' or 'key' for a particular aethyr, in the Enochian language, and then vibrating the names of the governors of the chosen aethyr. The governors and the aethyrs are part of the Enochian map of the world.

Just like the I Ching and the Tarot, as a complete map of the world Enochian magic must contain elements that we, as humans, would describe as 'bad'. Perhaps this accounts for the Goetic names, and the odd dodgy 'elemental' that engenders a feeling of mistrust?

I think the key to the operation is the language used. Despite many an Enochian scholar's best efforts, the structure of the language still remains a mystery. It is evident that it has a syntax, but it is something beyond our current ability to understand. Could this also apply to the Enochian entities? If it had been me who originally received Dee and Kelly's 'angel' communications, might we know them as 'Enochian cybermen' instead?

Although many Enochian scholars argue over the correct pronunciation of the language, experience has shown you can pronounce Enochian any which way you please, and it still works.

I think we can best sum up the operation as a call to something beyond our present comprehension. Anything else, such as claiming you are calling to angels in a specific language, appears to be arbitrary.

What of the experience itself?

Well, apart from the trance and the lesson in map integration, the principle result was a vision made of symbols. As such, an Enochian vision has the potential of communicating

as much wisdom as the number and nature of the symbol systems it employs. (Consider, for instance, how much wisdom is crammed into a single symbol-system such as the Tarot). This means there is no limit on what a vision can communicate, or how many things it can communicate, other than the scryer's faculty of understanding (which perhaps depends upon his or her initiatory level). There is no reason why a vision cannot apply to an individual and a group simultaneously (as a result, I now believe that Duncan's vision of the 30th aethyr *did* apply to the group, as a function of his personal development).

To sum up: the operator calls forth something beyond his or her current understanding, which necessitates a tendency towards a revelatory experience, taking the form of a vision with unlimited wisdom, effecting the scryer in both a passive and active manner.

I believe the system of the Enochian aethyrs is a revelation engine.

Synaesthesia and Spirituality

Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) is widely credited with having invented abstract art. He was also famously synaesthetic – that is, he experienced the (possibly) neurological condition known as *synaesthesia*, whereby perceptions gained from a particular sense trigger responses belonging to other senses. For example, synaesthetes commonly 'see' music, or apprehend 'colours' in response to spoken or written words. There are also cases of people who could 'taste' words, or for whom sounds triggered tactile sensations.

In a recent article, Gary Lachman (2006) traced the influence of occult thinkers upon Kandinsky. If Kandinsky can be said to have invented abstract art, then maybe its deeper roots lie in the ideas and practices of these occultists, among them the Theosophists and Rudolf Steiner.

In some of his paintings, Kandinsky seems to give representation to the shifting imagery that his synaesthesia overlaid onto his perception of reality. His artistic manifesto,

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Concerning the Spiritual in Art (Kandinsky, 1977) makes explicit his aim to plunge beyond materiality and give expression to subtle spiritual realities.

Kandinsky was very interested in Steiner and attended his lectures in Germany, and read avidly the journals that Steiner published. Some of Steiner's blackboard drawings, produced during his lectures, which have since been exhibited as abstract works of art in their own right (Steiner, 2003), bear comparison with Kandinsky's work.

Given the interest of both men in exploring the realms of spirit, the question arises: were their minds and perceptual abilities similar in some special sense?

I'm tempted to believe that they were. Part of my reason is that I'm synaesthetic too. Some people have such heavy synaesthesia that they cannot leave the house, because the imagery provoked by sounds and sensations in the street is so vivid they cannot function. My case, thankfully, is much milder and takes the commonest form of colour responses to letters, words and numbers. (Handy for helping me remember names and phone numbers.) I also 'see' colours and forms in response to music. In case you're wondering, R is green; T is orange; B, K and X are each black; and there's only one purple letter in the whole alphabet: J.

So now you know.

I recently attempted for the first time the meditation that Steiner recommends for developing clairvoyancy. (See Steiner, 1947.) In brief, the technique involves concentrating on the beginnings and endings of things perceived. The figures on the next page were the result.

Not great art. (Hey, just give me time!) But it became clear how this meditation encourages an effect already familiar to synaesthetes. For a non-synaesthete, I imagine continued practice of this meditation might produce a synaesthetic effect, because it invites the meditator to contemplate perceptions against the unrepresentable backdrop of their origin and demise (emptiness). Simply, this exercise makes the meditator more aware of his or her mental imagery.

Lachman writes: ‘students of Rudolf Steiner’s teachings will remember that synaesthesia is one of the signs of advance on the spiritual path’ (Lachman 2006, p. 102). I really wish he’d provided a reference for this! The only reference to synaesthesia in Steiner I’ve found so far occurs in a lecture that hasn’t been translated yet, but in it—apparently—Steiner asserted that although synaesthesia is an attainment, it should not be confused with the higher attainment of clairvoyant vision.⁴⁰

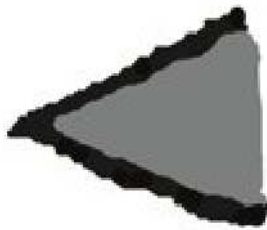


Figure 13: The Beginning of a Thing.

A feeling like the heart filling slowly with blood. Pleasant tension. The hands, feet and limbs are activated. Readiness. Answering a call.



Figure 14: The Ending of a Thing.

A feeling like the heart being tugged, or pulled, or emptied—like the mind’s reaction to sudden silence. A feeling that activates the mind—a mental shock that leaves the mind trying to gather the pieces. But there are no pieces to gather.

⁴⁰ Rudolf Steiner, ‘Building Stones for an Understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha’ (10 lectures: Berlin, March–May 1917). It’s Lecture Ten in which the reference to synaesthesia and clairvoyancy occurs.

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For instances of clairvoyancy, we can turn to a book called *Thought Forms* by the theosophists Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbetter (1905).⁴¹ The authors present a series of abstract images from clairvoyants' descriptions of certain thoughts and emotional states. Once again, these compare interestingly with examples of early abstract art.

The difference between these images and synaesthesia is that, in synaesthesia, a particular impression may be perceived differently by each synaesthete. For instance, 'A', for me, is yellow-gold; for Rimbaud it was black; for Nabokov it had 'the tint of weathered wood'; for Baudelaire it was: 'a black corset and over it the flies boil noisy where the cruel stench fumes slow'.

On the other hand, according to Besant and Leadbetter, clairvoyant vision is consistent in its forms and colours; there are fixed correspondences between the forms and the states they represent. For instance, a grey cloud indicates fear; a blue triangle rising upwards indicates religious feeling (Besant & Leadbetter 1905, p. 46). The images of synaesthesia are merely impressions; the thought forms of clairvoyancy constitute a *language* and, as such, they provide information.

A thought form seen in connection with a particular event or person can reveal something otherwise hidden concerning the meaning of that event, or the inner thoughts of that person. Synaesthetic imagery, meanwhile, is simply the translation of impressions from one sensory modality into another.

Even so, Steiner suggested that synaesthesia was an attainment, and I think it can be argued that it proves its worth at certain stages of the insight process. (Although I've also noticed it sometimes leads me astray, as when I find myself concentrating on the *visual image* of my breath that my synaesthesia causes to arise, which is a degree removed from the actual sensation.)

In that higher stage of meditation known as equanimity, where sensations are recognised for what they are (i.e.

⁴¹ There's an on-line version of this text at: <http://tinyurl.com/mjkh7g>.

impermanent, incapable of satisfying, and essentially empty), and where the meditator is capable of not reacting to them with either attachment or aversion, then synaesthesia can be helpful.

Daniel Ingram describes sensations at this stage of meditation as 'formations'. He suggests:

They contain all the six sense doors in them, including thought, in a way that does not split them up sequentially in time or positionally in space. If you could take a 3D moving photograph that also captured smell, taste, touch, sound, and thought, all woven into each other seamlessly and containing a sense of flux, this would approximate the experience of one formation. (Ingram 2004, p. 173)

When I reached equanimity for the first time I got stuck, because I was waiting for these 'formations' to appear. The problem was, I expected something new. However, I now suspect that 'formations' resemble what is arising constantly in the mind of synaesthetes, albeit in a less conscious guise.

I know the letter R isn't green, and I know it's absurd to think that it is. Yet the impression persists automatically, vividly, no matter how stupid. Synaesthesia can help in apprehending the emptiness of sensations, because it predisposes the meditator towards recognising them as the little bundles of jumbled cross-modal impressions that they truly are, but from which everyday consciousness elects only certain parts.

In the mind of a synaesthete there's a constant degree of 'bleed-through' between sensory impressions, which means that a synaesthete is always residually aware of the arbitrariness and unsteadiness of sensations, and of how surface reality is an illusion that disguises its truer face—a chaotic flux, which some regard as a gateway to the 'spiritual'.

Coming Home

(A review of *Coming Home: The Experience of Enlightenment In Sacred Traditions*, by Lex Hixon.)

Heidegger, Krishnamurti, Ramakrishna, Tantra, Zen, Plotinus, Hasidism, Saint Paul, I Ching, Advaita Vedanta... Hixon covers them all, and all in some detail, exposing the similarity that underlies each: that enlightenment is an awakening to primal consciousness; not a transcendence, but a realisation of our own divinity in this life.

Where the stuffed shirts of the monotheistic religions are concerned, Hixon has to dig deeper into their mystical offshoots: Baal Shem (Judaism), Gnosticism (Christianity) and Sufism (Islam), but it must be no coincidence that every orthodoxy seems to have an underside where the perennial philosophy survives in a less corrupted form.

You won't get far into the book before you realise that Hixon is providing more than a survey of beliefs; he's giving us tools and talking us into an experience of the realisation that he describes, even as we read. Perhaps he succeeds as much as possible, because the quality of the writing is gorgeous, demonstrating his expertise as a lecturer.

Ten images known as the 'ox-herding' pictures are used to guide the Zen practitioner through the stages on the path. What's commonly presented as the experience of enlightenment in many other traditions (*nirvikalpa samadhi*) seems to occur around the third ox-herding picture, leaving the remaining seven to deal with the subtle illusions that beset the practitioner after 'enlightenment'. I'd never appreciated the extent to which Zen is focused on integration of higher states with everyday life; this seems to be the mark of true attainment for the Zen practitioner.

In his final chapter, Hixon provides a blueprint for enlightenment that—whilst drawing upon Advaita Vedanta (his own spiritual preference, it seems)—is largely tradition-neutral. Now, there is much discussion in this very book that you are holding concerning what is known in the Western Hermetic

Tradition as the 'Holy Guardian Angel'. Hixon's final chapter casts important light on this concept. He suggests that in our practice we should adopt a technique of meditation, a mantra, but also an image of: 'any human or divine figure, any earthly or heavenly vista or object that functions as a sacrament' (Hixon 1989, p. 194). This image, in Sanskrit, is an *ishtadeva*:

We are not projecting the ishtadeva. The primal radiance that assumes the form of the ishtadeva is actually projecting us and all the phenomena that we call the universe. The ishtadeva that we have chosen represents the archetype, or door of power, through which we originally emerged from primal radiance and through which we now seek to return or to come home. (Hixon 1989, p. 195)

The relationship between the practitioner and the ishtadeva passes through stages. The first is contemplation or worship. In the second, the practitioner merges with the ishtadeva and union is attained. In the third stage, the ishtadeva disappears into primal radiance, carrying the practitioner with it. In the fourth stage, primal radiance is revealed at the heart of all being, flowing from the ishtadeva or archetype that the practitioner has now become.

In other words, Hixon's tradition-neutral method for enlightenment hinges upon selection of a divine image, used as a vehicle by the practitioner to realise his or her own inner divinity.

To understand the Holy Guardian Angel of Western Hermeticism, I think you could do a lot worse than consider its similarity with Hixon's ishtadeva.

About An Egregore

When we started our magical group in Brighton, we wanted to embark upon work that would bind us together and emphasise the paranormal aspect of magic. Inspired by the research

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conducted at Toronto University during the 1970s, through which a group of students created a poltergeist named 'Philip' (Owen & Sparrow, 1976), we decided to make ourselves an egregore in the same vein.

The Toronto experiment showed that entities which manifest with material effects need not be interpreted as the disembodied souls of dead people. 'Philip' was a fiction: the students made up an identity for him, including some intentional historical inaccuracies, so that they were sure he had never existed in real life. Having decided on a back-story, what they did next was to apply their belief. They met regularly, and in a relaxed atmosphere talked to 'Philip', and talked about 'Philip' amongst themselves, as if he were a real person. It didn't happen overnight, but in due course 'Philip' began to respond. Knocking sounds were heard in answer to questions, and other poltergeist activity was observed and recorded on film.

William Clementine Esq., our egregore, was conceived in May 2006. We had just performed a ritual devised by Alan, which involved attaining a state of illumination through the use of a hand grenade. (A replica, I should add.) Afterwards, as we debated what William's biography should be, we experienced a striking synchronicity, undoubtedly fallout from Alan's ritual. Each of us suddenly had the same idea expressed in the very same phrase: 'A Sixteenth Century Car Mechanic'.

Thus, William's identity took shape. He was a Leonardo of the Elizabethan age; the creator of the automobile three centuries too early. Despite his genius for invention, the era in which he lived made the requisite materials very hard to find. There were no cars and no roads, so he made a very meagre living from his auto-repairs business. Furthermore, after he'd cobbled together a working prototype, fashioned entirely from wood and cat-gut, tragedy struck. The young prince, heir of King Henry VIII, was taking a walk with his nurse, when both were struck down and killed by William out on his maiden test-drive.

For his part in the accident, William was put to death. (Hanged, drawn and quartered, as his bad luck would have it.) King Henry was so distraught by the death of his son he had every mention of the boy erased from court records. And although he tried subsequently every means possible to produce a male heir, the rest – as we know – is history.

Early returns from our investment of belief in William were promising. Asking him to knock in order to indicate his presence, we were rewarded by a few clicks and bumps that seemed intelligent, but were intermittent.

Our preferred means of communication with William became the ouija board. At first we received random letters and numbers, until we realised these were registration plates of vehicles William had loved. Occasionally a primitive sentiment would be expressed, such as: KEEP ON TRUCKING. Most often, his favourite word was: WEED. William frequently expressed a desire for cannabis, and was fixated on finding a way to imbibe some, despite his non-embodied state.

One night, in answer to his plea, we drew a sigil that represented him onto a piece of paper, and each of us in turn blew smoke at it. We were rewarded by an entheogenic trip far in excess of anything we had a rational right to expect from the drug. Even the seasoned pot-heads amongst us expressed bafflement the next day at where the effect had come from. The magical cause was obvious. William is our egregore – in other words, our ‘group mind’. By blowing smoke onto his sigil, the benefit had rebounded back onto all of us, ten-fold.

As the weeks passed, things took a more difficult turn. We’d hoped that William’s communication skills would increase in sophistication, but instead they regressed. Instead of coherent replies, we were treated to more registration numbers. Answers, when they came, were garbled and contradictory, because – William claimed – he was stoned. We suspected that like a moody two year-old he was simply refusing to talk sensibly.

One week, he didn’t show up at all, but something else did: an insane, time-wasting spirit calling itself ‘MF’, which led us a

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merry dance, until we wised-up and forcibly banished it. We sensed William lounging in the background, laughing.

We'd always spoken with William at the end of our meetings, and it took us a while to realise that this was disrespectful—as if he were an obligation or after-thought. As we examined our conduct toward him in more detail, we realised we had been treating him like a servitor—a spirit created to perform our will—rather than a being on an equal footing with us. We apologised, and from then onwards invited him to join us at the beginning of all our proceedings, offering him toasts and full participation in the group.

Relations immediately improved, but once again didn't take the course we'd hoped. A friend from outside our group, with whom we'd discussed William, decided to evoke and meet him for herself. The experience, she told us, was very unpleasant. She resolved never to work with him again. Shortly after this, he insulted a female member of our group. He was obviously developing an undesirable misogynistic streak.

We changed our mode of communication. We dropped the ouija board and left a space for him to stand in our circle at the beginning of meetings. Each of us took turns to channel him, reporting on where he was, how he looked, and on what he wanted to say to the others.

He took to wearing his hair in a 'mohican' style. He was often abrasive and grumpy. On a couple of occasions he appeared in a tavern (on one memorable instance, attended by a serving wench). Another time he was lying in a park, drunk, wearing a plastic moustache, nose and glasses. One week he told us we must all bring wooden objects as offerings to him. On the next occasion, when no one did, he was doubly insulting.

Recently, an experienced magician from outside our group, who knew about William, took me aside and expressed his concern. He suggested we'd gone about our egregore in a way that was—to say the least—problematic.

‘A Sixteenth Century car mechanic is an impossibility, and William knows it,’ he said. ‘You’ve forced him into an impossible identity, and it has made him insane.’

I’ve given this some long and serious thought. Of course, there’s much truth in this viewpoint. But at our last meeting it seemed William was finally beginning to realise the purpose for which we’d created him.

We had reverted back to asking him to demonstrate his presence through material effects. Four of us were present. When I asked him to communicate, I heard two knocks, absolutely clear. Oddly, no one else did. When another member of the group spoke to him, exactly the same thing happened: she heard the knocks, we didn’t. Another member of the group heard the ticking of the wall-clock alter in response to her questions. The remaining member of our group experienced no effects at all.

It would seem that William is producing sensory phenomena at last—but at the moment, he has only enough strength to affect one of our minds at a time. The knocks I heard were obvious and pronounced. I was amazed that no one else heard them. They also possessed a quality I’ve noticed in previous experiences of this type: their acoustic didn’t fit the room. The knocks were echoing and distant, whereas the room was small and cosy.

An egregore is a manifestation of the ‘group mind’. But what does a ‘group mind’ think? What is a ‘group mind’ for?

We’ve all experienced how stupid and primitive groups can be—disorganised and uncoordinated. Yet a group can also produce artefacts that far exceed the abilities of its individual members. The highest achievement of human groups are the cultures that have sprung up over the globe since history began. Whereas the worst a group can do is when it switches into paranoid-survival mode, tearing apart itself, or the members of some other group.

An egregore, as the production of a group, can therefore tend in one of two directions: toward the group’s lowest common

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denominator, or toward the manifestation of an ideal held in common.

Our magical colleague had every right to be concerned about William. In retrospect, the best way to create an egregore is probably to identify the ideals of the group, through structured workings, and create a thought-form that manifests precisely those.

William hasn't had the best start in life. Admittedly, his identity was forced upon him by us into a paradoxical, crippled shape. Given a second chance, maybe we wouldn't do it that way again. His sense of inadequacy has forced him to adopt a paranoid-survival mode, simply in order to exist. Primitive, aggressive, basic personality forms are the simplest and therefore the easiest to assume. For William, it's a stark choice between these, or collapsing into self-contradictory nothingness. I think the latter may indeed have happened to him, at times, judging by the gibberish and incoherency we received from him.

But I believe in William—in both senses of the word—and imagine there is great hope for him, because madness is a peculiarly human pitfall, one that gods, angels, servitors, elementals don't have to contend with. His identity is indeed contradictory, but all of us have parts within ourselves at war with other parts. What we call 'identity' is the fragile outcome of this impossible-to-resolve battle, the compromise between the wild contradictions of life. Where this structure falls apart, there's madness. Where it holds together, there's a personality. And where the struggle is transcended altogether, well, that's an *arahat*, an enlightened being.

Of all the spirits I've worked with, William is not the most illuminating, but he is the most earthy and human. It'll be interesting to see how—or if—he can pull it together.

Integral Magic for an Integral World

When I first investigated Ken Wilber's Integral Theory, I couldn't help applying his AQAL model to magical practice.

For the uninitiated, AQAL stands for 'All Quadrants, All Levels'. Wilber's system includes a model of all the stages of human spiritual development, from infantile to enlightened—these are the so-called 'levels'. In addition, every entity has an inside and an outside, an individual and a collective form—these are the 'quadrants'. AQAL enables us to map any manifest experience onto (a) its level of development, and (b) its perspective upon existence (i.e. whether it is oriented towards 'I', 'it', 'we' or 'they').

One of the beauties of Wilber's model is that the next developmental stage in any area of human activity is the Integral stage. If you want to know what comes after Chaos Magic (which is 'Green meme', or at the current 'cutting-edge' of human development), now you know—Integral Magic!

I find Wilber's model incredibly comprehensive, and especially useful at exposing blind-spots in the consideration of any subject, but the very idea of Integral Magic is absurd.

AQAL can be applied to anything, and that's the point. We can apply Integral theory to our magical practice, just as we can apply it to plumbing, Buddhism and scuba diving. But do you really believe there's such a thing as an 'Integral Plumber'? And if Integral is a theory of everything, does that mean we live in Integral World? (If Wilber has his way, one day who knows...)

Integral Magick

Very low down in Wilber's developmental model is the 'Magic' stage, which is a label he uses to describe a certain naive and superstitious view of the world. Magicians have taken offence to this, and have accused Wilber of deliberately ignoring the magical spiritual traditions of the West.

Fenwick Rysen is currently working on what he calls 'Integral Magick'.⁴² Although prefixed with 'Integral', Rysen has abandoned AQAL as unfit for adequately describing magic, and is currently drowning in notebooks as he collates enough information to put together his own model. Unfortunately, I

⁴² See: <http://community.livejournal.com/integralmagick>.

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think this is a case of throwing the baby out with the bath water, which I believe is a result of not really understanding AQAL (no offence, Fenwick).

The stage called 'Magic' in Wilber's model does not mean magic in the sense that we use it. Not everyone in that stage is a magician. I think the use of the word is unfortunate, and (ironically) the result of a naive and superstitious view of magic, typical of Western psychology. But to abandon AQAL for not including magic in its developmental stages is to fail to understand that AQAL is simply a framework of approaches or viewpoints, not of subjects or practices.

Surely Wilber would have included a 'Buddhist' stage if AQAL were the later?

Are we really saying here that the AQAL model is useless because Wilber doesn't recognise Western magic for what it is? Who cares if he does or not?

Integral Theory applied to magic

AQAL can be applied to magic very easily. We can consider magic in terms of the quadrants – see diagram, p. 173.

Although not comprehensive, and with a great deal of overlap, this diagram at least gives us a general idea of how the quadrants can be applied to magic.

As for the levels, I'm sure you can work out how certain approaches or attitudes affect those parts of magic ascribed to each quadrant, and which traditions belong to which stage.

It's worth noting that Wilber has written extensively on spiritual development, and I think it says a lot about a person's view of magic should they fail to see how his work in this area is relevant.

Integral Cubed

There used to be a big problem with Integral Theory, and I used to love telling everyone about it. Originally, Wilber simply slapped a magical developmental model on top of Spiral

Dynamics⁴³, with his own Integral view conveniently in the middle. In other words, to get enlightened, you had to read Ken Wilber first! Yet people have been experiencing enlightenment long before Wilber showed up. (Oops.)

I	It
Identity, attitude, approach (Chaos, Thelema, Wicca, etc) Magical developmental stages Trance states Visions Dream work Communication with non-human intelligence Mental and emotional manifestation of magical results (including non-human intelligence) Ethics	Rituals Techniques Tools (wands, altar, etc) Books, blogs, podcasts, etc Physical manifestation of results (inc manifestation of non-human intelligence) Synchronicity
We	Its
Group work Social manifestation of results (inc. manifestation of non-human intelligence) Attitudes, approaches, identities, movements (Chaos, Thelema, Wicca, etc)	Temple / sacred space / laboratory Magical Orders / structures Environmental manifestation of results (inc. manifestation of non-human intelligence) Synchronicity

Figure 15: Aspects of Magic Across Wilber’s Quadrants.

However, in his latest book, *Integral Spirituality* (2006), Wilber has addressed this problem with the ‘W-C Lattice’ (which is a table, with Stages versus States – see Wilber 2006, p. 88f). After the Integral stage, we now have ‘Super Integral’

⁴³ ‘Spiral Dynamics’ is a theory of human development, first introduced in a book of the same name (Beck & Cowan 1996). Wilber took this model as the basis of his levels of development.

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(grasping at straws anyone?) instead of the various stages of enlightenment. This means we are now free to enjoy the various trance states of 'spirituality', no matter what stage we may be at.

Now, I know Ken is going to freak out when he reads this, but the lattice fails to account for the fact that enlightenment, or magical development, occurs in *stages*, not states. (Oops again.) At some point, the lattice is going to have to become a cube, with Spiral Dynamic stages versus trance states versus spiritual stages. When Wilber finally concedes this, remember where you heard it first.

Ken Wilber On Magic

I've got some points to add to Alan's comments on Ken Wilber and magic, coming at the issue more from the perspective of Wilber's developmental levels rather than the quadrants.

Like many other magicians, I'm a big fan of Wilber, and always thought it was a shame he doesn't return the favour, with his relegation of 'magic' to a very low ranking on the developmental scale.

Walking along the street yesterday, I saw a little girl in her pushchair shouting 'STOP!' as buses rumbled past, and boasting to her mother to look at how she was effecting change upon the double-deckers in conformity with her will. This is the kind of world-view that Wilber intends when he uses the term 'magic': an ego-centric, deluded, omnipotent, fantastical belief that I can make reality do whatever I want.

To a magician, this is simply annoying.

Also annoying is the way that Wilber usually mentions Sigmund Freud at this point in his discourse, as an example of someone who over-used the 'magical' world-view as a too convenient dustbin in which to categorise all spiritual or paranormal phenomena. Although this is true in a basic sense, Freud's attitude to the paranormal is more complicated than many people assume. (See below, p. 253.)

Fenwick Rysen is busy creating his own version of Integral Magic, as Alan indicated, but I came across some words of wisdom from Ken himself that seemed untypical and now, like Alan, I'm wondering whether Fenwick needs to bother. The passage in question comes from the series of audio interviews entitled *Kosmic Consciousness* (Wilber, 2003). The interviewer, who seems a bit of an astrology fan, is trying to pin Ken down on the question of whether divination is mindless bollocks (i.e. 'magic' in the Wilberian sense) or whether it can convey important truths that address issues on higher-than-average (or 'transrational') developmental levels.

Ken suggests that divination, imputing authority to an oracle, indicates a mindset at the 'mythic' level. (The level immediately above 'magic'.) He mentions Joseph Campbell's argument that myths perform two functions. The first is realised when we accept a myth as concretely real—for instance: 'Jesus died on the cross and three days later came alive again'. The second is realised when we accept the myth as symbolic of something else—for example: 'Jesus shows that if you die to your own ego then you will resurrect in this life into an existence of enlightened awareness'.

Says Ken:

The way you get to this higher mythology is you hold the mythic image in an 'as if' way. *As if* it were true. Now, the capacity to form a cognition 'as if' it were the case is what we're calling a level four or rational capacity [i.e. the level above 'mythic']; it doesn't come into existence until that level. That's why you can't hold an 'as if' view until you're ten or eleven years old. Any 'as if' mythology has to be held by rationality or higher. So this is a very distinguishing way to tell the difference between pre-rational myths and transrational myths. (Wilber 2003, CD3, track 3)

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'How do you tell the difference?' asks the interviewer at this point. In other words, if I've forked out £30 for a tarot reading, how can I tell I'm getting my transrational money's worth, and not a mythical rip-off?

You ask them what is it they're doing. If they're saying: 'I'm going to give you empirical evidence of what's going to happen tomorrow afternoon', then check it out empirically! Unfortunately, most of them are doing this. However, if they've framed what they're doing as: 'I'm going to give you an interpretive reading about events that are important to you in your life right now,' then that's fine. That's a metaphoric orientation. Using their whole intuitive awareness, using their own development along various lines, cognitive, intuitive, emotional, they're using the tarot cards that come up as a kind of Rorschach interpretive tool to help the person get in touch with some facets they believe this person might be out of touch with, and under those circumstances it can be a kind of high metaphoric event. (Wilber 2003, CD3, track 3)

So it's as Alan said, isn't it? The developmental levels are 'simply a framework of approaches or viewpoints, not of subjects or practices'. In other words, a deck of tarot cards can be put to a use that can help you attain enlightenment, or it can be used as toilet paper. 'Magic' in the Wilberian sense is simply an unfortunate label for a cretinous way of looking at the world.

As Wilber himself suggests, gateways to the transrational or upper levels of development include taking an 'as if' stance, or experiencing a 'high metaphoric event'.

'Belief-shifting', anyone?

Do I hear 'ritual' or 'ceremonial magic'?

Maybe Ken doesn't think we're so lame after all.

Magicians and Spies

The Great Work and The Great Game

No doubt, there's a strong affinity between magicians and spies. John Dee was the original 007 (the code number he chose to identify his communications) on the service of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth I; Crowley had links with MI5, and claimed to be the inventor of Churchill's 'V for Victory' salute (Kaczynski 2002, p. 420-1); and even Austin Osman Spare went to the trouble of designing an original camouflage system for the military (Letchford, 1996). (It was rejected.) On the literary fringes of occultism, the link also holds true: Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond, had connections with both occultism and the secret services, as did novelist Dennis Wheatley (Kaczynski 2002, p. 416). (I'm not sure how well the link survives on the other side of the Atlantic, but Jack Parsons springs to mind as another possible example. See Carter, 2004.)

There's a parallel tradition of stage illusionists offering expertise to the intelligence services. Stories of airfields crowded with dummy cardboard spitfires; or of Churchill making appearances in more than two places at once are trademarks of their involvement (Sutton, 2004). Yet apart from a love of secrecy, the affinity between traditional magicians and the secret services is less easy to define.

When Science Fails

It has been argued that magic and science are similar, once the materialist fundamentalism of 'scientism' is ejected from scientific methodology. Both magic and science boil down to a procedure for acquiring and categorising knowledge and experiences. But when two photons speed away from each other, at a relative velocity of twice the speed of light, and yet each demonstrates an awareness of what the other photon is doing, as if faster-than-light communication were occurring between them, then the world-views of the scientist and the magician also split apart.

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Philip K. Dick was fond of quoting Heraclitus, who wrote: 'It is the nature of things to hide themselves' (Heraclitus 1987, fragment 129). Dick's life and work exemplify the gnostic, paranoid mind-set of the occultist, which operates on the assumption that reality isn't neutral. It's not a matter simply of striving toward a more complete picture of reality. Maybe this isn't even possible, because reality is *lila*, the divine play of the gods, placed there to fascinate and delude us.

Experiments in paranormal research have shown that chickens and rabbits can influence a computer programmed to generate random numbers in the direction of non-randomness (Fenwick & Fenwick 1998, p.227-8). Oddly, the effect holds if the random numbers are generated in advance, before the experiment takes place. It's as if something *knows* that a particular sequence of random numbers will later be used in the experiment, and obligingly inserts a degree of non-randomness.

Investigators in branches of paranormal research have become resigned to their equipment failing at exactly the moment a piece of evidence walks into frame: the poltergeist prefers to do its thing off-screen; the UFO chooses to land on the day there's no film in the camera.

Intelligence

Reports of events at the 'Skinwalker Ranch' in Utah (Kelleher & Knapp, 2005) dramatised the idea that reality throws anomalous phenomena deliberately in our faces. Whatever happened at the ranch (allegedly: apparitions, UFOs, poltergeists, cattle mutilations, the whole paranormal shebang) the attention of investigators soon concentrated on the interference by the phenomenon in the investigation. Despite witnessing plenty of bizarre phenomena, virtually no evidence was collected, because the phenomenon itself appeared intelligent, conscious of being investigated, and capable of safeguarding its privacy.

One of the conclusions of the investigating team was that scientific method is inadequate for investigating phenomena that are consciously intelligent: 'A more appropriate

methodology... might have been one utilized by the intelligence agencies' (Kelleher & Knapp 2005, p. 266). They quote from an interview by Jacques Vallee with a member of military intelligence:

'In the field of counter-espionage, the rules are completely different... You are a scientist. In science there is no concept of the 'price' of information. Suppose I gave you 95 per cent of the data concerning a phenomenon. You're happy because you know 95 per cent of the phenomenon. Not so in Intelligence. If I get 95 per cent of the data, I know this is the 'cheap' part of the information. I still need the other 5 per cent, but I will have to pay a much higher price to get it. You see, Hitler had 95 per cent of the information about the landing in Normandy. But he had the wrong 95 percent!' (Cited in Kelleher & Knapp 2005, p.266-7)

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Magician

It was William Boyd's latest novel, *Restless* (2007), which set me on the theme of magic and espionage. The heroine is Eva, a British spy in New York, 1940, whose aim is to persuade the USA to join the war and save Britain from Germany. Boyd has done his research into day-to-day techniques of espionage. Eva is trained in how to dip behind the façade of everyday life, to hide and protect herself, or to exploit conventions of everyday behaviour to her advantage. She is constantly mindful of her moment-to-moment experience, scanning it always for alternative interpretations and clandestine meanings.

What struck me from Boyd's depiction is that no matter how capable Eva is, she's aware she operates on a particular level of reality. Things make sense on that level, but she knows that what she perceives might be a fabricated reality in which she is 'being run' by a higher-placed agent, used as a pawn in another game entirely.

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The affinity between magic and espionage lies in a shared mind-set. For both, reality is non-neutral, intelligent, aware, and one's mastery of it is provisional. The scientist uses his instruments to define better models of reality, whereas the magician negotiates with reality, in order to engineer a particular experience.

Like a good spy, the capable magician adopts an intentional paranoia toward reality, probing the façade of everyday life on the lookout for messages from the intelligent universe. Dreams, angels, gods and servitors form an entourage of allies and adversaries, viewed from the level on which the magician operates.

Of course, the spy works solely on the level of human agency, but her world-view is structurally identical to the magician's. So small wonder if Dee, Crowley and Spare decided to make use of their transferable skills with the security services of their day.

I hear that MI5 is recruiting.

Gary Numan's Ghost

The rock musician Gary Numan tells in his autobiography of an encounter at Piccaddilly Circus tube station (Numan & Malins 1998, p.105-6). He and a friend got off the train to visit a guitar shop. They followed the small crowd of passengers up the escalator. In front was an old man in a grey hat and trilby. At the top of the escalator the man turned left, so Gary and his friend did likewise – and they walked straight into a wall.

They fled in terror from the station.

This story fascinated me, not least because the figure of the man in the grey coat and hat re-appears in Numan's life and work. The figure is depicted outside the window on the cover of Numan's second album, *Replicas*, and features in the lyrics of his first major hit: 'Are "Friends" Electric?' About thirty minutes into a recent podcast interview⁴⁴, Numan reveals that

⁴⁴ *Times Online*, podcast, 'Noel Fielding from the Mighty Boosh interviews Gary Numan' (2006).

when he told the story of what had happened at Piccaddilly tube to his mother, she had dreamt of the exact same figure.

I am pleased to announce that Alan and I can at last shed partial light on these strange occurrences. All I told Alan was that Gary Numan had seen a ghost somewhere in the station, and that I'd like him to attempt communication. We pitched up at Piccaddilly, around 8pm on a Saturday in June, 2007, and I tried to identify from the published account the exact spot where Numan had seen the ghost.

The layout must've changed since the late 70s. The station entrance hall is circular, so there was no left turn at the head of the escalator. Instead, I led us anti-clockwise around the hall, looking for a likely place.

'Do you know where you're going?' Alan said.

'Yes,' I lied.

Alan suggested we stop by a disused staircase, blocked off by a metal grille. He'd noticed a small object thrown or dropped onto the ground. Bending to investigate, he picked up an amber bead. A woman reading a timetable nearby was wearing a matching bracelet. She said 'thank you' as he handed it back.

'What impressions are you getting?' I asked him.

'A young woman in a frilly white dress called Betty. She was murdered.'

I had my pendulum with me. Just as well, otherwise we'd have been stuck with Alan's crappy mediumship all night.

My pendulum is made of haematite and is controlled by a spirit named EGGOZBEKGEE who claims to have access to all knowledge, present, past and future. Many entities that drive pendulums and ouija boards will make similar claims. In my experience, it's best to take no notice and test what they tell you, however possible.

'Was there a woman in this tube station called Betty who was murdered?' I asked the pendulum.

'No,' it signalled.

Alan's next impression was of a man named Paul in his mid-twenties, with a side-parting and a round face, who looked like a newspaper seller or barrow boy.

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'Bollocks,' said the pendulum.

Luckily, at that moment Alan received a genuine intuition: 'I think Betty and Paul are just people who were here. The thing we're trying to contact isn't a ghost; it's an elemental spirit.'

'Yes,' agreed the pendulum.

'A salamander? A spirit of fire?'

'No.'

After a few more questions we established that the thing Numan had seen was an earth-spirit; not a ghost, but an entity connected with the site, rather than with the human beings that had built a station and now trampled in their thousands over the area. The spirit had been on its natural business when Gary saw it; it had no message, yet the pendulum indicated there was more for us to find out, so we invited the earth-spirit to come and speak to us directly through the pendulum.

The spirit ascended the disused staircase towards us. We knew, because a cold wind blew through the metal grille, stirring the dust and grime that had accumulated over the years. The motion of the pendulum grew stronger, as we gradually uncovered that the spirit wished to be relocated to another place.

'Can we trap you in a stone or crystal and take you somewhere else?'

The earth-spirit revealed it had supplied the amber bead for this purpose, which we had stupidly given back to its owner. However, it promised that it would procure another suitable object.

Nothing had materialised after a few seconds, so Alan decided to make a circuit of the station. I stayed in position, but as Alan walked back into view, I noticed a 2p coin lying a few feet away, which hadn't been there when he'd set off.

'Is the 2p coin suitable?'

Apparently not; firstly, it had to be prepared. Luckily for us this didn't involve sexual fluids or anything too weird for a public place; a single breath from both of us onto the coin would suffice. The spirit went inside immediately, and suddenly the coin felt hot.

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The spirit claimed at first it had no preference where we took it, as long as it was somewhere away from here. Obviously, we would take it to a place that suited its earthy nature. But when asked if it preferred Crystal Palace Park, or Preston Park in Brighton, it became apparent it was a Londoner at heart.

Our work was done. The spirit said it was grateful. We might have squeezed a favour from it in return, I suppose, but neither of us thought of it at the time. As we were leaving, a large troupe of dancing Hare Krishnas invaded the station with drums and instruments, processing around and around, chanting and singing. Many of the crowd joined in. Everyone seemed on the verge of ecstasy. Alan fell in love with the beautiful woman in a blue sari who was leading the dancing. It was impossible not to interpret this as a sign of the spirit rejoicing.

I did a web search and, apart from Numan's, found no other account of a ghost at Piccadilly Circus. A man in grey suit, called William Terriss, haunts Covent Garden tube. Allegedly. His ghost might have travelled up the line to Piccadilly, I suppose, but there's no obvious reason why it should.

The true form of an elemental spirit is not human in the slightest. It's no longer 'fairies' that abduct people these days, but 'grey aliens', which suggests that the form taken by the supernatural is at least in part determined by the culture and disposition of the perceiver. When Numan ran into the elemental at Piccadilly, the form it took was perhaps determined by some ready-to-hand template or archetype available inside his mind, or in that of his friend. The way that Gary's mother saw the same figure separately in a dream perhaps also indicates that the meaning of the 'grey man' doesn't begin and end with the Piccadilly experience. What Numan encountered merely clothed itself in a shape and form that already had a deeper, individual significance in the personal lives and minds of the people that witnessed it.

Well, if any of them ever wants to see it again, they'll need to visit Crystal Palace Park.

Instant Whipped Cream Samadhi

I'm squeamish when it comes to drugs. Most things make me feel sick, and I have issues over handing control of my mind and body to some chemical. Silly, I know. But recently I had the chance to play with nitrous oxide, and remembering how it was a favourite of the philosopher and psychologist William James (1842-1910), I was up for for some experimentation.

The gas is delivered from a siphon intended for making whipped cream. (How many of these units are actually used for their intended culinary purpose might make a revealing study.) Nitrous oxide is used as a propellant because it transmits well through fats, and because it tastes 'sweet' in comparison to other common propellants, such as carbon dioxide.

I soon hit on a technique for gaining a good effect. Take a moderate lungful from the siphon, then hold the breath for a while. Next, top up the lungs to full with another good hit, then hold the breath for as long as possible, allowing the effect to strengthen. The longer you can hold the breath, the greater the effect. When you can hold no longer, let go of the breath slowly. At this point the effect will maximise, then begin to tail off.

The result is like your mind disintegrating to a single point—or rather, down to a single fragment, because the universe has shattered. The sensation of singularity increases to an unbearable extent, then overflows and is transcended. There is a vast release—a 'mind orgasm'—that surrenders to emptiness. These sensations are accompanied by vivid hypnagogia; sounds in the room seem to echo, or stutter over themselves like a faulty recording.

The hypnagogic effects were symmetrical, with a tendency toward monochrome imagery. They also possessed a strong emotional tone. During the tail-off, they faded in an organised way. For instance, if the form taken was—say—a sixteen-sided star, it would become eight-sided, then four, then two, as the world recomposed into wholeness. One form reminded me of a pattern my father drew for me as a child, and immediately the pattern assumed the same emotional tone and meaning as this

memory. During another hit, I saw a roughly bounded rectangular area, full of stars. This was the universe. As I entered the tail-off, the number of stars become less and less, until finally the rectangle spilled into reality and the world became a coherent whole.

No hangover results from the effects, which are short-lived. However, repeated use will do your brain no favours, can lead to vitamin B12 deficiency, and various other nasty effects. And who knows what carcinogenic compounds may lurk in the siphon or cannisters?

Like James, I found the experience impelled me into meditation and contemplation. Each hit is a 'mini samadhi', a mind orgasm, as consciousness disintegrates from many, to one, to nothing. Unlike samadhi attained through meditation, the effect rapidly evaporates, and left a vaporous sadness behind rather than bliss. Whether this is an effect of the gas, or my emotional response to the experience, I couldn't determine.

When I arrived back home, I looked up William James's description of a nitrous oxide hit:

Looking back on my own experiences, they all converge towards a kind of insight to which I cannot help ascribing some metaphysical significance. The keynote of it is invariably a reconciliation. It is as if the opposites of the world, whose contradictoriness and conflict make all our difficulties and troubles, were melted into unity. Not only do they, as contrasted species, belong to one and the same genus, but *one of the species, the nobler and better one, is itself the genus, and so soaks up and absorbs its opposite into itself.* This is a dark saying, I know, when thus expressed in terms of common logic, but I cannot wholly escape from its authority. I feel as if it must mean something, something like what the hegelian philosophy means, if one could only lay hold of it more clearly. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear; to me

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the living sense of its reality only comes in the artificial mystic state of mind. (James 1985, p. 388-9)

I think he's describing the same thing as my 'mini samadhi', although he resorts to the language of Hegelian philosophy rather than Buddhism. As an adherent of the Pragmatist school, James invested a lot of effort into criticising Hegel. In another paper, 'Subjective Effects of Nitrous Oxide' (James, 1882),⁴⁵ he suggests that Hegel is probably best understood after a snort of the gas! The vision of an underlying union between opposites is exhilarating at first, but, taking a deeper snort, the unity of all eventually results in a bewildering, horrifying sense of futility.

In my opinion, James is describing here the difference between my 'instant whipped cream samadhi', and a state of mind established through willed concentration and skilful meditation. The former is a drug-induced event in my brain, which quickly leaves me feeling stranded and empty. Yet if I'd climbed to those same heights under my own strength and through my own talent, perhaps I'd discover myself better equipped to make a survey of what those insights mean.

How To Become Gifted At Divination

A couple of years ago, I decided to become very gifted at reading tarot cards, so I placed an advertisement on the intranet of the organisation where I work, inviting people to book free lunchtime readings.

I recommend this. If you want to become good at divination, advertise your service for free in a prominent place. Pretend you're doing it as an assignment for your 'International Guild of Tarot Readers, Level One Qualification' (or whatever). This white lie tidily explains why you're not charging; it sounds non-threatening; and it encourages people to feel that by coming they're doing you a favour. Best of all, when it all goes tits-up, your customer hasn't parted with any cash and you've got an ideal excuse. ('Sorry, but I'm still learning.')

⁴⁵ On-line version: http://www.erowid.org/chemicals/nitrous/nitrous_article1.shtml

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It wasn't long before every lunchtime was booked for days in advance. I knew a couple of meeting-rooms that were often unbooked; and if they weren't free there was Starbucks nearby, where you can always get a table for the price of a coffee.

So there I was, maximum clients, minimum expertise, embarking on a Himalayan learning-curve.

There's One Born Every Minute

The first major lesson I learnt concerned 'cold reading', which I had read-up on in advance, assuming that I'd need it. Cold reading is a verbal and psychological bag of tricks used by illusionists and con-artists to fool people into believing that the illusionist knows all about them.⁴⁶ I agonised a long time over whether I should taint myself by learning these skills, but the issue was finally settled when I asked myself: 'What would Aleister Crowley have done?'

Most cold reading techniques are common sense. The skill lies in the smoothness with which you put them into action. One of the most common and effective is The Barnum Statement, an assertion of such wide applicability it can't fail to hit its mark. For example: 'You set yourself high standards and sometimes give yourself a hard time when you don't quite meet them.' Who on the planet wouldn't identify with this?

This example also illustrates a closely-related trope, known as The Fine Flattery, a complimentary assertion that the subject's narcissism won't allow them to dispute: 'You're a very generous person, and other people sometimes take advantage of this.' This, in turn, can be combined with one of my personal favourites, The Rainbow Ruse, in which a personal quality is asserted, but also – immediately after – its opposite, such as: 'As a rule you're generous. Yet at other times you sometimes grow tired of giving and wish that others would look after you for a change.' The Rainbow Ruse covers all the bases, so part of the assertion at least is bound to be correct. Happily for you, the

⁴⁶ For a practical manual of cold reading techniques see Rowland, 2002. This book is not cheap, and is only available from the author's website.

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questioner tends to remember the hits rather than the misses, because these make a greater impression.

Other cold reading techniques are more spectacular, but more risky. The Push Statement, for instance, involves staring perplexedly at the cards, feigning reluctance to say what you see: 'I'm not sure this can be right. It sounds stupid, but is there a pair of blue shoes that has been significant recently?' If you hit something straight off, then well and good; most often, you're usually way off the mark. What you do next is gently press the questioner into making the 'blue shoes' relevant. Maybe they've had a dream of blue shoes, or it's 'blue' in the sense of sad; or the shoes aren't blue but red, etc. Oddly, the longer it takes and the more remote the connection, sometimes the greater the impact.

The only problem I discovered with cold reading is—it's bollocks.

In From The Cold

I never pretend to be a psychic, but I'm no illusionist either. Maybe cold reading didn't work for me because I don't have the knack. Once, The Page of Wands turned up in a spread. He looked a bit hippyish, so I went for a Push Statement: 'This might sound odd, but is there a hairy man somewhere in your life at the moment? He might have a beard, or hairy arms, or long hair, but I sense he's important.'

I wasn't exactly going out on a limb, was I? But the questioner refused to connect anyone with my remark. Worst of all, because I'd pushed it, she remembered my gaffe. Throughout the reading she kept referring back to it, scoffing, because it made no sense.

Pretty quickly I turned away from deceit and focused on the actual symbolism of the tarot. Immediately, my hit-rate and the customer satisfaction level shot up, and I became sceptical of scepticism. Reading the cards seemed to lead to more success than simply reading the customer.

Any divinatory system worthy of the name has its own Barnum Statements, its own Fine Flatteries, Rainbow Ruses and Push Statements embedded in the symbolism it employs. If I'm using techniques to entice the questioner into belief, then it's a con. But if the system on its own terms entices the questioner into belief—then that's a result. Sceptics carp that the symbolisms of the tarot, the runes, the I Ching, are so wide-open that they can mean anything to anyone. This, in my view, is an achievement, a strength. To say a system is capable of this is tantamount to claiming that it works.

Brace Yourself!

These days I use cold reading only on those clients for whom divination is pointless (more on that later). But there are extra-curricular skills that do come in handy with face-to-face readings.

If you're a magician, maybe you've used tarot—or some other oracle—as a vehicle for spirit communication, or to provide directions on the path of your magical development. If so, then brace yourself. The use to which the average questioner wants to put your treasured oracle is excruciatingly mundane.

Most people will not realise the answer is already staring at them from the question they've asked. Only a clueless, lazy bastard wants to know: 'Will I be rich?' The lover who asks 'Is my current partner right for me?' only wants to implicate you in the consolidation or denial of their doubt.

To avoid cynicism, and to at least appear to be providing useful answers to stupid questions, you'll need proficiency in basic counselling skills. This is because the key to effective face-to-face readings is to anchor your chosen oracle's symbolism firmly in the questioner's life. Magicians are often trained in doing the complete opposite: amplifying and multiplying meanings and ambiguities. Thus, in face-to-face encounters with the general public, they are liable to go badly wrong.

Always greet the questioner with open and friendly body-language. Resist the temptation to be weird. If in a public or

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open space, seat the questioner so that – as far as possible – they see only you, with a minimum of distractions in their visual field. Allow the questioner to set the emotional tone of the meeting (serious, sad, humorous, sceptical). Explain to the questioner that he or she may say as little to you or as much as feels comfortable. Some will prefer to test your ‘psychic powers’ and will remain stonily silent, providing no easy hooks on which to hang your reading. If this happens, you’ll simply have to plough ahead, checking their body language for any handy feedback. Often, they’ll realise before the end that divination is a two-way process, and will start to open up.

You’re not trying to deceive the questioner; you’re trying to anchor the reading in their personal frame of reference. If they won’t do this for themselves, then prompt them to fill in the gaps. For example:

‘There has been a loss in your life, not long ago. You’re grieving still and you’re not over it yet. Does this mean anything to you?’

‘My dog died a while back. Is that it?’

Experience has taught me that the first thing that enters the questioner’s mind in connection with the reading is the issue you should concentrate on.⁴⁷ Of course, sometimes this is not the case; the questioner’s tone and body-language will help you decide.

Once a link has been established between your reading and the client’s life, drop the oracular symbolism. That card – the five of cups – that rune, hexagram, whatever; no longer refer to it in general terms. From this point onwards, that card *is* the dead dog.

‘I’m so sorry. What was your dog’s name?’

‘Baffy.’

Refer to that card from now on as: When Baffy died.

Do the same for all the other cards in the spread, so that you are no longer confronted with abstract symbols, but personalised scenes, events, people. Now you can use the

⁴⁷ Cf. A patient says to Freud: ‘You ask who this woman in my dream represents? Well, it’s *not* my mother.’ Freud’s response: ‘So it *is* his mother.’ See Freud 1984, p. 437.

spread to explore with the questioner relationships between these scenes.

'So, Buffy's death, just here, set off an extended period of introspection, this card here, The Hermit, which was when you moved into that dark basement flat in Leamington Spa. But in the future we've this card, The Ace of Pentacles, representing a renewed sense of wholeness and purpose. Do you have any ideas at this stage where a change in your emotions like that might come from?'

What you'll soon discover is that foretelling the future is easy. You can say any old rubbish with impunity. (But please don't do that.) The more serious challenge, however, is the past and the present; you absolutely have to get these spot-on. You must demonstrate that your chosen oracle has supplied you with a sense of who your questioner is and where they're at, otherwise you'll never establish the rapport needed to enable their belief that your predications carry weight.

It's always the questioner's experience of the reading that counts. This means you should throw away your notion of what a successful reading is. I've done very clever interpretative gymnastics, for a questioner who sat tight-lipped and went away without a word. Equally, I had a client once who wouldn't let me get a word in; each card I turned up, she practically interpreted it herself. In total, I must've spoken about three sentences. But she was radiant at the end, saying I'd given her the best, most accurate reading she'd ever had.

Stupid Questioners

That said, there are some clients who won't benefit from a reading, no matter what you do.

Forget about sceptics and having to deal with scepticism. People who truly don't believe in divination won't bother to come. The closest you'll get is someone who doesn't actually *want* a reading. Their friend has talked them into it, or they're fixated on a particular issue; they've composed a script in their head, and they want your reading to confirm that script. They'll

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reject or refuse to process anything they don't want to hear, regardless of how blindingly obvious it is to you.

Perhaps worse, and unfortunately more common, is the clueless, flaky questioner:

'There's a strong female figure here.'

'That's my mother.'

'Wow. Your mother can be quite judgemental.'

'Or maybe it's Dion, my friend. She's always telling me to get my act together.'

'Dion sometimes gives you a hard time.'

'Or is it? Then again, it could be my mother, you know...'

This type of client cannot apply your reading to any fixed aspect of their life – because they don't have any. Sadly, people in a state of turmoil, or with an indecisive or amorphous personality are exactly the kind who are attracted to readings.

The way to deal with them is to keep your temper and reflect their indecisiveness back at them:

'You don't seem able to decide if this person is Dion or your mother. Is it because you have so many people on your back that it's hard to choose one?'

Sometimes this is enough to snap them out of it. If it doesn't work, then perhaps you've revealed to them one thing – at least – that they weren't formerly aware of.

When confronted with the type of questioner who doesn't want a reading, the only thing to do is power through and get them out of the door. But bear in mind that attitudes can change during the course of a session; any remark may cause them to suddenly become interested and open up. Maintain your friendliness and insist on providing opportunities for dialogue. If all of your gambits are rebuffed, remember to check the questioner's back is turned before issuing them your middle finger. Remind yourself that everyone has a right to their reality tunnel.

Divination isn't fortune-telling; it concerns exploration of possibility and potential. That's what I tell all my punters. Detractors might argue that I'm not doing divination at all, just cheap counselling. I wouldn't necessarily disagree. The

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difference between me and a counsellor is that I listen to the tarot as well as to the questioner.

Many punters have told me I'm good at reading the cards. Yet no matter how fantastic your clients say you are, it's the wisdom built into the oracle itself that delivers the goods.

I try hard to stay humble.

What follows are some more lumps of advice, gained from experience.

Threesomes

Never see more than one client at a time.

They'll try their hardest you persuade you – please – could a friend come too?

Do not yield.

Imagine: what if the friend started to offer comments? You could no longer anchor the reading solely in the experience of the person who asked for it.

Also, who knows what issues might come up? Sex? Misdemeanours from the past? Maybe even the malign influence of the friend who's sitting there watching... A questioner can never be sure that the presence of another person won't inhibit their responses.

The Voice Of Doom

Never predict death or illness.

Just *don't*.

If the questioner seems the type who can take it – still, please *don't*.

I've actually been stupid enough to do this. And I can report back that – surprise, surprise – it really scares people.

In fact, never predict anything ominous or scary. If the cards pointing to the future are bad, transmit the message with a positive spin. Talk about 'challenges' instead of 'disaster'; not 'danger' but 'possible pitfalls to look out for'; and consider 'radical potential for transformation' a far better alternative than 'imminent death and dismemberment'.

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Most magicians regard the universe as too fluid to harbour notions of predestination. Even if you believe the future is written in stone, why frighten people?

Cheap Date

I've never charged for a reading, unless the questioner isn't known to me and insists on meeting at my home. I've agonised over this, but under all other circumstances (the vast majority) I give readings for free.

If the questioner pays, then the onus will be on you to provide a service. Yet a good oracle never plays to human expectations. Most often, I find that the tarot will answer a different question from the one asked, or it might refuse to give a definite answer altogether, or sometimes it even answers with a question of its own.

Oracles cannot be bought.

Most of all, though, to be honest I don't want to be beholden to someone else's crap, just because they've trumped up twenty quid. Honestly, I can't be bothered with the idiotic non-questions that occupy many people: 'Will we move house this year? Will I get a new job? Am I going to get pregnant this month?' In other words, the type of questions to which the only sane response is: 'For Fuck's Sake: make it happen or wait and see!'

But if someone who is troubled seeks me out, and wants to ask a question that has come up from inside themselves, then I'll willingly try to help.

I often think about Austin Osman Spare⁴⁸, in his later years, reading playing-cards for people in his local boozier, asking only beer-money in return.

I think he had the right approach.

⁴⁸ I recommend Austin Osman Spare's 'Mind To Mind And How' (in Spare 2001, p.163f). Peer through the mystic verbiage and you'll discover a short, surprisingly practical treatise on divination.

On Demonic Spirits

Spirit leveller

People have problems with the word 'spirit'. I felt the same, until I decided that 'spirit' is pretty much synonymous with *information*. (This is a term that people like much better.)

If you insist on regarding 'spirit' as a kind of mystical, flimsy substance, you will arrive at a poor notion of spiritual beings: 'they're like us, only not made of flesh but "spirit"'. Yet to argue that what defines a spirit is that it's made of spirit explains bugger all.

Instead, thinking of demons, angels, the human soul, as forms of information steers us in a more useful direction.

Here comes the science bit

Some things have material existence. Some don't.

This is not to say that some things are more 'real' than others. Very often, things that have no material existence (such as nation states, for example) are treated as very real indeed.

A daffodil has material existence.

Like all objects with material existence, the daffodil has sensory attributes: a size, colour and shape. Often, the reason we claim a thing has material existence is that we can locate outside ourselves, through our senses, the attributes associated with the concept of that thing. In other words: it has material existence because we sense it.

But an 'informational entity' (something made of *information*), on the other hand, is composed of elements that are uniform and not necessarily sensory. A jpeg image of a daffodil, for instance, consists entirely of bytes. These elements have no remarkable sensory qualities—or none at all, it might be argued. The image of the jpeg daffodil on the screen is produced from the computer's interpretation of the relationships between the bytes.

Words and musical notes are further examples of elements that might constitute an informational entity (not to be confused

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with the actual sound of a song when it is played, however). The attributes of the entity arise not from the elements of which it is composed, but from an interpretation of the relationships between those elements.

The daffodil in your garden is yellow. So is the daffodil on my computer screen. But my screen daffodil is yellow because the data in the jpeg file informs my computer it should display it as such.

So, we have arrived at a notion of two different types of things: material entities and informational entities. Material entities possess sensory attributes, but the attributes of informational entities, whose constituent elements may or may not be perceivable, become apparent only after an interpretation of the *relationships* between those elements.

Now, don't get me wrong: informational entities do indeed have a material basis. Undeniably, they have material qualities. But these are of secondary importance. The typeface of your copy of *The Brothers Karamazov*, for instance, has little bearing on your reading of it, or on its meaning.

And this brings us to the most important aspect of an informational entity: its meaning.

My tricksy spirit

The attributes of demonic spirits can be found listed in grimoires, such as *The Lesser Key of Solomon the King*. For instance, the demon Shax:

...is a Great Marquis and appeareth in the Form of a Stock-Dove, speaking with a hoarse voice, but yet subtle. His Office is to take away the Sight, Hearing, or Understanding of any Man or Woman; and to steal money out of the houses of Kings, and to carry it again in 1,200 years. If commanded he will fetch Horses or any other thing. (Crowley 1995, p. 51)

I'm not proud of my experiences with demons. So far, every working I've done has gone slightly tits-up, due to faulty intention on my part rather than the fault of the spirit or the evocation.

In the course of a particularly poorly-conceived working, I summoned Shax and asked him to bring me some cash. A few days later, I was standing in a shop when a wad of notes fell out the back-pocket of the man in front. He must've felt it fall, because he bent to pick it up, but he only retrieved a single fiver that had separated from the remaining wad of twenties. The rest was left on the floor.

Everyone in the shop had entered a trance-state during which, evidently, I was invisible, because when I bent down and picked up the money, no one saw me. I could have put it in my pocket and walked out of the shop. Instead, I handed it back to the man.

Although I ruined his good work, Shax had indeed fetched me some cash. Only later did I recall that his main office is to 'steal money out of the houses of Kings'. I should have been prepared that any money from this direction would be 'dirty' (albeit stolen from someone who could probably afford to lose it).

I really wish I'd asked the guy in the queue his name.

It was probably Rex.

Informational entities from Hell

If Shax is an informational entity then, like our jpeg daffodil, his perceivability depends on the interpretative action of another agency.

In the case of the jpeg daffodil this agency is a computer, but I suspect the nature of the agency doesn't matter—most likely it's a human being, although perhaps an animal or another type of machine can fulfil the role—as long as that agency itself is another informational entity.

It was the informational entity of my mind that acted as the interpretative agency for Shax. Without my intent, or my

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decision to choose him from the grimoire, or my performance of the evocation, what happened in the shop would have had no significance other than a sequence of consecutive events.

But I know better. Because I had specifically asked Shax to provide the wad of cash that dropped onto the floor in front of me.

It has often been demonstrated, both in magic and in science, that perceptions are shaped by intention. An act of evocation—in effect—is the installation of an informational entity (or spirit) between my intention and my perception. It functions like a kind of filter.

In evocation, the mind behaves like the computer, interpreting and giving to the informational entity life and meaning, until the image of the daffodil looms on our interior screen, and we perceive it as big and yellow and lovely. (In a sense, everyday reality is one continuous evocation.)

Similarly, Shax's ability to 'steal money from the houses of kings' became wedged between my intention and my perception. My mind was running Shax like a computer program in order to change my reality.

The vicissitudes of evocation

Here are some scenarios that describe the possible outcomes of an evocation:

1. I evoke, and my intent and the demon's attributes coincide nicely, so the demon forms a suitable filter between my intention and perception. This is a 'successful' evocation, by which it's meant that my intention matches the attributes of the demon, and through the demon's service my will is enabled to act semi-autonomously upon the world.
2. I evoke, but my intent is only partially in accord with the full range of the demon's attributes. Either I don't want what the demon can deliver; or the demon can't deliver what I

want. The result may contain a contradictory significance (like my Shax working), or there may be no result at all.

3. My intent and the demon's attributes contradict or conflict. Unpredictable patterns of interference are the consequence. At best, the result is partial or zero. At worst, my intention is perverted, or its opposite manifests.

Pea-green puke

We've all seen *The Exorcist*. But the view of demons as informational entities casts a different light on 'possession'.

The demon leaves the service of a magician when it is granted licence to depart. Ideally, the transaction terminates once a result is obtained and the magician no longer needs an autonomous filter between his or her intention and perception.

However, 'possession' is what might occur if the transaction unsuccessfully terminates. Instead, the demon lingers and becomes grafted onto the will of the magician. The cause of this is—once again—a fault on the magician's part. 'Lust of result', or an obsession with a particular aim to the extent that even a successful outcome does not satisfy the intention may lead to this state of affairs.

You wouldn't necessarily be conscious of being 'possessed'. You wouldn't necessarily act or think in a style any different from your habitual notion of yourself. But you might notice that your actions in everyday life are becoming separated from your intentions, in a way that fulfilled the attributes of the demon more completely than it fulfilled your personal will.

Feelings of alienation, boredom, frustration, discontent, and doubts concerning the efficacy of magic are, therefore, possible indications of possession.

Sounds familiar?

As Lon Milo DuQuette puts it: 'Can the spirits hurt me? Yes, most definitely, spirits can hurt you. They hurt you all the time' (DuQuette 2001, p. 131).

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A demon is a static template; a fixed collection of attributes. We are most likely to uncover demons grafted onto those aspects of ourselves that are less vulnerable to change: our opinions, well-established personality traits, or those myths we have constructed about ourselves in order to make sense of our personal histories.

Fluidity, flexibility and development are the enemies of demons. We can change ourselves, but the attributes and function of the demon are fixed. The most powerful exorcism is always self-transformation, which can iron out the creases where demons might cling to us.

Be ye not afeard

Replace the word 'spirit' with 'information' and there's no need to side-step the question of whether spiritual beings are real. There's no need to side-step any questions about spiritual beings, because this approach frames detailed and specific replies.

There's no need to be disappointed, either, the next time you evoke and a misty, wraith-like entity fails to appear. (Although who's to say it won't?)

That feeling of presence, that baleful sense of being stared at from the triangle of art, is a faithful indication that the entity is active and alive.

On Watching *Most Haunted*

I know *Most Haunted*⁴⁹ is crap, but I love it.

The best part is when Yvette Fielding, Derek Acorah and the crew stand in some creepy dungeon, where you wouldn't catch me within a hundred miles, and challenge the ghost to appear.

'If you can hear us, give us a sign,' says Yvette. 'Touch one of us, make a sound, or move an object.'

⁴⁹ *Most Haunted* is a TV programme, in which a regular team of presenters spend a night in a reputedly haunted location and record their experiences. The show is made by and broadcast on Living TV. See: www.livingtv.co.uk/mosthaunted.

The very best part of all is when there's actually a reply: a noise, or an object really does have the audacity to shift. Firstly, Yvette screams. But as soon as she calms down, I guarantee she'll say: 'Thank you. But please give us *more*. We don't mean you any harm, we're just interested.'

And if the phenomenon does come back at her, it's never enough:

'One more time, please. Show us what else you can do.'

Even when paranormal phenomena are in our faces, we have a tendency to demand more. But what is it, this proof we're hankering for? After all, the ghost *answered*; it knocked in reply to our summons. If, instead, a costumed Tudor courtier had manifested, and had answered all our questions in Elizabethan English, we would be even more suspicious of the evidence, not less.

Most Haunted makes entertainment of the paranormal, which is what makes it dangerous, because the paranormal isn't a spectator sport. Viewed from the sofa, it makes ontological slobos of us, as we watch others having experiences, which—if we lived them ourselves—would shake the foundations of that which we consider rational and sane. Re-framing this experience as entertainment makes it tame. In this respect, *Most Haunted* is the worst that Reality TV can do. At least those Wednesday-night programmes that document in meticulous detail the redecoration of someone's house make no pretence at anything other than brainlessness.

Most Haunted must fill its airtime. On-screen 'proof' would kill the series in its tracks. Almost as bad are those investigations when nothing happens: no unexplained bumps or squealing panic at shadows; not even Derek lightening the monotony by getting possessed. Of course, on each investigation *something* has to happen. If nothing does, viewers won't watch. So the team *make* things happen; they're not investigators but performers. *Most Haunted* is séance dressed as science; a camp waltz between parapsychology, entertainment, and magic ritual.

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Yes, *magic ritual*. How else would you describe a group of people engaging in formulaic behaviour with the intent of communicating with the spirits of the dead? But what you don't find in magic ritual is the obsession with 'proof', which is the ostensible driving-force behind each episode of *Most Haunted*.

Science seeks to distinguish cause from effect, whereas the aim of magic is *meaning*. When the ghost knocks in reply, the magician listens to what the spirit is saying. Meanwhile, the scientists flick on their EMF detectors and try to determine how the sound was made. In *Most Haunted*, entertainment plays a third role of keeping science and magic at odds, in order to prolong and dramatise the tension between their different points of view.

If we imagine all human experience as a printed map, then the zones of the paranormal are characterised by rumples, rips and distortions. For the magician, these are privileged, fertile spots, where confusions in the map afford a glimpse into the noumenal territory beneath.

The rumples and rips appear because the problem with paranormal experience is how describe it in the first place. Taking communication with the dead as an example, when Derek brings back scraps of information from 'Sam', his trusty spirit guide, he might be doing exactly what he says (for all I know); or he might be using some stage illusionist's technique, such as 'cold reading'; yet equally, he might be tuning in *telepathically* to living people around him, extracting the information from their minds. Then again, he might be telepathically linking across time to people who—in the past—aren't yet dead. ('Post-' rather than pre-cognition.)

Spiritualist demonstrations; ouija boards; bizarre electronic voices: the range of phenomena in our culture regarded as communications from the dead is disparate and diverse. It seems that one medium (pun intended) is as good as any other, once the idea is allowed that communication is possible.

Archetypally, the concept of speaking with the dead is crystal-clear. It carries a powerful charge of meaning, and for this reason has attracted magicians through the millennia. No

classical epic, from Homer to Joyce, is complete without the hero's descent into the underworld to consult with the spirits of his ancestors. Yet the problem remains: if the dead can talk, how 'dead' are they? Likewise, if we can recognise an extraterrestrial, how 'alien' is it really? If I read your thoughts, then how are they 'yours'? If I foretell my destiny, it's no longer an event in the future; it's a concern of the present moment. All types of paranormal experience by their nature generate descriptive categories that are self-violating.

Even the most sophisticated work in parapsychology eventually bangs its head against this terminal problem. For example: N'kisi, a parrot, several years of age, whose English vocabulary is approaching one thousand words. Parapsychologist Rupert Sheldrake became interested in N'kisi after reviewing evidence that the bird could sense its owner's unvoiced thoughts (Sheldrake & Morgana, 2003).⁵⁰

N'kisi often makes comments about images on television or in books, as his owner views or reads them, when she is beyond his immediate vicinity. N'kisi has even woken his owner from her dreams, by calling out phrases that reveal a knowledge of what was passing through her mind as she slept.

Sheldrake describes N'kisi as an 'animal ambassador'. The implication is that we should marvel at this bird. I can't help wondering if the telepathy actually detracts from N'kisi's linguistic achievements. It's like 'psychic incontinence', as if the parrot had become a mere biological loudspeaker, through which his owner's thoughts are amplified. When N'kisi is telepathic, the parrot is merely parroting. (Or has he been infected by a poltergeist?)

The desire for 'proof' that motivates the *Most Haunted* crew is easier to understand when its futility is grasped. What hope is there of 'proof' when the premise that seeks proof lacks a logical structure? But this lack of rationality—and the fertile sense of meaning generated as a consequence—is actually the whole point.

⁵⁰ An on-line article on N'kisi is at: [http:// www.sheldrake.org/nkisi](http://www.sheldrake.org/nkisi).

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'Proof' would entail arrival at a single explanation that could not be reduced to any other. This may be feasible in other fields of enquiry, but not so in the case of the paranormal. Once one form of the paranormal is admitted (e.g. mediumship) then there is no reason to exclude any other (e.g. telepathy), and so its explanatory power crumbles apart.

'Proof' is the desire for one explanation to negate all others. It is a wish that the map completely described the territory. It is a rite of enchantment.

Here, we witness the paranormal's ultimate trick of self-violation. By enticing us to prove the unprovable, it makes alchemists of us all, transmuting base science into magic.

Long may Derek Acorah fall into his cheesy trance-states. And let the *Most Haunted* team retain their flabby investigative technique, with no proper controls or follow-up into the random bumps and draughts that send them into screaming fits of panic.

They'll never prove anything, because it was never honestly their aim. The villain of *Most Haunted* is the demon of entertainment, which exploits the mismatch between science and magic to crank the media dynamo. Magic and science for centuries have pushed culture forward. The output from Reality TV has so far proved less venerable.

The LAM Workshop: A Dialogue

On March 10th, 2007, we attended a workshop given by Michael Staley of the Typhonian O.T.O. on how to work with the entity known as 'LAM'. Before you go any further (if you haven't already) now would be a good time to read Alan's article, 'The Origin of LAM.' (See below, p. 297.)

ALAN: I have a prejudice: I expect magicians who belong to the O.T.O. or other Crowley-based orders to talk a lot about magic, but do very little. This prejudice is based on experience. I've had a number of unfortunate encounters with Thelemites who are 'working with currents above the abyss' or 'destined to start a new order'.

DUNCAN: I was doubtful too. There we were, in a basement near Covent Garden, sitting cross-legged in a circle, evoking a snake that would travel up our spines, jettison out our heads, and sport among the stars—or, more specifically, the constellation Serpens. *Have I really resigned my job to do this?* I was thinking. I'm fucking insane. And then I started to think: What would my Dad say, if he saw me? But despite the usual doubt, I was enjoying myself.

ALAN: I could tell. You were hissing in my ear... My impetus for attending the workshop was simple curiosity; like you, I'd tried the method given of invoking LAM given in 'The LAM Statement' (Grant, 1987), and was interested to see what other methods had been developed, if any, by the Typhonian O.T.O.

DUNCAN: Crowley never refers to LAM in any detail in any of his writings, so LAM obviously didn't mean much to him. Yet here was a roomful of people evoking and worshipping a dwarf with a planetoid for a head, because one person to whom LAM meant a lot was Kenneth Grant, founder of the Typhonian O.T.O.

Apparently, in 1945, Crowley donated the portrait of LAM to Grant, after Grant obligingly popped out to fetch Crowley some heroin for a particularly nasty asthma attack. (So *that's* what they put in those blue inhalers.) Obviously, it's in Grant's interest to make as big a deal out of the portrait as possible. All this stuff about 'an extraterrestrial drawn by Crowley from life' comes to us purely through Grant's report of what Crowley said. Grant had had his eye on that portrait for a while, supposedly, but Crowley didn't want to give it up. Reportedly, Crowley suggested to Grant both that the portrait was of (or connected with) Aiwass (Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel, which dictated *The Book of the Law* in 1904); and an extraterrestrial entity that had interfered with the progress of the so-called 'Amalantrah Working'. But the record of the Amalantrah Working that comes down to us is conspicuously incomplete. Nowhere in it is 'LAM' mentioned, so if LAM were a part of this working he must've appeared in the later, unrecorded portions.

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ALAN: Yeah, and the first part of the workshop covered all that stuff in a very well-researched talk on the background. I was surprised that Michael Staley included Crowley's retreat on Esopus Island as part of the Amalantrah Working, and considered LAM to be a composite portrait of the motifs involved in Roddie Minor's visions during this working. He also recounted Crowley's past life as a disciple of Lao Tzu, and even mentioned the '49' in the corner of the portrait—although he believed it was some kind of script. (I bit my tongue.) I had arrived at the workshop nursing a hangover, and so struggled to maintain concentration throughout most of the talk; but a copy of the *Tao Te Ching* on the altar had piqued my interest.

DUNCAN: When the Amalantrah communications had ended, Crowley spent his time on Esopus re-writing the standard English translation of Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*. This activity, plus some intense drug-fuelled yoga sessions, led to a devastating mystical experience that Crowley found too harrowing to describe in writing:

[A]n initiation so stupendous that I dare not hint at its Word. It is the supreme secret of a Magus, and it is so awful that I tremble even now... (Kaczynski 2002, p. 261)

It was around this time that the portrait of LAM was painted. Now, I did some work with LAM a while back, on the assumption he was an extraterrestrial agency. (I had an idea he was more like some Philip K. Dickian 'machine intelligence', beaming back messages from the future.) I used Grant's prescribed method of gazing at the portrait, meditating on the eyes, then entering into the head of LAM and gazing out again through his eyes. This hadn't yielded much, except for darkness. And deep silence. And the notion of a black sea that I was supposed to cross. Oh—and he told me to wear an ankh around my neck, which I did, but this didn't lead anywhere much, apart from helping overcome my inhibitions regarding male jewellery.

ALAN: Staley didn't really get much either out of the standard LAM method, nor from working with LAM as an entity; and in light of this, his group have developed the LAM Serpent Sadhana. In other words, they've stuck LAM's massive noggin on the Kundalini snake. The Sadhana consists of raising the 'LAM Serpent' up the spine, one chakra at a time. So they see LAM as a process or a 'gateway' (as they were fond of saying) as opposed to a 'being'. I thought this was very interesting, considering I believe LAM to be a portrait of Lao Tzu (see below, p. 297). The fact that the Typhonian O.T.O. stress developing work with LAM, instead of simply rehashing the belief that LAM is a 'grey' alien, has gone a little to addressing my Thelemite prejudice. Granted, a few remarks seemed a little naive, like the idea that a certain 'atmosphere' must be generated within a ritual or the magic will not work, but it wouldn't surprise me if in fifty years time the Typhonian O.T.O. were the only Thelemite organisation still going.

Things became interesting when we tried the Sadhana as part of the workshop. I don't know if my hangover had anything to do with it, but I actually experienced physical sensations when activating my chakras using the respective bija (or 'seed') mantras.⁵¹

DUNCAN: Overall, for me, it was perplexing. Equating LAM with a cosmic state of consciousness derived from the transition up the spinal column of an energy-force symbolised as a snake, robs LAM of his identity. In that case he's just another name for kundalini! The 'LAM Serpent Sadhana' was pretty much like a kundalini yoga session, a lot more wordy, not as challenging, but with much better incense, and a nice glass of wine afterwards.

ALAN: For me, the most remarkable event occurred when the snake reached the middle of my brow, or Ajna Chakra. Now, I know this is either going to sound like bullshit, or some kind of bad joke, but make of it what you will. I had a vision of a very old, thin Chinese man, looking quite pleased with

⁵¹ For more on chakras and their seed mantras, see below, p. 341.

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himself despite the fact his orange robes were far too big for him. Wherever he was, it was sunny, surrounded by trees, and with a monastery close by. The vision couldn't have lasted longer than a couple of seconds. In many cases, I've often been left uncertain as to whether or not what I've 'seen' is a genuine vision or the product of 'lust of result'. I can say, quite emphatically, this was the most certain vision I have ever had. It should be noted that I don't know for sure who the Chinese man was, and although I'm tempted to think it was Lao Tzu, this wasn't imparted in the vision. More importantly, by the end of the exercise, my hangover was greatly reduced.

DUNCAN: I'm more confused about LAM than ever. I evoked him preliminary to my HGA work, at a time when you had already started on the HGA path, and triggered that absolutely mad web of synchronicities that made LAM seem relevant to both of us. LAM, to me, was a 'token HGA' before I understood what an HGA was. Maybe the blackness indicated I wasn't ready at that time for what I was groping towards. Contacting LAM was like trying to tune into a channel that wasn't yet on the air. Or then again, maybe that 'black sea' is a message concerning something that will only make sense now I'm on the other side of the abyss; something that might occur now that I've attained contact with the HGA.

ALAN: Like you, I couldn't help feeling at first as though LAM had become pretty pointless; why bother sticking his head on the kundalini snake, when you can get the same results without it? However, that night I had very strange dreams indeed: robots made out of buildings, something to do with galaxies and stars, visiting my old house in the future and examining the brick work, and a name or phrase that kept forcefully presenting itself until I woke up and realised it was 'Hadit'. I then spent the rest of the day experiencing déjà vu. In the past, I considered writing a 'Lao Tzu Statement', mostly just for a laugh. But it appears as though working with LAM has necessarily led the Typhonian O.T.O. LAM Lodge to a Taoist approach; indeed, Staley very much equates the HGA and the Aeon of Ma'at (let's *not* go there) with the Tao. For me, LAM

has become the embodiment of the Tao from a particularly Thelemic perspective. Crowley's 'Taoist period' occurred during his grade as Magus, which relates to sphere two or Chokmah on the Tree of Life, as does the Tao and Hadit. As such, I've come to consider the LAM Serpent Sadhana as quite a profound magical practice; instead of the pointless mishmash of genuine eastern technique and ridiculous western myth it superficially appears to be.

DUNCAN: I'm still wondering, uneasily, about that devastating realisation that Crowley had in 1918, around the same time he painted that enigmatic portrait. Is that what LAM's got in store for us? I also find it interesting that Michael Staley connects the whole notion of 'extra-terrestrialism' with mystical states of non-duality (Staley, 1994). In other words, LAM represents 'cosmic consciousness' rather than an alien literally from outer-space.

ALAN: I've been thinking about joining the Typhonian O.T.O.

DUNCAN: Are you going to?

ALAN: No. Not after you told me they drink each other's man-batter.

Postscript

ALAN: Regarding my 'Hadit' dream, I discovered the following quotations. The speaker is Hadit:

22. I am the Snake that giveth Knowledge & Delight and bright glory, and stir the hearts of men with drunkenness...

26. I am the secret Serpent coiled about to spring: in my coiling there is joy. If I lift up my head, I and my Nuit are one. (*BOL II*)

In his confessions, Crowley claims the Tao or Way is the attainment of all magical traditions, and the Ankh is a symbol of this in the sense that it is a sandal strap (Crowley 1989, p. 516).

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Indeed, under the LAM portrait in *The Voice of Silence*, Crowley states:

LAM is the Tibetan word for Way or Path, and LAMA is He who Goeth, the specific title of the Gods of Egypt, the Treader of the Path... (Crowley 1974, p. 733)

Does LAM's apparent instruction to Duncan to wear an Ankh around his neck further indicate LAM's synonymity with the Tao, especially as this occurred well before any Lao Tzu connection was made?

I think maybe LAM was being metaphorical: you must become the Treader of the Path. Not a gangsta.

The Nature of the A.:A.:

The A.:A.:, as conceived by Aleister Crowley, is an anomaly amongst magical orders. It is not a lodge system; the order is formed solely on the basis of the teacher and student relationship. This has rendered the idea of a governing body impossible, and any claims to membership or genuine lineage questionable. Since Crowley's death, there is only one source of bona fide A.:A.: teaching: Crowley's writing.

Although it is possible to acquire the syllabus of A.:A.: material and then to work alone, many would argue this doesn't constitute membership, writing off the A.:A.: as an over-ambitious attempt at a new kind of order, which is now nothing more than a curious footnote in twentieth century occult history.

However, this is to assume that the A.:A.: is supposed to be a magical order in the usual sense. In 'One Star in Sight'⁵², Crowley outlined the A.:A.: thus:

⁵² A version of this text is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/nmcde5>.

The Higher Ground

The order consists of eleven grades or degrees, and is numbered as follows: these compose three groups, the Orders of the S. S., of the R. C., and of the G. D. respectively.

The Order of the S. S.

Ipsissimus.....10 Degree = 1Square
Magus.....9 Degree = 2Square
Magister Templi.....8 Degree = 3Square

The Order of the R. C.

(Babe of the Abyss – the link)

Adeptus Exemptus.....7 Degree = 4Square
Adeptus Major.....6 Degree = 5Square
Adeptus Minor.....5 Degree = 6Square

The Order of the G. D.

(Dominus Liminis – the link)

Philosophus.....4 Degree = 7Square
Practicus.....3 Degree = 8Square
Zelator.....2 Degree = 9Square
Neophyte.....1 Degree = 10Square
Probationer.....0 Degree = 0Square

(Crowley 1998b, Part III, Appendix II)

However, in ‘An Account of A.:A.:’ (Crowley, 2008b) Crowley identifies the A.:A.: solely with The Order of S.S., or the final three grades given in the above schema. Indeed, although what A.:A.: actually stands for is still a matter of debate, there are two widely accepted full titles for the order: the *Argentum*

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Astrum (Latin, meaning 'Silver Star') and the *Astron Argon* (Greek for 'Shining Star').

Crowley had this to say about the S.S.:

This community possesses a School, in which all who thirst for knowledge are instructed by the Spirit of Wisdom itself; and all the mysteries of nature are preserved in this school for the children of light. Perfect knowledge of nature and of humanity is taught in this school. It is from her that all truths penetrate into the world; she is the school of all who search for wisdom, and it is in this community alone that truth and the explanation of all mystery are to be found. It is the most hidden of communities, yet it contains members from many circles; nor is there any Centre of Thought whose activity is not due to the presence of one of ourselves. From all time there has been an exterior school based on the interior one, of which it is but the outer expression. From all time, therefore, there has been a hidden assembly, a society of the Elect, of those who sought for and had capacity for light, and this interior society was the Axle of the R.O.T.A. All that any external order possesses in symbol, ceremony, or rite is the letter expressive outwardly of that spirit of truth which dwelleth in the interior Sanctuary. Nor is the contradiction of the exterior any bar to the harmony of the interior. (Crowley, 2008b)

And furthermore:

We must not, however, imagine that this society resembles any secret society, meeting at certain times, choosing leaders and members, united by special objects. All societies, be what they may, can but come after this interior illuminated circle. This society knows none of the formalities which belong

to the outer rings, the work of man. In this kingdom of power all outward forms cease.

L.V.X. is the Power always present. The greatest man of his times, the chief himself, does not always know all the members, but the moment when it is necessary that he should accomplish any object he finds them in the world with certainty ready to his hand.

This community has no outside barriers. He who may be chosen is as the first; he presents himself among the others without presumption, and he is received by the others without jealousy. (Crowley, 2008b)

As you can see, it's not like any order in existence, let alone a body of people founded upon a direct lineage from Crowley. The S.S. is not the order that Crowley founded, but simply a term he used to describe it; the grading system, exercises, and the A.'.A.'. as a conventional order, are simply token representations (or an exterior expression) to be used as a means of joining the S.S., just like any other system of achieving 'enlightenment', such as Buddhism, Sufism, Gnosticism, etc.

So what of the conventional A.'.A.'. schema, with its three orders and eleven grades? Crowley says:

It should be stated that these Grades are not necessarily attained fully, and in strict consecution, or manifested wholly on all planes... The outline given of the several successive steps is exact; the two crises—the Angel and the Abyss—are necessary features in every career. The other tasks are not always accomplished in the order given here; one man, for example, may acquire many of the qualities peculiar to the Adeptus Major, and yet lack some of those proper to the Practicus. (Crowley 1998b, Part II, Appendix II)

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In the following paragraph, the use of A.:A.: is in the conventional sense, as given in the schema:

The natural talents of individuals differ very widely. The late Sir Richard Jebb, one of the greatest classical scholars of modern times, was so inferior to the average mediocrity in mathematics, that despite repeated efforts he could not pass the 'little go' at Cambridge—which the dullest minds can usually do. He was so deeply esteemed for his classics that a special "Grace" was placated so as to admit him to matriculation. Similarly a brilliant Exorcist might be an incompetent Diviner. In such a case the A.:A.: would refuse to swerve from Its system; the Aspirant would be compelled to remain at the Barrier until he succeeded in breaking it down, though a new incarnation were necessary to permit him to do so. But no technical failure of any kind soever could necessarily prevent him from accomplishing the Two Critical Tasks, since the fact of his incarnation itself proves that he has taken the Oath which entitled him to attain to the Knowledge and Conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel, and the annihilation of his Ego. One might therefore be an Adeptus Minor or even a Magister Templi, in essence, though refused official recognition by the A.:A.: as a Zelator owing to (say) a nervous defect which prevented him from acquiring a Posture which was "steady and easy" as required by the Task of that grade. (Crowley 1998b, Part II, Appendix II)

It is evident then that membership to the S.S. rests solely on the magician accomplishing two tasks: gaining the Knowledge

and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, and Crossing the Abyss.

Once joining the S.S.:

Members of the Order are each entitled to found Orders dependent on themselves on the lines of the R.C. and G.D. orders, to cover types of emancipation and illumination not contemplated by the original (or main) system. All such orders must, however, be constituted in harmony with the A.:A.: as regards the essential principles. (Crowley 1998b, Part II, Appendix II)

Crowley developed the A.:A.: with George Cecil Jones, once he had achieved the grade of Magister Templi and joined the S.S. (or A.:A.: proper). The quotation above can be seen as Crowley stating his authority to found an order, based on the two tasks of the magician. These existed prior to Crowley's A.:A.: schema—see, for instance, *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (Mathers, 1976) for a 15th Century example of the first task.

In other words, the grading system, the tasks of the grades, the various techniques and exercises, the terms, names and symbolism used, are what Crowley thought would be useful to the aspirant to S.S. as a means of achieving the two tasks. This is further made explicit by Crowley when he states:

Any neophyte of the Order (or, as some say, any person soever) possesses the right to claim the Grade of Master of the Temple by taking the Oath of the Grade. (Crowley 1998b, Part II, Appendix II)

Although it is possible to accomplish the two tasks using Crowley's teaching, membership of the S.S. is not dependent or exclusive to Crowley's writings or any genuine lineage.

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Any discussions regarding genuine lineage of the A.:A.:, or of whether a person can be considered a member just by working from the written material on their own, or on the correct interpretation of Crowley's teachings, has nothing to do with the S.S. (or A.:A.: proper).

A Summary

1. The A.:A.: proper is the Order of S.S. in Crowley's self-devised order.
2. Membership to the S.S. requires the completion of two tasks: contact with the Holy Guardian Angel and the Crossing of the Abyss.
3. All other tasks, exercises, writings, symbolisms and teachings were provided by Crowley as material useful for, but not necessary to, completion of the two tasks.

The Two Tasks

It is imperative to understand that the two tasks are in fact part of one process; they are not simply a question of employing a specific method and obtaining the necessary result. Crowley describes the process, in the terms of his order, when discussing the use of his preparatory exercises:

He will thus prepare himself properly for the crisis of his career in the Order, the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel.

His Angel shall lead him anon to the summit of the Order of the R. C. and make him ready to face the unspeakable terror of the Abyss which lies between Manhood and Godhead; teach him to Know that agony, to Dare that destiny, to Will that catastrophe, and to keep Silence for ever as he accomplishes the act of annihilation.

The Higher Ground

From the Abyss comes No Man forth, but a Star startles the Earth, and our Order rejoices above that Abyss that the Beast hath begotten one more Babe in the Womb of Our Lady, His concubine, the Scarlet Woman, BABALON.

There is not need to instruct a Babe thus born, for in the Abyss it was purified of every poison of personality; its ascent to the highest is assured, in its season, and it hath no need of seasons for it is conscious that all conditions are no more than forms of its fancy. (Crowley 1998b, Part II, Appendix II)

The moment the magician achieves the KCHGA is the moment a process is set in motion that will eventually end with the magician joining the ranks of the S.S. (It must be remembered that the magician need not know it in such terms – we are here using Crowley’s arbitrary symbolism.

The angel will lead the magician to the abyss whether he wants to go or not. Of course, the magician can refuse to make the crossing, once faced with the task. However, it is here that he or she shall then remain forever, staring the loss of self in the face, for there is no way to reverse the process.

The A.:A.: as a Developmental Model

Crowley’s schema is therefore not just a representation of a body of work that must be completed in order to advance within an order; this is in fact secondary. The A.:A.: functions as a developmental map or a model that can be used to chart your progress as you undergo a process set in motion by achieving the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

The A.:A.: schema can be considered as follows:

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The Order of the S. S.

Ipsissimus.....10 Degree = 1Square
Magus.....9 Degree = 2Square
Magister Templi.....8 Degree = 3Square

**Completion
of Task 2**

The Order of the R. C.

(Babe of the Abyss – the link)

**Beginning
of Task 2**

Adeptus Exemptus.....7 Degree = 4Square
Adeptus Major.....6 Degree = 5Square
Adeptus Minor.....5 Degree = 6Square

Task 1

The Order of the G. D.

(Dominus Liminis – the link)

Philosophus.....4 Degree = 7Square
Practicus.....3 Degree = 8Square
Zelator.....2 Degree = 9Square
Neophyte.....1 Degree = 10Square
Probationer.....0 Degree = 0Square

**Preparatory,
but not essential**

Figure 16: The A.:A.: as a Developmental Model.

The grades within the Order G.D. and R.C. also serve another function in terms of magical development. Once Task Two is completed, and the magician has joined the S.S., we are told:

Every active Member of the Order has destroyed all that He is and all that he has on crossing the Abyss; but a star is cast forth in the Heavens to enlighten the Earth, so that he may possess a vehicle wherein he may communicate with mankind. The quality and position of this star, and its functions, are determined by the nature of the incarnations transcended by him. (Crowley 1998b, Part II, Appendix II)

This is a heavily symbolic way of saying that the magician is now free to function unencumbered by the ego. If we consider

the fact the Tree of Life (on which the A.:A.: schema is based) is a complete map of the universe, to which all phenomena can be attributed, then the magician can be ascribed to a sphere or number on the tree that best reflects his or her nature. For instance, once Crowley had completed Task 2, he 'was cast forth into the Heaven of Jupiter'; in other words, Sphere 4 (*Chesed*) is the idea on the Tree of Life that best describes Aleister Crowley as a person. Similarly, a pupil of Crowley's was cast into the Sphere of the Elements, or idea number 10 (*Malkuth*), because this best described him as a person.

Once you've crossed the abyss, no idea below the abyss is deemed superior to any other; in other words, all spheres are equal when it comes to being 'cast out'. The lower grades are only a hierarchy if you are working through Crowley's exercises.

It should be noted that the tasks of the grades above the abyss, much like the two tasks below the abyss, are descriptive of the magical process and should therefore not be considered tasks in the usual sense of the word. For a description of these tasks, and what you can therefore expect once the abyss has been crossed, see 'One Star in Sight' (Crowley 1998b, Part II, Appendix II).

Austin Osman Spare and the Source of his Magic

Without doubt, the easiest and most accessible means of 'proving' magic works is the sigil method. It is minimalist, requiring no equipment, and yet offers incredible versatility in terms of the results that can be obtained. Without the advent of this method, there would be many less magicians than there are now. (A traditional, full-blown ritual offers far too many opportunities for being overwhelmed by a feeling of absurdity and calling the whole thing off.)

Austin Osman Spare is the man to thank for sigils. Of course, sigils are as old as humankind, but the actual method (of reducing a desire down to a glyph and 'burying' it in the subconscious) first appeared in *The Book of Pleasure* (Spare,

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2005) originally published in 1913. Spare offered sigils as an antidote to ineffectual ceremonial magic; indeed, his book must have seemed incredibly vital and 'genuine' compared to what was available at the time. That is, of course, provided you could make sense of his insane use of grammar.

Within Spare's lifetime, a myth developed regarding the source of his occult knowledge. In the introduction to *The Book of Pleasure*, there is a footnote detailing omitted chapters, such as 'Prophecy, Omens, etc.', 'Controlling the Elements', 'Black Magic with Protection', 'The Black Mass', 'Vampirism', 'Sorcery', 'Use of Spells and Incantations on Men, Animals, etc.' and 'Invoking Elementals, Nature Spirits for Glamour and Power'. It suggests Spare had a lot more 'genuine' occult knowledge than just the technique of sigils. Ooh, what I wouldn't give to get hold of those, eh?

According to Kenneth Grant, Spare claimed that as a child he befriended an old witch by the name of Mrs. Paterson, who was descended from a group of Salem witches that avoided persecution at the hands of Mathers. She had amazing powers, such as the ability to transform her appearance into that of a young girl, and taught Spare all she knew. Grant has gone to great pains to perpetuate this story in his numerous books, even going so far as to claim that Mrs. Paterson's teachings are in fact of ancient Native American origin, being principally concerned with contacting the Great Old Ones straight out of H.P. Lovecraft's fiction (Grant 2003, p. 15).

There is no evidence of the existence of Mrs. Paterson, and a similar lack of evidence for Spare's alleged powers (such as being able to manifest an elemental to visible appearance in the form of a green mist [Baker, 2001], all the way to making his cock grow so big he couldn't find a prostitute that could 'accommodate' him [Grant & Grant, 1998]). Kenneth Grant has sold a lot of books off the back of these stories, and evidently they did Spare's reputation as the greatest magician in London no harm either.

Unfortunately, Spare had this to say in *The Book of Pleasure*:

Sigils are the art of believing; my invention for making belief organic, ergo, true belief. (Spare 2005, p. 44)

Out of love for my foolish devotees I invented it. (Spare 2005, p. 50)

Hmm. Could it be that Spare made up the Paterson story *after* he had written *The Book of Pleasure*?

Dr. W. Wallace makes a very convincing case for the origin of Spare's occult knowledge. In Aleister Crowley's own copy of *The Focus of Life* (a later book by Spare), Gerald Yorke wrote the following note:

Spare became Frater YIHOVEAUM under A.C. in the A.:A.: 10 July 1909, being the seventh member to join. (Wallace 2005, p. 259)

Spare joined Crowley's order in the same year he conceived *The Book of Pleasure* (Spare started the book in 1909, but it wasn't published until 1913) with none other than Crowley as his mentor. Spare puts a nice little spin on this in a letter to F.W. Letchford in 1953 when he states: 'I was one of the founders of the A.:A.:.' (Wallace 2005, p. 259).

Of course, we can't claim that Crowley taught Spare the method of sigilisation; as far as I know, the method is indeed the result of Spare's own magical genius. However, there is evidence to suggest that a great deal of the content in *The Book of Pleasure* is derived from A.:A.: material. For instance: Spare's concept of the Death Posture, which can be found in *Liber HHH* as 'shavasana' (Crowley, 2008c); the derivation of the twenty-two letters of the Alphabet of Desire from Dee's Enochian Alphabet⁵³; the use of simplified Goetic seals

⁵³ Spare's 'Alphabet of Desire' is a sequence of glyphs that appear repeatedly throughout his work. According to Peter Carroll, it 'includes all the basic root emotions' (Carroll 1987, p. 76). The 'Enochian Alphabet' is a series of characters through which the language of the angels is expressed. (See Crowley, DuQuette & Hyatt 2002, p. 79.)

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throughout the illustrations in the book; the references to the Qabalistic Tree of Life in Spare's cosmology; the depiction of Nuit, Hadit and Ra-Hoor-Khuit (Spare 2005, p. 16); and—my personal favourite—the silhouette of the Pan gesture (Spare 2005, p. 54). There is also a picture in Wallace's book of Spare performing this gesture himself (Wallace 2005).

However, there are also references to alchemy and Goetia throughout the book; my point is simply that there is ample evidence Spare's magical knowledge did *not* originate from a H.P. Lovecraft-loving Salem witch.

There is no doubting Spare's genius, both as an artist and magician, and I believe he did 'discover' or 'invent' the sigil method as we know it. A cursory investigation of his life will reveal that we are not dealing with an ordinary mind; but, like all geniuses, he seems to have had a bit of an ego.

With regards to contemporary magic, a friend of mine recently said: 'Yes, it might be *Uncle Al*, but it's definitely *Grandfather Spare*.'

It seems that Spare knew exactly what he was doing.

The Death Posture: A Definitive Instruction

Spare's 'Death Posture' is the most misunderstood magical technique in the world. Ever.

The technique is described in *The Book of Pleasure* (Spare, 2005) and so I sympathise with any initial confusion readers may have concerning the posture; after all, Spare's writing is demented.

However, a simple re-read of the page in question should be enough to dispel the confusion. I can only surmise from the absolute rubbish presented in many books, magazines and websites as 'the death posture' is due to the fact that most people cannot be bothered to read carefully.

The Ritual and Doctrine

The instruction is given in three paragraphs. Here's how they are printed:

Lying on your back lazily, the body expressing the condition of yawning, suspending while conceiving by smiling, that is the idea of the posture. Forgetting time with those things which were essential reflecting their meaninglessness, the moment is beyond time and its virtue has happened.

Standing on tip-toe, with the arms rigid, bound behind by the hands, clasped and straining the utmost, the neck stretched—breathing deeply and spasmodically, till giddy and sensation comes in gusts, gives exhaustion and capacity for the former.

Gazing at your reflection till it is blurred and you know not the gazer, close your eyes (this usually happens involuntarily) and visualize. The light (always an X in curious evolutions) that is seen should be held on to, never letting go, till the effort is forgotten, this gives a feeling of immensity... whose limit you cannot reach. This should be practised before experiencing the foregoing. The emotion that is felt is the knowledge which tells you why. (Spare 2005, p. 18)

It's obvious, isn't it? The death posture itself is completely open to interpretation. There is no 'one' posture; instead it ranges from holding your breath until you pass out, to staring at yourself in the mirror. And it can be used to 'charge' sigils.

Actually: *no!* What big fat hairy bollocks!

If we re-read these three paragraphs, we see that paragraph two ('Standing on tip-toe...') '...gives exhaustion and capacity for the former.' In other words, it is a *preliminary* exercise for the instruction given in the first paragraph ('Lying on your back...').

As for the exercise given in paragraph three ('Gazing at your reflection...'), we are told: 'This should be practised before experiencing the foregoing.'

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Paragraph three is therefore a preliminary exercise to be practised before the instructions given in paragraphs one and two. The death posture proper is therefore given in paragraph one. So, to clarify:

1. Practice staring at your eyes in the mirror, until your reflection looks bizarre. Granted, it doesn't help at this point when Spare tells you to close your eyes and visualise, and then goes on to describe something you should see ('an X in curious evolutions', which I propose is the image left on the retina—indeed, there is very similar to a Buddhist exercise), but the point is that you concentrate on something, never letting go, until: 'this gives a feeling of immensity... whose limit you cannot reach.'

Spare is quite explicit when he says this must be experienced *before* practising the death posture proper.

In other words, you must have a degree of proficiency in concentration. Knowing Spare's magical background, I believe he is here describing *dhyana*.

It should be noted that there is nothing special about this concentration exercise, as Spare explains a little later on: 'There are many preliminary exercises, as innumerable as sins, futile of themselves but designative of the ultimate means' (Spare 2005, p. 18). Once Dhyana is achieved, we can move on to the death posture itself.

2. The death posture requires a degree of relaxation, and to obtain this, you may first strain the whole body and hyperventilate. Of course, you could also go for a run or lift some weights—the aim is to be relaxed for the practise of the posture proper. Just to be explicit: holding your breath until you pass out is *not* the death posture.

3. So, once a degree of competence in concentration is achieved (i.e. you can enter a state of dhyana, or trance), you can practise the posture proper.

I believe the biggest difficulty with understanding the death posture lies with the fact that Spare appears to be telling us to lie down, yawn, smile and 'let go' of all of our worries. But that's not correct.

The Higher Ground

The posture is indeed lying on your back, relaxed, without a care in the world. However, if you think he is advocating relaxation for its own sake, you're missing the point. If we take a look at the next paragraph, Spare says:

...know this as the negation of all faith by living it, the end of the duality of consciousness... Know the death posture and its reality in annihilation of law – the ascension from duality. (Spare 2005, p. 18)

The aim of the death posture is not to achieve 'gnosis' in order to 'charge' a sigil, but to experience the non-dual. Spare is talking about samadhi, or the experience of what he called *Kia*.

Spare elaborates on the practice:

The primordial vacuity (or belief) is not by the exercise of focussing the mind on a negation of all conceivable things, the identity of unity and duality, chaos and uniformity, etc., etc., but by doing it now, not eventually. Perceive, and feel without the necessity of an opposite, but by its relative. Perceive light without shadow by its own colour as contrast, through evoking the emotion of laughter at the time of ecstasy in union, and by practice till that emotion is untiring and subtle. The law of reaction is defeated by inclusion... Let him practise it daily, accordingly, till he arrives at the centre of desire. He has imitated the great purpose... Thus by hindering belief and semen from conception, they become simple and cosmic. (Spare 2005, p. 18-9)

The 'primordial vacuity', or *Kia*, is achieved by cultivating an awareness of immediate sensation. For example, instead of experiencing a sensation and knowing it as 'light', simply experience the sensation. The correct mental attitude is that which is experienced when you laugh; you accept all experience

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and sensation (including the sensation of thoughts) without resistance.

If this attitude of inclusive awareness is cultivated by daily practice, you will eventually experience a state of non-duality and bliss.

The parallels between Spare's instructions and those of the Buddha are quite striking. The death posture facilitates the same awareness as 'insight practice' or *vipassana*, which can only be practised competently once a degree of proficiency in concentration is achieved.

A Practical Summary

1. Practise concentration exercises until you experience dhyana.
2. Practise being aware of all sensations and experiences as they arise without fixing your attention on or identifying with any one thing. (The correct attitude can be engendered by smiling or laughing.) This is easiest to do when relaxed, so practising after physical exercise is ideal.

Alternatively, taking up insight practice, vipassana or Taoist meditation will achieve the same result.

Core teaching

Of the sixteen chapters of *The Book of Pleasure*, eight deal exclusively with the non-dual or Kia, either expounding the virtues of the pursuit of the non-dual, providing instructions for achieving the non-dual, or detailing the resultant state once the non-dual is achieved and becomes habitual (which Spare calls 'Self-Love').

Spare is essentially concerned with hedonism. (I think the title of the book gives that away.) If you want the most ecstasy and pleasure possible, if you want the greatest degree of satisfaction, then you must concern yourself with the non-dual:

The wise pleasure seeker, having realised they are 'different degrees of desire' and never desirable, gives up both Virtue and Vice and becomes a Kiaist. Riding the Shark of his desire he crosses the ocean of the dual principle and engages himself in self-love. (Spare 2005, p. 1)

Self-love is the state that results from the habitual experience of the non-dual, obtained through practising the death posture every day. It is freedom from desire. Now tell me, which brings the greatest pleasure: using sigils to acquire a magical effect, or the transcendence of all desires?

For a long time, Spare has been fêted as the father of 'Chaos Magic' and the inventor of Sigil Magic. But his greatest magical achievement, the central teaching of *The Book of Pleasure* has either been misunderstood as an arbitrary component of sigil magic, or completely ignored as the ramblings of a mystic.

With his death posture, Spare managed to boil down the essence of all meditative practice to a very simple, easy and enjoyable method of genuine magical attainment, and not for any lofty, spiritual purpose, but simply for the sake of pleasure.

If you still think magic has nothing to do with mysticism, or is concerned solely with the manifestation of material results, consider the title of the book responsible for 'starting it all': *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*.

Magic with a K

In an effort to demonstrate that no idea is big enough to explain existence, Buckminster Fuller once described the universe as 'non-simultaneously apprehended'.⁵⁴ As the universe is not experienced all at once, but sequentially through space-time, we would need to apprehend all phenomena simultaneously (including that which hasn't occurred yet) in order to account for the entire universe. Because simultaneous apprehension is impossible, so too is a theory that explains everything.

⁵⁴ According to Robert Anton Wilson (Wilson, 2006).

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This spells bad news for theories that already claim to account for everything, such as every religion and philosophy previous to post-modernism.

The idea that there is no such thing as absolute truth is a central belief of post-modern magic, and although Fuller's 'non-simultaneously apprehended universe' has been used in the past to validate this idea, it is largely pioneering research in the fields of transactional psychology and quantum physics that informs the post-modern magical world-view.

Post-modern thought has made a number of significant contributions to a freer, less dogmatic world. For instance, there's *constructivism*, the idea that many of our perceptions of the world are created by ourselves through social and historical processes; *contextualism*, the understanding that meaning is dependent on context, and so phenomena are interpreted as well as perceived; and *pluralism*, the recognition that there are many contexts, and no single context is privileged in and of itself.

However, post-modernism is easily misunderstood: decide that constructivism applies to all phenomena instead of just some, and you end up with no metaphysical or universal truth; misunderstand contextualism by confusing interpretation with experience, and you deny the existence of a reality beyond the self; mistake pluralism for equality, and: 'nothing is true, everything is permitted'.

Sadly, we have arrived at an accurate description of magic in the 21st Century, where the absolute truth is finally revealed: the universe is devoid of all value, except the relative usefulness of a given world-view in providing personal satisfaction for the post-modern magician!

Has the last three hundred years of Western magical development really found its conclusion in this narcissistic dead end?

Magic is suffering from the misrepresentation of post-modernism. The abuse of Fuller's 'non-simultaneously apprehended universe' as an argument for existence as devoid

of truth is just one example amongst many of the post-modernist extremism that has infected Western occultism.

Although it is true that no idea can account for the entire universe, is it not true that some ideas account for more of the universe than others? Truth most certainly does exist, although it can only ever be known partially through ideas, and to a degree commensurate with the breadth, depth and width of an individual's direct apprehension of the universe. In other words, the greater the awareness of the individual, then the greater the apprehension of truth; the greater the apprehension of truth, then the greater the inadequacy of ideas at expressing that truth.

Buckminster Fuller was a mystic, not an egomaniac.

Moles

The relative nature of the personal world-view, or 'reality tunnel', has been explored at great length in the works of Robert Anton Wilson. Indeed, *Prometheus Rising* (2004) has the rather strange effect of making you feel a little less dogmatic, and a little freer, simply by reading it. But just like Buckminster Fuller, RAW has become a casualty of post-modern extremism. I don't think it is unfair to say that this is largely due to his own work.

Wilson describes a certain stage within the magician's initiatory career as the Chapel Perilous:

In researching occult conspiracies, one eventually faces a crossroad of mythic proportions (called Chapel Perilous in the trade). You come out the other side either a stone paranoid or an agnostic; there is no third way. I came out agnostic.

Chapel Perilous, like the mysterious entity called 'I,' cannot be located in the space-time continuum; it is weightless, odorless, tasteless and undetectable by ordinary instruments. Indeed, like the Ego, it is even possible to deny that it is there. And yet, even more

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like the Ego, once you are inside it, there doesn't seem to be any way to ever get out again, until you suddenly discover that it has been brought into existence by thought and does not exist outside thought. *Everything you fear* is waiting with slavering jaws in Chapel Perilous, but if you are armed with the wand of intuition, the cup of sympathy, the sword of reason, and the pentacle of valor, you will find there (the legends say) the Medicine of Metals, the Elixir of Life, the Philosopher's Stone, True Wisdom and Perfect Happiness.

That's what the legends always say, and the language of myth is poetically precise. For instance, if you go into that realm without the sword of reason, you will lose your mind, but at the same time, if you take only the sword of reason without the cup of sympathy, you will lose your heart. Even more remarkably, if you approach without the wand of intuition, you can stand at the door for decades never realizing you have arrived. You might think you are just waiting for a bus, or wandering from room to room looking for your cigarettes, watching a TV show, *or reading a cryptic and ambiguous book*. Chapel Perilous is tricky that way. (Wilson 2005, p. 6-7)

It is far too easy when reading the above (and RAW's work in general) to assume that occultism is an intellectual pursuit—a simple game of interpretation. RAW states the Chapel presents itself when 'researching occult conspiracies'. However, it is evident from his book *Cosmic Trigger* (2005) that by 'researching' Bob actually means taking part in the occult conspiracy by actually performing magic.

It doesn't help that Bob goes on to claim that there are only two possible results or 'exits' from the Chapel—paranoia or

agnosticism – which has the effect of reducing the magical quest to nothing but a question of belief.

Is it any wonder that ‘the Medicine of Metals, the Elixir of Life, the Philosopher’s Stone, True Wisdom and Perfect Happiness’ i.e. the Crown of the Great Work, is now considered a rather antiquated and flowery way of talking about the intellectual realisation of the relative nature of all perception?

It’s not for me to judge whether RAW attained to the Goal, but is it really possible to complete the magical quest and still have the option of leaving the Chapel *insane*? Is it really possible to attain to such an experience yet leave as a model *agnostic*?

Did Bob fail to mention a third, secret exit?

Achieving the goal of the magical quest can only result in what I consider to be the only sane world-view: Gnosticism. The world-view or ‘reality tunnel’ of the Gnostic is not chosen as a model, but given through direct experience. No amount of belief-shifting can substitute for this experience.

Yes, the Gnostic appreciates the arbitrary nature of all ideas, but he or she also knows of an objective truth beyond reason. No genuine teacher has ever preached literally, or claimed the truth is to be found in any idea. But preach they must, because it is better to point some in the right direction at the risk of deluding others, rather than settling for helping no one at all.

What function then does it serve to preach the extreme post-modernism of a universe completely subjective and relative?

There’s no doubt about it, RAW was a mystic. *Cosmic Trigger* is an account of his mystical experiences. I’m not being overly generous when I say Bob preached model agnosticism partly as the necessary next step in introducing magic to the world at large, and partly as a refusal to talk about that which is beyond idea, and so risk muddying the waters.

There is a scene in *Maybe Logic: The Lives and Ideas of Robert Anton Wilson* (2006) where Bob takes great pains to explain exactly what Korzybski’s famous aphorism ‘the map is not the territory’ truly means. It’s very easy here to think that Bob is simply promoting the idea of an observer-created

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universe—i.e. ‘the map is not the territory’ means that we all perceive with our own peculiar ‘maps’ of reality. However, Bob takes great care to draw attention to what is actually meant by ‘territory’, yet without actually ascribing any other, specific idea to it. (It is worth noting that in his later years RAW considered himself a Buddhist and a Taoist.)

I admire RAW’s integrity in refusing to talk about that which cannot be talked about, but I think this approach has deluded just as many people as any of the more ‘explicit’ magical teachings.

Happy Rainbow People

The greater freedom afforded by post-modernism, in conjunction with the dawn of the communication age, has encouraged a glorious growth in diversity of magical traditions within the Western magical community.

However, the insanity of extreme post-modernism has encouraged the delusion that all of these traditions are of equal value. As a result, magic has become vague and generalised. The plethora of available mystical experiences is reduced to a single, fuzzy notion: ‘gnosis’; early stages of childhood are confused with enlightenment; rationalisation is confused with meditation; beliefs are confused with perception; superstitious world-views are mistaken for magical consciousness; the pragmatism of pre-industrial sorcery is considered commensurate with post-industrial materialism. And there is supposedly one golden rule in all this: all that matters is if a world-view works for you!

Unfortunately, this approach is indicative of a failure to understand the nature of genuine magical tradition.

Genuine Tradition

Human beings are composed of many dimensions, one of which is the metaphysical. I am using the term in its Greek original sense—a ‘metaphysic’ is simply a language for describing mystical or profound experience. Every genuine magical

tradition to have graced the surface of this planet describes the metaphysical 'plane' as the root of all others, in the sense that it transcends but includes all other experience. These traditions state that if you carry out a certain practice (such as Vipassana, or the KCHGA) on a daily basis, a developmental process will begin with predictable, recognisable stages, that will eventually culminate in what can be considered the completion of the metaphysical process, sometimes referred to as the Great Work, illumination or enlightenment.

As the metaphysical is as much a part of being human as having a body or taking a shit, given enough time any group of humans will eventually produce a good magician who will produce a metaphysic (like the A.'.A.'. or Tantra, or Buddhism, etc.) that describes their experience of what it means to be human at the most profound level. This is why there are a startling number of traditions that all appear to be describing the same phenomena, but in different terms.

As these genuine traditions are an expression of the metaphysical process, and therefore concerned solely with the plane of profound or mystical experience, it is never a simple matter of choosing a world-view and reaping the intended results. There is a tradition peculiar to each magician that will bring him or her to the goal and will present itself naturally, or rather *magically*, at a certain stage in metaphysical growth.

There is only one golden rule concerning genuine tradition: all that matters is if a world-view works for you *in completing the Great Work*.

Strangely enough, examples of genuine tradition can be found (albeit within their esoteric schools) in the three major monotheistic religions of the West: Sufism, Hasidism, Christian Mysticism. Then there are of course the sacred traditions of the East: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism; not forgetting a number of African traditions,⁵⁵ such as those practised by the Yoruba.

And of course, the focus of this book – Magick.

⁵⁵ However, most traditions labelled under 'African Diaspora' are not genuine tradition. See above, p. 24f and p. 75f.

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It should be noted that initiation into one of these traditions does not guarantee the expression of the metaphysical process, just as the process can manifest itself without requiring an initiation into one of these traditions.

Pseudo Tradition

However, not everyone has personal, direct experience of the metaphysical. As a result, some misunderstand the metaphysical teachings of genuine tradition and promote a degenerated version, usually by 'confusing the planes' and believing that the goal of the metaphysical process is a mental, emotional or physical event.

These traditions are pseudo-traditions, offering only the outward appearance of a genuine tradition, regardless of whether effective practical magic is taught. All magical traditions that do not afford metaphysical process or mystical experience are at best pseudo-traditions. Syncretism is the ultimate example of this, as are magical those traditions that ascribe to a superstitious view of the world.⁵⁶ These are best described in the language of developmental psychology as reflections of the 'magic' or 'mythic' stages of development, and include traditions such as: paganism, wicca, heathenism, theosophy, new ageism, etc.

A tell-tale sign of the pseudo-initiate is an emphasis on practical results at the expense of experiencing the truth, or a contentment with rationalisation, emotionalism or intuitionism over direct experience of truth.

Counter Tradition

Whereas pseudo-tradition is simply a case of tradition cut off from the metaphysical, there are those traditions that actively oppose the metaphysical process. These traditions are counter-traditions. Any tradition that advocates a refusal to participate in the dissolution of the ego in the divine is counter-initiatory —

⁵⁶ The superstitious view of the world is sometimes confused with genuine magical consciousness, which is the experience of synchronicity as a permanent adaptation or state.

such as Satanism and Setianism—as are those traditions that traffic with entities that prohibit the metaphysical process, or restrict the magician to working solely within that tradition. The line between pseudo- and counter-tradition is easily crossed, as pseudo-traditions can easily be appropriated by the counter-tradition as a means of subverting genuine seekers.

All counter traditions are based on a misunderstanding of the metaphysical process, and operate from a basis of (usually subconscious) fear. The counter-tradition has its basis in confusion, and so the secret master of all counter-initiates, regardless of whom they worship, is Choronzon.

Why the long face?

It should not be assumed that simply because a tradition is a pseudo-tradition or even a counter-tradition that it has nothing to offer, or that any benefits gained from practising such a tradition are invalid.

Both pseudo- and counter-traditions can provide positive changes in the self and success in materialistic terms—such as in career or business, love-life, social role, etc., and can teach very useful magical techniques, with ‘real world’ results. Hence the staggering number of ‘good’ magicians, in the materialistic sense, that have never come across metaphysical experience. Many magical traditions are necessary and indispensable stepping-stones on the way to beginning the metaphysical process, and the expression of genuine tradition.

However, there is no escaping it: both pseudo- and counter-traditions either fail to engage with or completely ignore that part of reality that just so happens to include but transcend every other part of reality. This means that no matter how profound an experience, no matter how materialistically successful, no matter how well developed the self is as a result of practising a pseudo-tradition, the magician will only ever know himself and the rest of the universe at a superficial level.

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Special K

Aleister Crowley reverted to the old English spelling of 'magick' to distinguish between his 'art and science of causing change to occur in conformity with will' (Crowley 1998b) and stage trickery or illusionism.

Times have changed since Crowley's day. I increasingly find that more and more people are using the word magic in its original sense, so I've never felt the need for an alternate spelling. However, in light of the mess of the contemporary magical scene, I very much feel the need to make a new distinction.

When I talk about magic, I no longer wish to reference materialism, superstition, extreme post-modernism, and the pseudo- or counter-traditions. As such, from now on, I will make the distinction by spelling my magic with a *k*.

The Royal Art

Magick is the art, science and culture of experiencing truth.

This definition includes both subjective and relative truth (or perception), and objective and absolute truth (or enlightenment).

Any act therefore is an act of magick, if awareness is brought to that action. The practice of magick is the exercise and growth of conscious awareness, an expansion of the self in all directions and on all levels of experience.

This means magick isn't just about obtaining a material result or attaining the goal of enlightenment, although the latter is most definitely the ultimate goal of genuine tradition. It includes both practicality and mysticism, and the mastery of every level or plane of experience in between.

In light of the above, does getting high, conjuring for material results, pretending to 'belief shift', or indulging a regressive tradition (especially those that belong to the 'magical' or 'mythical' stages of development) really sound like magick?

It is time we addressed the stupidity of extreme post-modernism in our magical community. I think the best way to start is for people to spell correctly.

Postscript

Counter-tradition is not the same as the Left-Hand Path, tantra, black magick (i.e. using magick for 'negative' ends, such as cursing), working with entities such as Satan, Set, Baphomet, Lilith, the Goetia, demons in general, or other supposedly 'negative' entities.

Although I cite both Satanism and Setianism as examples of the counter-tradition, it is the approach or attitude of these traditions that defines them as counter-initiatory. It is possible to work with any entity, including both Satan and Set, and still remain within the genuine tradition.

However, counter-tradition is synonymous with the concept of 'the black brothers', and René Guénon often refers to counter-initiates as 'Satanists'. For the sake of clarity, I shall only use the terms counter-tradition, counter-initiate, or black brothers when referring to the counter-tradition.

Obverse

Genuine tradition is not the same thing as the Right-Hand Path, white magick (i.e. using magick for 'positive' ends, such as healing), working with entities such as angels, classical gods and goddesses, such as Venus and Mercury, or other 'positive' entities.

It is possible to work with entities from the Greek or Hindu pantheon—for example—yet still remain in a counter- or pseudo-tradition. However, this will usually be a case of failing to understand or implement these traditions. For instance, it is possible to work with Kali without recognising her transcendental aspect, and thus to fail to experience union with her as a result of ignorance.

However, genuine tradition is synonymous with 'the great white brotherhood' and the A.:A.:. For the sake of clarity, I will

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only use these terms when referring to the genuine tradition, but it should be remembered that I am not simply referencing a Western phenomenon when I use the term ‘great white brotherhood’ or A.:A.:..

A Classical Mess

Although in the preceding article I appropriated a number of terms from the work of René Guénon⁵⁷ as a means of categorising the traditions prevalent within the contemporary magical community, it must not be assumed that I am either endorsing Traditionalism, or that my work is a typical example of this school of thought.

The problem of extreme post-modernism is not solved through retrospection. To reject post-modernism outright, lament the present condition of humanity, and long for a past ‘golden age’ is a great failure in understanding what I have called the genuine tradition.

I do not contest that Guénon was a first-rate magical genius, or that his book *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times* (2001) is a masterpiece. His metaphysic is elegant, and his anticipation of our current society is nothing short of astonishing.

The main thesis of the book concerns humanity’s propensity towards the quantitative, at the expense of the qualitative, as an expression of the current period of time in which we find ourselves. In more traditional terms, quantity can be considered ‘substance’ or ‘matter’, and its ultimate expression is unmanifest infinite potential—it is therefore ‘unintelligible’ in the strictest sense. Quality, on the other hand, is the exact polar opposite: it is ‘essence’ or ‘form’, and its ultimate expression is unmanifest infinite action or realisation—it is therefore that which is ‘intelligible’. It is the interplay of quantity and quality that produces the manifest universe.

⁵⁷ René Guénon (1886-1951). French-born author, whose field was metaphysics, applied to the study of cultural traditions. Along with Ananda Coomaraswamy and Frithjof Schuon, Guénon is considered to be one of the founders of the Traditionalist School.

The end-point of a movement towards quantity is uniformity, or a multitude of separate units all sharing the same qualities. (This is, of course, impossible. But it is this very denial of what is actually experienced that is at the heart of quantity, and the reason why mathematics is its primary expression.) Such units are 'confused' with each other, lost in uniformity whilst demonstrating separation.

The end-point of a movement towards quality is unity, or a union of all qualities, each distinct but inseparable. An individual experiencing unity would be 'fused, but not confused'. The self is not lost, as is usually supposed by counter-initiates, but transcended and included in unity—it is an end to the illusion of separation.

Because it is only quality that can really be known, the experience of time and space cannot be anything but qualitative. Time is not the succession of quantitative units that we suppose, but a phenomenon that demonstrates qualities, such as speed and character. Of course, none of this is anything new to the magician familiar with aeonics.⁵⁸

It was Guénon's contention that we are reaching the end of a period known in Hinduism as the Kali Yuga, where quantity reigns to an extent greater than ever before. The whole of history is nothing more than an accelerating descent from extreme quality to extreme quantity, ending in what Guénon called 'the dissolution'.

If unity, or the experience of 'pure' quality is enlightenment, then it is easy to see that the traditions originating in a period in the past where quality was more prevalent, and quantity less-so, are more likely to offer a more accurate metaphysic and teaching for attaining enlightenment.

However, the belief that modern traditions are necessarily inferior in nature to those of the past, and that society can only get worse, means that the Traditionalist is always of the opinion

⁵⁸ 'Aeonics is a study of the inner levels of history, a study of the shifts in mass consciousness...' See Lee 2006, p. 187f, for an introduction to aeonics from a chaos magick perspective.

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that enlightenment is being lost with the disappearance (via Westernisation) of the traditional society.

And this is the fallacy of Traditionalism: that enlightenment, the metaphysical process, or what I call the genuine tradition, is synonymous with magical culture.

Although the Traditionalist school recognises 'the perennial philosophy', or the ubiquity of the expression of the genuine tradition within numerous magical traditions, it nevertheless cannot see past tradition itself.

In actuality, the truth is not in any idea, religion, ideology, law, caste system, practice, philosophy or era. The truth transcends but includes all notions of space, time, and culture, and is therefore not dependent upon any of these things.

In the article preceding this one, I listed a number of traditions as examples of genuine tradition; but these are and can only ever be cultural expressions of the genuine tradition—they are not the genuine tradition itself. The genuine tradition, or metaphysical process, can express itself through an individual who belongs to no tradition at all, or through an individual that indulges a pseudo-tradition.

However, this does not mean that all traditions are of equal value. (*Out, demon, out!*) A tradition that not only acknowledges enlightenment, but provides a map or model of development and instruction in a practice conducive to the metaphysical process, is of infinitely greater value than those traditions that do not.

This is why, despite the fallacy of Traditionalism, the works of the Traditionalist school (René Guénon, Julius Evola, etc.) are generally indispensable to the serious aspirant.

The Degeneration of Chaos Magick

Magick was left in a sorry state after the death of Crowley. Riddled with moralising, pompous armchair transcendentalists, waxing poetical about magical matters beyond the scope of their personal experience, magick became nothing short of a ridiculous intellectual eccentricity.

Somehow magick muddled through in this state for a couple of decades, until chaos magick materialised at the end of the Seventies to save its sorry arse. Suddenly magick was a practice again, with verifiable results.

It was essential for the Western magical tradition that chaos magick exposed the fantasy that had accrued around magical practice, and it is thanks solely to post-modern thought that magick regained its vitality.

The heart of the particular delusion that held sway with some (but not all) of the transcendentalists was the belief that the truth could be found in one correct answer (i.e. *theirs*). Chaos magick addressed this head-on by pointing out that no one idea is the truth, and that belief could therefore be used as a tool for magical effect.

With the advent of chaos magick, there were those who refused to abandon the old approach, and as a consequence many (but not all) of the present-day proponents of the old transcendental approach tend to be quite naive when it comes to actual magical practice, and usually operate from a rather dogmatic view of the world.

However, given enough time, delusion and fantasy will produce a degenerated form of any tradition, even if that tradition attempts to avoid such a fate by pretending it's just a theory.

And so, it is time to address the degeneration of chaos magick. The delusion that holds sway with some (but not all) of its adherents is the idea that there is no truth, and the universe exists solely to provide personal satisfaction for the magician.

We can address this head-on by realising we do in fact experience truth on a moment-to-moment basis, and it is therefore not to be found in adopting the attitude that there is no one correct answer, or in using belief as a tool. The truth is not to be found in any idea or attitude, but in direct experience itself.

With this comes the recognition that some ideas or models describe experience better than others, regardless of which model the magician might actually prefer. This does not mean

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that the most *useful* model or map is the truth, or that the tradition that leads the aspirant to the direct experience of absolute truth is the only way. Indeed, it is the very subjectivity of perception itself that allows the aspirant to reach the absolute truth through the relative value of the tradition most suited to him or her.

It is imperative that we do not assume that those magical traditions that do not address the metaphysical process are somehow superfluous or 'evil'; after all, magick is the expansion of the self in all directions. To focus solely on enlightenment at the expense of the rest of reality is as narrow-minded as focussing solely on material results and pretending there is no such thing as mystical or profound experience.

However, a tradition that acknowledges the metaphysical domain offers a lot more than what might be supposed by the simple recognition of another plane of experience, for the metaphysical transcends but includes every other level. This isn't a denial of experience at the level of 'everyday' life, but the facilitation of a greater depth and involvement with every experience whatsoever.

Perusing the material available on instruction for achieving direct experience of the truth, and for charting progress made, it becomes apparent that most of it is to be found in the sacred traditions of the East, and the old transcendental tradition of the West.

But there is a great danger with adopting a traditional view. The temptation to regress to the belief that truth can be found in one correct answer, or in any idea for that matter, can be too easily indulged, and the retrospective attitude tends to promote a dismissal of the contributions of chaos magick and the lamentation of a supposedly rapidly degenerating occult scene. For clarity's sake: I do not believe the entire occult scene is without merit—just that there is a degenerated or delusional form of post-modernism and of chaos magick currently doing the rounds.)

It is important to recognise that extreme post-modernism, or any degenerated tradition for that matter, is essential to the

growth of magick. The truth is found in experience, and this is no better demonstrated in the fact that humans only change when circumstances, or direct experience, force them to do so. Degeneration serves an indispensable function, and is most certainly not something to cry over.

I therefore salute the deluded proponents of both transcendentalism and chaos magick for fulfilling their appointed function, and for making progress possible.

Part 3

No other subject in the history of the human race has been as misunderstood and grossly misrepresented as that of enlightenment.

For many Eastern traditions, enlightenment is a product whose value is directly proportionate to the strength of its myth: the more enlightenment is divorced from reality, the more the devotee is willing to pay for it. The popular conception of enlightenment has suffered accordingly. For many people, enlightenment is considered fantastic, highly specialised and virtually unattainable—if it is believed to exist at all.

As for the Western enlightenment traditions, only one is still extant: magick. Unfortunately, enlightenment is considered a hopelessly regressive new-ageism by extreme post-modern magicians. It's only in the pre-post-modern, transcendental schools of magick that we still find reference to enlightenment as the goal of the magician's career.

Yet enlightenment within transcendental magick has suffered the same fate as in the East, largely thanks to the life and works of Aleister Crowley. The deification of Crowley—by himself and by his disciples—has mythologised the process of enlightenment within the Western tradition. Western magicians that still take the idea seriously do so only on the grounds that it is unattainable by the average magician, let alone the average man or woman. The magical community meets with incredulity any claim to the Western magical grades that delineate the

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process of enlightenment, resulting in the phenomenon of the inexcusably arrogant Western magician who will only 'hint' at the achievement of his or her grade, either as feigned humility in the face of his or her *incredible achievement*; or as a means of claiming the unattained, and the kudos that goes with it, without having to validate their experience.

However, we are not without hope: there are currently a few individuals⁵⁹ making towards an open and honest discussion of enlightenment within the Eastern traditions, based upon their own personal experience.

I feel that adopting such an approach with regards to the Western magical tradition is overdue. I therefore offer no apology to the extreme post-modern magician, who believes enlightenment does not have a place in today's magick, or to the transcendental magician whose bubble I'm intent on bursting. I do, however, extend to everyone reading this book an open invitation to the frank and honest discussion of enlightenment within Magick.

Let's Push Things Forward

If we are to avoid the types of degeneration peculiar to the transcendental and post-modern schools of magick⁶⁰, without dismissing the invaluable contributions of both approaches, how are we best to proceed? In my opinion, by recognising that:

1. The truth is not found in any idea, belief, opinion, map, model, technology, tradition, dogma, race, era (either long lost or imminent) or geographical location.
2. Truth exists in direct, personal experience.
3. Magick is the art, science and culture of experiencing truth.
4. What can be experienced using magick is limited only by the ingenuity of the magician (the subjective), but how that experience manifests is limited by the available means of manifestation (the objective).

⁵⁹ See, for instance, Daniel Ingram's website: <http://www.interactivebuddha.com>. See also the work of the various contributors to: <http://www.fallingfruit.tv/buddhistgeeks>.

⁶⁰ As described in the two preceding articles, above.

5. The available means of manifestation is the totality of reality. This means reality is not restricted to what is experienced through the five senses, but consists of many more planes or levels of experience. As well as the physical, emotional and mental realms normally recognised, there are also what are sometimes referred to as the astral, etheric and spiritual or metaphysical planes. What is experienced at each level has subjective, relative, surface features, and objective, absolute, deep features. In other words, although the perception of each level is subjective and relative, the actual experience of each level is not.

6. The human being is manifest or expressed at each level of experience. As such, every single person has the right and the potential to address any and all levels of his or her experience.

7. Each level or plane of experience must be addressed if we are to attain to understanding, happiness and power at all levels. Magick is the expansion of the self in all directions.

8. The metaphysical level includes but transcends all other levels, and therefore to engage the metaphysical level is not to escape reality, but instead to engage with life in the deepest and most profound way possible.

9. The metaphysical level is therefore to engage every other level of experience, both objectively and absolutely. To perform the Great Work on a personal level (the microcosmic) is to address the future of humanity and the manifest universe (the macrocosmic).

10. The Great Work is first and foremost a personal engagement with the metaphysical, and secondly, the facilitation of the possibility of engagement with the metaphysical for every other human being.

11. Although the engagement of the metaphysical level of experience is never just a simple matter of a conscious decision on the part of the magician, the only sane and reasonable way to proceed is to practice magick habitually, study every available map or model of metaphysical development, and use that which most accurately describes and predicts personal experience, and reject that which does not.

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12. As reality has subjective, relative, surface features, each human being can best engage with each level of experience in a subjective and relative manner. In other words, there is a tradition or path most suited to the magician for engaging with each level.

13. The metaphysical level is a fundamental constituent of every human being, and enlightenment or the Great Work is a very real, very attainable direct experience available to everyone, right here and right now, provided they apply the necessary effort in engaging with the metaphysical process.

14. Everything said in this article is not the truth, but a metaphysic based on the direct personal experience of a fellow human being. It remains for each and every individual to corroborate or disprove everything said here by experiencing the truth for themselves, through dedicated magical practice.

ON THE PATH

Does Anyone Need an Exorcist?

A review of *The Real Ghostbuster: Memoirs of an Exorcist*, by David Devereux.

I picked up this book for £2.99 in a bargain bookshop. What stopped me putting it back down were the photographs in the middle: a *phurba* (a ceremonial Tibetan knife for slaying demons); and a revolver, with sigils engraved on the handle. Both were purportedly magical weapons used by the author out in the field. The adulatory references to Phil Hine in the 'Further Reading' section sealed my opinion. *This bloke's a chaos magician*, I thought.

He is indeed, and he's written a rollicking good read. I took the book on holiday and lapped it up. I've always fancied myself as an exorcist. I've even got a big black leather coat, just like Mr Devereux's on the cover, which I'd be happy to wear around to your place if—you know—if you had, like, a ghost that needed getting rid of, or something...

Devereux presents himself and his colleagues as a team of dedicated professionals. He's part of a company, Athanor Consulting, which provides exorcisms and related services to domestic and corporate clients. The book consists of cases that Devereux and his team were called to work upon. It was fascinating to see chaos magical techniques put to use against ghosts, goetic demons, and other spiritual nasties. (I especially enjoyed the chapter on 'goetia gone wrong'; although—shhhh—the general reader wasn't supposed to know *that's* what it was.)

So, is it possible to make a living as a freelance exorcist? Devereux gives the impression it is. But, reading between the lines, most of the 'clients' in the book are friends, or friends of friends. During the one case in which a client clearly paid for the service, the team was called back repeatedly when the spirit failed to be chased away. This made me wonder whether the book is Devereux's attempt to launch his career, rather than a reflective gaze back over it. But whatever—the guy seems to

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know magic. And if I ever get an exorcism gig, I'll be re-reading this to steal some ideas.

I Love Ted Andrews

Ted Andrews. Author of perhaps the *cringiest* books on magic ever written, including: *Dreamsong of the Eagle*, *The Sacred Power in Your Name*, *Animal-Wise Tarot*, and, of course: *The Ted Andrews Gift Pack*.

Do you have books on black magic that you hide when your mum comes around? Ted Andrews' books are mum-safe, but you better hide them if your magician friends drop by.

I can't remember now why I bought *Simplified Qabala Magic* (Andrews, 2004a). Perhaps it dates to the time I believed books on magic were worth reading, before I discovered that most are shameless cut-and-pastes from Crowley, or by people who—magically—have never put their trousers where their mouths are.

But *Simplified Qabala Magic* is awesome. No, really, it is. Because it gets you to *do* stuff. It describes the Tree of Life, then tells you how to travel up and down it. It explains what you might see there, and forewarns what to do if things get weird. The method is set out in simple steps. You don't even have to do that much: light some incense; visualise a colour; chant a couple of Hebrew phrases. After reading it, every Sunday afternoon I was hanging out in the Sephiroth, gaining experience of astral travel (without even knowing it), meeting all sorts of entities, bringing back all kinds of stuff.

Oddly, I'm not the only one. I passed the book onto a friend and it had the same impact on her. Then I ran into someone else who'd used the book years ago; it had amazed her too. All this, from a stick of incense and a bit of chanting?

The difference between a good book and a bad book on magic lies purely in the effect it has. If it doesn't make you get up and do stuff, it's worthless. Ted Andrews can write all the

woolly, new-age, Llewellyn mass-market shit that he likes— because for *Simplified Qabala Magic* alone, he's okay by me!

How to Meet and Work with Spirit Guides (Andrews, 2004b) isn't bad either.

Keeping Silence

To Know, To Will, To Dare, and *to publish the whole damn lot to the whole wide world!*

The magician's credo 'to keep silent' concerns more than simply not spilling the beans about what you're up to. Granted, there's the aspect of keeping silence that protects oneself from the prying eyes of the profane, but it's not such a concern these days. It may not be desirable for your boss to discover you hold audience with demons, but as long as you don't bring your hobby into work, he or she is unlikely to report you to the Inquisition.

There's also that facet of keeping silence that respects the privacy of colleagues. You may not care if others know what you're up to, but Frater Baphomet may prefer to safeguard his elderly mother in Whitstable from the details of his sex-magical activities.

So: I don't mind people knowing I'm a magician, and I'd never 'out' a fellow magician, then why am I blabbing about my doings in print?

Gentle reader, I've only two points to make. The first is this: you don't believe we're really telling you *everything*, do you?

The second is that 'silence' goes deeper than keeping schtum. I write about the things I do, and the results I attain from them, yet there's something else, always cloaked in silence, which I think is well-expressed by Julius Evola:

The wise man... is not a follower of systems, he does not recognise dogmas, and having penetrated opinions current among the people and being indifferent in the face of speculation, he leaves it to

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others... he does not take part in the verbal battles of those who maintain: 'This only is the truth,' he does not consider himself equal to others, nor superior, nor inferior. (Evola 1995, p. 40)

The aspect of 'keeping silence' I take most seriously is abstention from opinions on what any of this stuff means. What I think is 'true', what I think is 'really going on', what seems to me to 'lie behind' all of this – are matters on which I will try my hardest *not* to hazard a guess. And I don't mean simply in print, because 'keeping silence' is an internal dilemma, from which I'd prefer my ego to disengage.

It's this internal silence which, when broken, impedes progress worst of all.

The Problem With Psychology

I once had more respect than I do now for psychological models of magic: the approach that holds magic isn't 'out there' in the material world, but acts within the mind, with the mind creating the sense of change occurring outside.

This avoids the inconvenience of believing in spirits, healing powers, action at a distance, etc., but the problem with it is – well, have you actually examined your mind lately?

A little meditation practice quickly exposes the problems with this approach. For instance, recently I've been examining my 'sense of self', to see if the Buddhists' claim is true that I don't really have one.

I sat down and concentrated, and there 'I' was. Solid as a rock. Unmistakably me. Set in stone. *Those Buddhists are spouting crap*, I thought, but gave it a chance for a while. As I continued, my mind settled down and I became more focused, and the discursive voice in my head gently came to a stop.

To my surprise, when this faded out, so did my sense of 'I'. I was so shocked, it set the internal voice gabbling again, and – lo! – there 'I' was.

More recently, I was meditating on the quality of my immediate experience. For a fraction of a second I was catapulted into a non-dual universe, having realised 'I' was simply another element in that experience, not something set apart from it.

Both these examples show how a little introspection leads to some spooky conclusions. The mind is not a handy object on which you can pin rational explanations, not when experiences like these leave you stranded in a realisation that your experience of mind is itself simply part of the mind's 'contents'. Which leaves behind a tricky problem: if you and your thoughts are parts of the content of your mind, then who is thinking your thoughts – and who is thinking *you*?

Sigmund Freud supplies a good example of how psychological arguments can be used to debunk magic:

I discovered under the primitive scheme of the universe known as 'animism' the principle of the over estimation of the importance of psychical reality – the belief in 'the omnipotence of thoughts' – which lies at the root of magic... (Freud 1986, p. 251)

Yet at the same time he was writing this, Freud was composing papers on telepathy, a phenomenon that he accepted as 'real' – although he left instructions that his papers on this theme should not be published until he was dead, for fear of embarrassment. Furthermore, after he'd died some jottings were discovered in a notebook, which have intrigued me for years, suggesting he was arriving at a different conception of mind altogether:

Space may be the projection of the extension of the psychical apparatus. No other derivation is possible. Instead of Kant's *a priori* determinants of our

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psychical apparatus. Psyche is extended; knows nothing about it. (Freud 1974, p. 299)

Discussion of what this might mean could go on for pages, but it sounds to me as if Freud was beginning to speculate that mind itself is 'out there' all the time. Indeed, he seems to be implying that the impression of there being an 'out there' occurs to us only because that's where the mind already is.

That Freud set out to debunk magic with psychological arguments, yet arrived at a notion as counter-intuitive as this sums up the pointlessness of using psychology to create a more 'rational' take on magic.

Next time you feel inclined to resort to psychology, after something inconveniently bizarre has occurred in your magical practice, mull this over: *your mind is a spirit!*

Answer me this, Professor Dawkins...

I stumbled across this gem in an essay by Abraham Maslow, and it won't leave me alone:

If I wanted to be mischievous about it, I could go so far as to define science as a technique whereby non-creative people can create. This is by no means making fun of scientists. It's a wonderful thing it seems to me, for limited human beings, that they can be pressed into the service of great things even though they themselves are not great people. Science is a technique, social and institutionalized, whereby even unintelligent people can be useful in the advance of knowledge. (Maslow 1972, p. 58)

It's not a happy choice, is it, the one offered by the Zeitgeist between religious fundamentalism and the so-called New

Atheism?⁶¹ The slant that Maslow puts on science exposes how religion and science can boil down to the same attitude. *Pressed into the service of great things?* I'd prefer not to be 'pressed' into anything, thanks, but I'll make my own way to whatever, in a style of my own choosing.

Sometimes I've taken part in rituals intended to ensure some scientific aim or other, like a new drug for a particular disease, or breakthroughs to fill some specific gap in human knowledge. But I don't feel comfortable as a magician taking a position on the sidelines to cheer on science. People who concoct these rituals – I feel – might have more success if they took up science themselves, rather than magic.

The question I always wanted to ask Professor Richard Dawkins is this: *Where does science leave us?* I mean we non-numerate, non-scientifically trained, yet intelligent people? Can we be expected to sit by passively and allow scientists to dictate to us 'the truth'? No matter if science works, and improves our material lives no end; we're still alienated from the very discourse and techniques that produce these changes.

Magic offers a third way. I wouldn't claim that it suits everyone, but since abandoning the orthodox model of reason I've never felt happier.

No Boundary

A review of *No Boundary*, by Ken Wilber.

It's difficult to argue criticise a book that shows you how your life makes sense.

When I first read Freud, a lot of bizarre memories from childhood resurfaced. For instance: a distant recollection of my parents warning me not to undress in front of windows, or else

⁶¹ 'The New Atheism' was a label given by the press (predominantly by *WIRED* magazine) to a disparate group of scientists and academics who, in response to the rising profile of religious fundamentalism, decided to hit back by writing books that roughed up God. Surprisingly, they turned out to be best-sellers. These writers include Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens. See: www.newatheists.org.

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a bird would mistake my penis for a worm and peck it off. (Seriously. I'm not joking. Thank you Mum and Dad.)

No Boundary by Ken Wilber (1985) had a similar effect. Wilber's thesis, as ever, is how the habit of dualism becomes installed in our minds, its detrimental effect on happiness, and the techniques we can use to overcome it.

The techniques work on different levels of the psyche. First off, there's psychoanalysis and other psychotherapies, which work on the *persona* level to resolve neurotic conflicts between the conscious personality and its unconscious shadow. Next is the *centaur* level, where issues of duality between mind and body come into play: yoga, gestalt, Reichian therapy and rolfing are examples of techniques that address this level. Next up, it's the *transpersonal* level, where we negotiate dualistic illusions of self and other. To get up to this level you need to hit the meditation mat, read a bit of Jung, and maybe some kundalini yoga wouldn't go amiss. And finally there's unity consciousness, which—as I read it—seemed to necessitate shaving my head and eating celery. But I'm not sure I understood, and may need to read that chapter again.

When I think back over my life, I realise how superb this book is as a practical manual for self-development. In fact, I'm a textbook case.

After I abandoned my doctoral thesis and my girlfriend left me, life was crap and made no sense, so I went into therapy. (*Ping!* That's one step up the ladder.) At the same time, I became interested in Buddhism and meditation—but became disenchanted again when these only made me feel worse. (*Doh!* Down the snake...) I wasn't sure if therapy did much good either; I learnt a lot about why I did certain things, yet I didn't seem to change very much. However, at the end of it I had a good job, and a new girlfriend, so I supposed it must've helped. (*Yay!* Tick box number one: *persona*.) Next I found myself going to the gym regularly, which was most unlike me. (*Hmm.* Question mark against box number two: *centaur*.) But again, I

got stuck, started drinking too much, and poured all my energy into my job, even as it satisfied me less and less.

Finally, I'd had enough.

'I'm going to practise magic,' I told my girlfriend.

'Okay,' she said, warily.

The western occult tradition succeeded for me where Buddhism failed; or rather, it provided a successful route into the same techniques. Soon I was a hatha and kundalini yoga freak. (Tick box number two: *centaur*.) Regular meditation and magical practice was kicking off all manner of transcendent experiences (Tick box number three: *transpersonal*.) And now, I'm seriously considering dressing in orange and making celery an established dietary feature.

I'm taking the piss, of course. When I tick those boxes, I don't mean to imply I've mastered a level; simply that I'm doing regular work upon it. But I was blown away by *No Boundary*. Wilber holds nothing back; he explains what each level is, and how to proceed from one to the next. And he enabled me to see in vivid detail where I've gone wrong over the years.

Hillman versus Steiner on the Guardian Angel

The Soul's Code by James Hillman (1997) was cited by Patrick Harpur (2006) as an interesting source on the Holy Guardian Angel. I'm not so sure. Someone warned me that Hillman's book is boring. It's true. Luckily, it was Christmas, so a little verbosity didn't waste much of my time.

Hillman's theory follows Plato: we are born equipped with a 'daimon' (his preferred term for the HGA) whose role is to guide us toward realisation of our fate. The daimon's purpose is opaque to us, sensed—if at all—as an overpowering urge toward certain courses of action.

There's loads of great stuff here, Hillman subverting causality by insisting that lives are correctly read 'backwards', from final destination toward origin. He also cuts away reams of psychobabble by showing how the daimon shapes our

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childhood far more significantly than Mum or Dad. Yet although he evidently thinks he has left it behind, to me it seemed Hillman never quite shakes loose from psychology.

Faced with the problem of 'mediocrity', Hillman argues there is no such thing as a mediocre soul or mediocre daimon. Rather, what we call 'average' is itself a set of specific character traits, through which the daimon is still able to manifest. The clearest examples of this include 'great conventionalists', such as Billy Graham and Oliver North.

Oh. So it's *character* that determines how the daimon manifests. But in that case, what is character? And whence? The door creaks open, admitting again all the causative psychobabble that Hillman was supposed to exorcise with his daimon.

In my experience, the angel has nothing to do with me. It's not my 'good' bits. It knows me, but I do not know it. It is not dependent on me, because its magical abilities far exceed mine. For these reasons, I was more enchanted by the baroque speculations of Rudolf Steiner.

Guardian Angels (Steiner, 2007) is a collection of lectures in which Steiner makes reference to the invisible legions. For him, they are living creatures of spirit, mostly imperceptible, but with projects and agendas all their own, the execution of which shapes our existence.

According to Steiner, humans and the orders of angels are mixed up and implicated in one another. We inhabit different levels of existence, perceiving and exercising influence over different layers. (See Figure 17.)

Thus minerals are to humans as humans are to Principalities. Steiner describes these exalted beings as 'time spirits' – they are the guiding principle of particular epochs, creating those epochs indeed, by placing the right people in appropriate places. Powers, on the other hand, are so high that humans do not register on their scale of perception; destiny on a planetary level is their concern.

Wow. There's loads more of this in Steiner's writings. Unfortunately, I think I'm now addicted to Steiner, and I'm guessing his writings get even nuttier. What appeals to me most is how his model addresses concerns I've bumped against: the way the angel has access to levels where human minds blend into one another; that matter and spirit intertwine; that the earth of certain beings is the heaven of others. It seems to account for how the HGA can express itself through visions, thoughts, but also through nature, signs, synchronicities. Although Hillman's books may appeal to therapists, Steiner's approach seems to offer more to magicians.

	Human	Angel	Archangel	Principalities	Powers
Powers					
Principalities					
Archangels					
Angels					
Human					
Animal					
Plant					
Mineral					

Figure 17: Levels of Existence Occupied by Creatures in the Great Chain of Being.

The key thing lacking – in this collection at least – apart from some vague directions to ‘think spiritually’, is a praxis to activate the model.

Each night, according to Steiner, in sleep our guardian angel visits us, and we consult with it on how to best realise our destiny in the day that lies ahead. At least, this is what *should* happen. If we don't orient ourselves spiritually, the angel loses interest and will not come.

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I'm going to find a way to make sure mine drops by every night.

Practical Steiner

When I began reading *Guardian Angels* by Rudolph Steiner (2007), I was of the opinion that his ideas were akin to a packet of Revels: some good, some bad.

After the first chapter, where he propounds the psychic nature of the liver, I thought I had a packet composed solely of the orange and coffee variety. (In case you like those flavours, I should make it clear that I do not.)

However, by the end of the book, I was in toffee and peanut heaven. As absurd as his ideas appear when standing alone, when taken in context with all of his other ideas, it becomes apparent that Steiner doesn't offer alternative theories or explanations for various phenomena, but an entirely different world-view.

If you happen to have the pleasure of chewing on one of his chocolate-covered nuggets of goodness—I mean: coming across one of his more 'outlandish' ideas—don't dismiss it on the grounds that there's no evidence. After all, does the Qabala require evidence?

Steiner's world-view is very much like the Qabalistic Tree of Life: once you get your head around his cosmology, any experience or event can be attributed to a 'correct place' within its completely coherent schema. The idea of evidence is no longer applicable, because it is not an explanation but a map.

Take another look at the diagram on the previous page. I'm going to concentrate solely on Angels, Archangels and Principalities, to illustrate how Steiner's ideas hang together.

Within the text, Steiner equates the Angels with the astral realm (which includes dreaming), the Archangels with the etheric realm, and the Principalities with the realm of form. Now, if we remove the anthropomorphism and the idea that

these categories are ‘places’, we can consider this schema as a categorisation of experience.

The astral and etheric categories include experiences of thought and sensation, so these are pretty familiar. But perhaps this is not so in the case of the Principalities, who are related to the category for the experience of *form*. When a human is born, Steiner tells us, a Principality extends from its realm and into ours, in order to give the human a form or shape. When that human dies, the Principality withdraws itself, and this is illustrated in the decomposition of the body.

These three categories are ascribed further ideas: the Angels are also responsible for the point of view and personality; the Archangels for space and national identity; the principalities for Time and the nature of various epochs.

So far, then, the schema looks like this:

	Realm	Dimension	Identity
Principalities	<i>Form</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Epoch</i>
Archangels	<i>Etheric</i>	<i>Space</i>	<i>Nationality</i>
Angels	<i>Astral</i>	<i>Point of view</i>	<i>Personality</i>

Figure 18: The Attributes of Angels, Archangels and Principalities.

It has been suggested that Steiner is not very practical; he only encourages us to ‘think spiritually’. Yet within his lectures Steiner states that thoughts without action are ‘Ahrimanic’ (which is bad). He also states that unless we look for our Angel, unless we think of our Angel, it will not be able to work with us during our life. In other words: unless we see and think of the world in terms of this world-view, we will not experience these things.

Now, we all know that a belief is only true if it is experienced, so if we want to experience Steiner’s world, we need to actually experience these ideas.

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How do we do that?

Exercise 1

Memorise Steiner's schema, and then attribute all experiences you come across during the day to that schema. (Sounds familiar?)

Exercise 2

Act on the belief! Talk to your Angel; devise a ritual and summon an Archangel; use a Principality as an oracle. (I'm sure you can come up with some more!)

Beyond material ends, what else can be gained by working with Steiner's system? Steiner assures us that the more we think about the various 'beings', and the more we encounter them, the more we experience of their reality.

Do not confuse this with visiting various astral planes (although that could be used as a method); rather, if we decide to encounter a Principality, we are in fact encountering a different stratum of consciousness. The higher you go, the closer to the infinite you get.

Steiner's world-view is also a developmental model!

To back this up, I've added to the schema the various brain wave frequencies recorded during the different states of consciousness found in sleep, which—when experienced whilst maintaining awareness—also correspond to various mystical states of consciousness.

And—guess what? It all fits together completely congruently. In fact, if you're familiar with Timothy Leary's eight-circuit model of consciousness (see Wilson, 2004), note how the higher circuits match up not only with the brain waves, but with the 'dimension' column as well.

	Realm	Dimension	Identity	Consciousness	Brain Wave Frequency
Principalities	<i>Form</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Epoch</i>	<i>Deep sleep</i>	<i>Delta</i>
Archangels	<i>Etheric</i>	<i>Space</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Sleep</i>	<i>Theta</i>
Angels	<i>Astral</i>	<i>Point of view</i>	<i>Personality</i>	<i>Dreaming</i>	<i>Beta</i>

Figure 19: Attributes of Angels, Archangels and Principalities Mapped onto States of Consciousness.

However, I still refuse to experience my liver as psychic.

Meditation and Circuit 6

I’ve just finished *The Quiet Mind* by John E. Coleman (2004). The author was a CIA agent in South-east Asia, who, between spying missions, took time out to sample the local religions in a personal quest for enlightenment. Some of the book, first published in 1971, seems very dated, but it’s interesting as a personal survey of the different flavours of Buddhism and meditation. (Burmese vipassana wins out in the end.)

An incident at the end of chapter two also caught my attention. In Thailand, Coleman had been placed under a light hypnotic trance by a friend and was lying, relaxed, on the floor of a Buddhist temple. A young Thai naval officer came in, sat in the corner, and began to meditate. After a time, Coleman’s friend noticed that Coleman’s arms and legs were raising and lowering themselves. As an experienced hypnotist, this surprised him. Then the meditating naval officer opened his eyes and started to laugh; he confessed that he was testing out his telepathic abilities, and was transmitting mental suggestions to make Coleman move.

Coleman’s friend decided to experiment, and asked the meditator to elicit specific movements from Coleman—which he was able to do, one hundred percent. However, once the pair had woken Coleman and explained what had been happening,

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they were unable to recreate the effect. (Don't you just hate it when paranormal phenomena do that!)

What interested me was how the meditator spoke no English, and Coleman spoke hardly any Thai, yet the telepathic suggestions seemed to be hitting their mark regardless. This incident illustrates Tim Leary's description of the Sixth Circuit of Human Consciousness, which he names 'The Neuroelectric Circuit'.⁶² It's the circuit which, when activated, forms the basis of psychic powers and occult attainments. Yet it also has an evolutionary purpose, according to Leary. In its capacity as a 'universal translator' it will one day enable us to communicate with post-verbal alien intelligences.

Why go to language class when all you need to do is cultivate the fourth dhyana?

Trivial Psychic

Sometimes you catch your mind doing stuff you suspect it's doing all the time, but which it mostly gets away with.

I'd been keeping a dream journal. The entry recorded for 26th March, 2006, involved meeting an old friend – let's call him *Buckley* – who said: 'I spent my summer ending the life of a twenty-six year-old.'

On the morning of the 27th, I happened to hear a radio interview with a woman we'll call *Tina Buckley*. (Same surname as my friend.) She had cancer, but had been denied a drug that might have helped her by the National Health Service. She was worried she would die. 'I'm only twenty-six,' she said.

Whilst I was reporting this startling yet inconsequential coincidence to colleagues at work, I suddenly remembered what my friend Buckley used to do for a living.

He was a National Health Service accountant.

⁶² See <http://deoxy.org/8circuit.htm#c6>, and also: Robert Anton Wilson, *Prometheus Rising* (2004), chapter 12.

Trapped Inside A Novel

I picked up a novel, *Old School* by Tobias Wolff (2005), and couldn't put it down. Then, when I came to meditate, I discovered I was identified with the narrator of the novel. It seemed, as I meditated, that I was him.

I've encountered this before, with other books and films that make an impression—even a negative or a mediocre impression. It's odd how easily it happens and how shockingly complete it is; there's no difference at all between my everyday sense of me, and my sense of a character from a book. The only difference is that I'm not specifically like them—that's all.

This realisation was synchronistic, because truth, falsity and authenticity are Wolff's big preoccupations in the novel. He seems constantly affronted by the fact that literature cannot yield truth. (Tobe, mate: get over it!) The crux of the novel arrives when the narrator reads a short story that seems to describe his own character so completely he claims it as his own work and submits it to a competition.

This is plagiarism. Yet to him, it doesn't seem so, because the short story *is* his truth, as he sees it.

I think many of us are plagiarists of our own sense of self. We pretend authorship of our selfhood, but to put on a self is actually the act of a reader, not an author.

I never want to give up reading novels, though.

The Passive-Aggressive Usage of Sigils

I travelled north for some weekend occult shenanigans, and on the way up I discovered I was sitting in a tubular, moving pub rather than a train. The aisles were crammed. By 10am half the passengers were drunk.

On the long haul back, it was the burble of gadgets that annoyed me. A teenager behind rang her Dad, to ask him if the socket under her seat was suitable for her laptop.

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I pretended for a while that I wasn't irritated by tinny garage music blasting from the mobile phone of the guy behind me. It wasn't only me who was staring disapprovingly at him.

He glowered back at us.

At one point, another guy flung himself into the empty seat next to me. He was in some kind of private hell. Couldn't sit still. Couldn't concentrate on his football magazine. Was he going to be my friend or hit me? It could've gone either way, if his restlessness hadn't pulled him away elsewhere.

I couldn't deny any longer that the garage music wasn't tormenting me. Its owner was obviously waiting for someone to complain so he could kick off.

Time for a sigil.

I stated my intent and visualised an arbitrary glyph. I wondered how to charge it, but then the train passed under an engineering arc light, so bright I wondered if the eschaton had arrived, and the momentary shock was enough to pack the sigil on its way.

I sat back and waited.

After ten minutes, the train stopped and the crew changed. The new regime was tougher by far. An announcement warned people to turn down audible music. The new guard was a stern, ginger bloke named Roger, who came and stared at Mr. Garage, until he took his feet off the seats.

Finally, Mr Garage turned down his music.

At the same time, I found myself possessed by an urge to do some writing. Concentrating on that, my awareness of Mr. Garage at last decreased to zero.

I had to wonder, though, whether sigils can seduce their users into passive-aggressive forms of behaviour. Once, at a gig, I got to the front by projecting sigils onto the nape of everyone who stood in my way. Rather than dealing with Mr. Garage openly and honestly, had I retreated behind a barrier just as alienating as booze or gadgetry?

A big shout out to Roger, though. At last, a guard not afraid to do his duty. All hail, Roger! No wonder that train ran bang on time.

Fugitives From Therapy

Magic can be self-psychotherapy, but sometimes it's more dangerous to regard magic as 'psychology' than simply to accept the existence of faeries and demons.

Concerned and frustrated is how I feel, when people use magic specifically to increase their self-confidence, communication skills, to help them with anxiety attacks or addictions, or to equip them with skills useful in their job.

Before I started magic I was interested in psychoanalysis. When I found myself depressed with no job, no relationship, no proper place to live, then I decided to practise what I preached and found myself a therapist. By the time I finished I had a new girlfriend, a career, and a place to call home. I was no longer depressed, but working hard at my job like a model citizen.

Psychotherapy is excellent at fixing things that are broken in the ego. It's also good at adapting the individual to society: in other words, at teaching you how to secure those qualities and states our culture decrees you should have in order to declare yourself 'successful'.

Yes, you can attain these using magical techniques. Psychotherapy is a slow process, after all. Yet therapy hammers home the reasons why you have the habits you do. By the time you reach your goals, it'll have given you a rock-solid grounding in how you need to change. In the process, you might even start to glimpse the true cost of setting your sights on socially-sanctioned goals.

My therapist was a family man who took his work seriously. Steps I made towards starting a family of my own, or developing my career, were met with approval. (Perhaps because each time I received a pay rise he could put up his fee.) Less warmly received were those occasions when I talked about

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paranormal experiences, and how I thought reality was less stable than many people assumed.

Toward the end of my therapy, after a session in which I'd talked about psychokinetic phenomena that I'd witnessed as a teenager dabbling with the Ouija board, I went back to my girlfriend's flat. The place was in darkness when I arrived. I fumbled down the pitch-black hallway to the light switch, and was surprised when flicking it had no effect.

My therapist had spent the hour encouraging me to entertain the notion that those teenage paranormal experiences had been hysteria or suggestion. Even so, as I rummaged in the fuse box, the darkness was starting to feel like a spooky synchronicity I could've done without.

No fuses were blown. I went to the kitchen and lit candles, which I started to distribute throughout the flat. After I'd placed one in every room, I noticed a whirring from the freezer in the kitchen. I tried the light switch and discovered that the power was back.

Sighing, I blew out the candles and packed them away for the next power-cut. Then I sat in the lounge, congratulating myself on not losing my cool. *So much for the paranormal. It's just coincidence*, I was thinking—when an eerie, mocking crash echoed throughout the flat and again, all the lights went out.

I lost the plot and panicked.

My point, though, is that there's this thing called 'consensus reality', and psychotherapy is an excellent tool for delivering goals in accordance with it. Magic, on the other hand, fiddles about with reality something rotten. Using magic to attain consensus-oriented goals is like using quantum physics to change a light bulb.

Render unto the therapist that which is therapy.

For the stuff beyond, there's magic.

Two ‘Side-Effects’ of Magic

Every magical act reaches out to overcome the illusion of duality. From the false separation between self and other comes desire, but by expressing desireless intention, in magic, we close the illusory rift.

This view casts light on two ‘side-effects’ of magic. The first is when magic obtains a result, but not the one expected, which every magician will experience at some point. The traditional lesson derived from this is: ‘be careful what you ask for’.

I performed a rite recently for a woman in her mid-eighties who had suffered a stroke. I wasn’t asking for a miracle, only that she would recover enough to leave hospital and face at home whatever fate had left to throw at her. A few days later, she caught a super-bug from the hospital—one of those drug-resistant, life-threatening viruses rife inside British medical establishments. (I’d overlooked the necessity of adding that she should come out with nothing worse than when she went in.) Yet despite this, and a slight loss of mobility, she made a brilliant recovery. She was discharged so soon her family hadn’t had time to make necessary adaptations to her house.

You get what you ask for, then, but in this case with complications. What seemed for the best turned out not to be all good. Coming out of hospital quickly has its drawbacks, as the family are currently discovering.

However, the lesson shouldn’t be: ‘be careful what you ask for’. Defining a more specific intention buys us deeper into the illusion that—if only I talk to it properly—a universe exists ‘outside’ to supply my desires. But the universe just is, and I am part of it.

One day I won’t need magic, because I’ll have realised this. I’ll throw away my books and get on with it—like Prospero at the end of *The Tempest*, after he had brought harmony to all the warring factions on his island.

A while back, I decided that to bring my Holy Guardian Angel working to a conclusion by learning ‘The Ritual of the

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Bornless One' by heart and performing it daily. In the event, I read the ritual once from a book. I did it badly, yet it had an impact; I obtained union with my angel the next day.

This side-effect of magic I'll call: 'when intention is stronger than effort'. In this instance, I didn't *need* to learn and perform the ritual more than once. Sometimes this effect takes the form of a result obtained from merely *deciding* to do a ritual, rather than actually performing anything.

I fool myself repeatedly that waving my wand and shouting at the world is a means of manifesting change. It's only true because of the stage of development I'm at. But those occasions when intention beats effort demonstrate that changes in myself and in the world actually amount to the very same thing.

Integration Failure

The ordinary course of spiritual development includes access to states that you're not quite ready for, in the sense that you don't yet fully understand their nature. Sometimes an experience is so far beyond the ordinary that you fail to make sense of it. You cannot integrate it into your normal conscious mind.

Integration failure takes various forms, some of them extreme. Insanity is the most unlucky. From what I've seen, it results from a failure of boundaries. The paraphernalia of ceremonial magic is there to create a self-contained environment for experiences. Things that would've sent me screaming from the room, if they'd popped up after dinner whilst I was watching television, seem far more manageable inside a ritual circle.

Where integration failure leads to madness, you might also find a practitioner who is prone to rule-bending, or to following rules too dogmatically; both can be an indication of an inner imbalance or rigidity. The added strain of an unusual experience brings the whole edifice crashing down.

Religion is the second-worst consequence. Some people will run from a weird experience to the nearest religion for support;

or perhaps go off on another kind of reality-deadening bender, such as drugs or booze.

Yet my main concern is with those failures of integration that are more pernicious, because they're subtle. The most brutal is simply forgetting—about which there's not a lot that can be done, except to acknowledge that it has happened, and to accept that the reason is we've not successfully processed the experience.

Any occurrence of boredom in magical work should also be treated with caution. Magic is the antithesis and antidote to boredom. Without exception, the boredom is functioning to mask some other emotion. If you dig under boredom deep enough, you might find terror, inadequacy, shocked incomprehension. Whatever it is, it won't be dull.

Disappointment is similar, but even more insidious. I've often come back feeling empty-handed. 'Is that it?' I start to wonder. Each of us has characteristic ways of failing to integrate; this creeping disappointment is mine. Attaining something I've read about in ancient mystical texts, I think to myself: 'Wow. It's just as they said.' But then my ego starts to feel insulted that the revelation of universal interconnected consciousness hasn't left me feeling—erm...—very *special*.

Integration failure sometimes assumes the flip-side of this: 'Me? Attain the "Formless Realms"? No, I don't think it could've been that...' Once again, the ego spoils a perfectly authentic experience. Whenever it can't incorporate something, it will fling, squash, bury, distort or alter it, or relentlessly pick away—anything, to diminish the reality and intensity.

When you discover this happening, don't take it hard. Failure to integrate indicates the threshold of growth. These so-called 'failures' are actually partial successes.

Rudolf Steiner took the view that the role of human beings is to manifest on the material plane what we gain from seeing into higher worlds (Steiner, 1947). This is what 'integration' means: if you glimpse the boundless compassion of the Godhead, only when you bring down some of that divine jism to share through

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your thoughts and actions can it be said that you've really 'got it'.

It's the same with all mystical attainment. Until your waking ego accommodates it, regardless of the fact that temporary renunciation of the ego may be necessary to re-visit certain states, then it can't be said the state is fully integrated and attained. A step towards this is an authentic recognition of failure, in all its partial, subtle and pernicious forms. Feeling disappointed, bored or forgetful is doubtlessly preferable to insanity or religion, yet these subtler forms of integration failure are just as undermining, and will thin out the herd of seekers on the path just as ruthlessly.

How Bloody Psychic Am I?

At about 6pm on the evening of February 12th, I was ending my meditation session when I heard a woman say: 'I'm done! I'm done!'

She sounded relieved. Happy, almost. The voice was so clear it startled me. *Someone has died*, I thought, but mentioned it to no one, because my girlfriend's mother had recently been seriously ill. But I made a note in my diary.

The next day at work it was announced that a senior member of staff had died at around ten, the previous evening. *That must be it*, I thought, even though this person was male and he'd been alive when I heard the voice. I reminded myself of Steiner's claim that the world of the dead is wildly different from our own (Steiner, 1918). *For all I know, a woman's voice might indicate a man*, I thought.

Around this time, a letter arrived at our building with no apartment number, addressed to *Mrs. G*. For several days it lay in the hallway uncollected. There was no-one named G in our building. There was no return address, so I opened the envelope to find out who the sender was.

Mrs G—it turned out—was the sister of M, the elderly woman who lived below me. The letter was a note of

condolence. It was only by this accidental route that I discovered my neighbour, M, had died.

I returned the letter to the sender, inserting an apology for having opened it, but explaining that Mrs G was not at this address.

I'll probably never know the date and time at which M died. I'd known she was ill and had spoken with her, offering assistance, but she'd never taken up my offer. I'd always taken care to make as little noise as possible in the room where I meditate, conscious that it was directly above her bedroom.

The Non-Duality Blues

A Review of *The Book of One: The Spiritual Path of Advaita*, by Dennis Waite.

Advaita is Sanskrit for 'not two'. The essence of its teaching is that there are not 'two things': no observer and observed; no you and me; no division in reality between anything, but a universal seamlessness that many followers of Advaita prefer to call *Consciousness* or *Self*.

Advaita is a particular branch of Hinduism, but its tenets reappear throughout the eastern religions and in almost all mystical traditions. Take any diagram from the books of Ken Wilber, and I bet it'll have its top slot reserved for 'non-duality'. Indeed, the Buddhist notion of enlightenment is fundamentally an arrival at a non-dual understanding of reality.

I'd recommend this book, not because it's a pleasant read but because it covers a lot of ground. Waite opens by demonstrating how the notion of 'I' has no basis in body, mind or ego, and then guides us gently through concepts such as karma and the three gunas, before introducing various forms of yoga and meditation and their role in Advaita. There are some nice sections on epistemology and the four states of consciousness, yet toward the end we've been lured into a very weird place, entertaining the notion that we were never born and will not die, because Consciousness is our true nature, which is not an

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object or an idea inside this universe. (This stuff could keep a science fiction writer busy for years.)

I had my own non-dual realisation recently. I've not been the same since. The grand finale was a vision of a dark doorway in a hot, desert country. I was there to interview 'primal awareness', who was waiting inside. Suddenly I realised that 'primal awareness' and I were the same thing. There was no need to do an interview; I would only be interviewing myself. Realising I had nothing to do and nowhere to go, there was huge bliss and hilarity. It was blindingly obvious that awareness had nothing to do with 'me', because 'all this' was already 'it'.

Non-duality was simultaneously the most mind-shattering and stupidly mundane realisation at which I'd ever arrived. I knew, in that moment, that everything in the universe was conscious and whole; I understood exactly how to do nothing, in a way that wasn't even trying to do nothing. Appallingly, this knowledge faded; it feels now as if it had been a dream, although at the time I'd never been more awake. But this is hardly surprising, because in realising non-duality the mind brushes against something that's not inside the universe. It's like suddenly being able to see, whilst watching a film, the blank surface onto which the image is projected; you can see the image and the 'ground' that sustains it.

You can't *be* non-dual. You can't *experience* non-duality. (What's it an experience *of*, for fuck's sake? That would imply there's a 'you' and an 'it'.) But non-duality has an effect on you, as you bring the realisation back and integrate it with your daily state of consciousness.

Non-duality has definitely sent me a bit funny. I've made major changes to my life since I had my realisation. But I've not turned as funny as I might have, judging from Waite's account of 'Direct Path' teachings. This is a modern flavour of Advaita, whose adherents assert that we're already enlightened, and so there's nothing we need to do. Actually, they say there is no

enlightenment; no one ever became anything other than what they already are and always will be:

People... should simply 'assume' that they are the Self... and carry on with their normal lives, abandoning all further seeking as fruitless. They will then gradually relax into the full realisation of their true nature (or not); nothing matters... (Waite 2003, p. 199)

First off: excuse me, but doesn't 'assuming you are the Self' constitute what we are supposedly avoiding: i.e. a practice? Secondly, I cannot think of a practice (even though it claims it isn't one—very sneaky) better designed to produce grossly inflated egos and crazed counter-initiates.

Advaita offers much regarding the realisation of non-duality, and helps us attempt to understand the nature of these realisations. But in terms of practice and the integration of these experiences, I'm far more dubious, especially where the 'Direct Path' teachings are concerned.

The Angels of the Quarters

My mother slept with one of the Beatles. She wasn't sure which, but as I grew up and people remarked on my resemblance to John Lennon, it wasn't really a mystery.

She didn't tell me until I was much older. Being Lennon's son, I was part of an artistic and cultural elite. Unfortunately, I was never raised in a context that realised my potential. That's why I've never found a comfortable role in life.

A few years ago I met the actor Patrick Stewart. He was investigating the landscape of his childhood. He'd climbed each hill, had stood on the roof of each factory, and had looked from the window of every house in his village. He'd even explored the mines under the hills.

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He took my right hand in his left hand. In his right hand, he took the hand of a black woman. She wore a business suit and had struggled against the circumstances of her upbringing, gaining impressive achievements and lots of money.

Before him, Stewart positioned a colleague from my workplace: a typical techie, intelligent and practical, expert at what he does, but focused exclusively on following procedures. Behind him, Stewart placed his wife, whom he'd known since childhood. Their bond of love was very strong. She would pick him up whenever he was down or ill.

The four of us pulled Stewart in all directions, around the floor of an abandoned factory. This went on for some time, until I realised that Stewart was no longer a passive participant, but had found a way of guiding us.

Of course, this was all a dream. But it had supplied me with useful information about the angels of the quarters, who feature (for instance) in 'The Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram' (Regardie 2003, p. 53-4): Raphael, the angel of Air, stands before us in the East; Michael, Fire, to the right; Gabriel, Water, behind; and Uriel, Earth, to the left.

Interesting, this idea that the angels might manifest as human characteristics, and that self-realisation involves positioning oneself centrally, relative to these forces. Interesting, too, that I was Uriel to Patrick Stewart; and that anyone might fulfil the role of one of these forces to someone else.

There's also an implication that an angel may manifest in a way not dissimilar from the magician's ego. Which angel are you most like: the techie; the high-achiever; the nurturer; the dreamer? It might be worth doing some work to gain some distance from this entity, in order to reinstate balance.

An Encounter With Sophia

At 2.43am I woke and went downstairs. When I'd finished writing in my notebook dawn was glimmering and the birds had started to twitter. The following felt like the kind of vision

which, by exposing the machinery of the universe, changes you forever:

We're near a zone where things happen that defy the usual laws of reality. We are in a room, in a military base on the edge of the zone. Someone runs in with a warning. To protect ourselves we pull down shutters on the doors and windows. But we do not move quickly enough, and there is one shutter forgotten on a small side-door. Before we pull it down, a woman enters whom we do not know.

She is short with dark hair, in her thirties. She has no military uniform, so we assume she is an administrator at the base. We take no notice once she is inside, supposing she is in the same situation as the rest of us. The question on our minds is how long we must remain inside until someone sounds the all-clear and allows us home.

Time passes, and the woman with dark hair begins to issue orders to the rest of us: to fetch and carry certain objects; to allow her to sit in a chair already occupied.

'Who the fuck are you?' someone asks.

She takes the challenge good-naturedly, with a smile that suggests she has had to answer this question a million times.

'You do not understand,' she explains, 'but you must do what I say, because your existence depends upon me. You cannot appreciate it yet, but conditions in the zone have changed and the area in which we stand is subject to physical laws incompatible with human existence. You would cease to exist were it not for my mind, which is supporting you. My will ensures the particles of your bodies are granted a space in which you may endure. If I withdraw my intention then you die.'

'I'm going to make a cup of tea,' I sigh.

'You cannot,' she tells me. 'You do not comprehend how dangerous to your existence that would be. At least six conditions would conspire to cause instant death, were you to turn on the tap.'

'You're lying.'

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‘Try it. You won’t live long enough to acknowledge your error.’

To demonstrate, she withdraws attention from one of our group and he vanishes. She explains she chose him because he was boring. Later, we realise he was lucky. She could easily have given him a painful death; she has the power to re-organise bodies into painful shapes that cannot sustain life.

She wants sex. She demands it all the time, and threatens that we will be ended if we don’t oblige.

‘You need *something*, then,’ I remark.

‘Sex is what humans want,’ she says. ‘While I manifest through a human body, I have that need too. Except I have the power to indulge it whenever I want. So why shouldn’t I?’

She reads our every thought. She sustains our thinking also, so she can see all that occurs inside our minds. Without her we wouldn’t think at all. She sustains the background conditions of all we are.

Occasionally, one of us will think something, and she’ll start a game in which we must all participate, because that stray thought was unique for her, revealing a facet of human experience she hadn’t encountered and is interested to explore.

Someone has been thinking about mind-reading, so she stages a game show in which we must try to read each others’ minds.

‘What mental message would you most like to send to another person?’ she asks.

Sir Jimmy Saville is a member of our group. I project my thoughts at Jimmy. I am thinking that—more than anything—I would like to send Jimmy a message asking him to make my dreams come true and fix it for me to escape from this place.

She picks up my thought and demands I explain why Jimmy is so important.

‘Because he grants wishes.’

‘This is not communication,’ she says. ‘You are simply asking him to realise your desires.’

'As you do for us, in reality and at every moment,' I point out.

It's impossible to suppress thoughts of hatred against her, thoughts of plots to kill her. Imagine what we're going through: one person controls reality, and there's no choice but to obey, because her will is synonymous with the universe.

She seems to us mad. She manifests as human, but her desires and motivation are not comprehensible. If she knows how much I hate and despise her, will she end me? Of course, she knows already. She must understand that human beings cannot control their thoughts. She has said nothing, but seems to take my hatred with good grace.

'You're not human, yet it seems you need something,' I remark, 'because of the way you allow us to exist. You must need to be entertained, otherwise this would not go on. Or maybe you cannot bear to be alone.'

If I can ascertain what she needs, then I will have realised her weakness. And if she has a weakness, maybe I can exploit it and escape. But surely, she will kill me for these thoughts?

'I *will* kill you,' she says out loud, 'if you persist with that line of inquiry.'

She hasn't done so yet. She has merely threatened me. But surely, if there was ever a sufficient reason for killing me, this would be it. For certain, she knows now I am planning to kill her. But perhaps I'm not a threat to her. Yet in that case why did she threaten me?

By this point she has ended several members of our group, for offences far less trivial than mine. She described their actions as 'offences', but I doubt they really offended her. I suspect that she simply grew bored of those people.

I realise there is no sense in limiting my thoughts in order to appease her. She knows all, and can do anything. She can end me when she chooses. But during each instant she delays I learn more. For example, the fact that she allows me to think about her weaknesses, and of how I might kill her, demonstrates that either I am not a threat, or that she has other reasons for not

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killing me. And it must not be forgotten how she threatened me, which means that she has reasons for wanting me to think that she will end me.

Either she cannot end me, or for some reason she *wants* to put my mind on the track of thoughts about killing her or escaping.

She loves me!

That's the only logical conclusion I can arrive at.

I put it to her directly. There's no sense keeping anything inside.

She denies it.

'Then kill me,' I challenge her. 'Come on.'

She says she won't.

'You *can't*.'

Certainly, she can kill the others, but evidently not me. Once again, only by pushing my thoughts as far as they will go am I learning anything useful about this situation.

Maybe the others are not real, but only illusions she has created. In which case my predicament is altogether different. She would not, then, be omnipotent: this situation would be merely an illusion, and her power would not be the power of life and death, but the power of delusion.

Yet I'm inclined to believe that the others are real. They certainly seem so. In which case, I am exceptional in some way, because she will not or cannot kill me, even though I plot her death.

I constantly remind myself that she only appears to be human. There is another being hidden behind this appearance, which may have needs or motivations beyond my comprehension. Above all else, it appears to need to be entertained – or some need similar to this, at least.

By not killing me, I am gaining power. I know that within the bounds of the world she has created, I can do or think anything. I can say anything, without fear of punishment. This gives me scope for experimentation without fear of reprisal. I can extend my knowledge further.

I am not a being like her, but I have more power than the others in the group. I am a step closer than they to being the kind of being that she is. But then I realise that even if I were given the chance to kill her, I wouldn't do it.

Because *I love her*.

Is this what makes me different from the others?

Is it because I am her lover that she loves me in return and will not act against me?

Does love affect the world in such a way that it determines life, death, fate, and everything in between? But we know that love changes and dies. Reality, on the other hand, is not supposed to fade; it's what stays in place, even after we've gone. But now *she* is my reality, and by loving her, and through her loving me, we participate in something that exceeds merely one human being loving another. Indeed, our love is an action that creates and destroys worlds.

However, another possibility haunts me: that all is indeed as it seems. She is omnipotent and will kill me when she likes. In which case, it is her need for entertainment which is uppermost. And she has refrained from killing me so far simply because my continued existence generates all these thoughts, these knots of meaning, which she finds more entertaining than having me cower in fear.

In that case, all my knowledge is illusory: a bubble, created through her desire for entertainment. And even if this desire in her is truly a weakness, I haven't found my way behind it yet. I cannot comprehend it.

Yet something tells me this is not the case. There must be a possibility of truth within this situation and I am on its trail. But it's only an intuition.

Art and Magic

I once attended a magical meeting where someone presented a ritual based on the idiom 'putting your fingers in all the pies'. A few months afterwards I went to an artistic happening, where a

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performance artist presented a piece on the very same theme, involving exactly the same activity. The first occasion was supposedly 'magic', the second 'art', yet they were identical.

First off, I wasn't impressed by either as a piece of work in its own right. Magic and art based on 'turns of phrase' tend to be contrived and shallow. They give me the feeling I get whenever I encounter a pun: it feels clever for half a second, but is just as likely to make me groan with irritation as it is to make me laugh. I suspect I'm not unique in this.

In my own approach to rituals I'm wary of anything that feels as if it's straying into art. It's difficult to put a finger on, and it's a fine line, but if I sense anything in my ritual is an expression of an idea or theme, rather than a means for creating an experience, then I'll chuck it out.

When magic loses itself in art the result is over-elaborate or static rituals, where the magical intent is lost behind the trappings of a performance. Most likely, it's the lack of a genuine intent that leads to this sorry state of affairs.

When art strays into magic and regards its own forms and processes not as media for expression, but as forces operative upon the world, then you tend toward the kind of writing, drawing and imagining commonly found in the sketchbooks of people held in psychiatric institutions. Most art of this type is fantastically dull. It takes a genius, like William Blake, to raise sublime art from a magical intention.

Magicians caught on the job in public places commonly excuse their behaviour like this: 'Oh, it's just an art project,' they say, or: 'It's okay, we're performance artists.' This highlights how, in art, there is always a respectable *deniability*; it's not supposed to be mistaken for something 'real'. The skill of the artist lies in playing objectivity and subjectivity against each other, committing himself or herself to neither. The skill of the magician, however, lies in collapsing the difference between the two as thoroughly as possible.

In other words, although they are closely related, art makes bad magic and magic makes bad art.

Nothing gives me more pleasure than brilliant writing with the capacity to alter my perception. I wouldn't want to argue we should keep art and magic totally apart. A well-written invocation will tend to be more effective than one that isn't, no matter how sincere the intent of the poorly-written version. Yet I'm sceptical of magicians like Alan Moore, who sometimes seems to argue that the magical act and the creation of art are synonymous.⁶³ This introduces a notion of skill, craftsmanship and agency that is non-intrinsic to magic. Instead, magic is at its most powerful when experience collapses into desireless non-doing. Art requires an artist, but the main obstacle to magic is the magician.

The Book of the Law

I first read *The Book of the Law* (Crowley, 1976) over ten years ago. I must confess, at the time it didn't really mean much to me.

Around this time I began experimenting with magical technique—what works and what doesn't, and what might work better. I eventually came to know, through experience, what state of mind engendered the greatest magical result (which is usually typified by sigilisation). It was in an attempt at finding adequate words for this state that a quotation from *The Book of the Law* floated into my noggin:

For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered
from the lust of result, is every way perfect. (*BOL* I:
44)

I didn't think that I could top that, although I still couldn't bring myself to quote from *The Book of Law*.

Several years later, and I'm strolling through St James' Park in London when I suddenly enter a magical state of mind.

⁶³ See, for instance, the recent documentary on Moore: *The Mindscape Of Alan Moore* (Vylenz, 2006).

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Although reality looked, smelt, sounded and felt the way it always did, there was no difference between any one thing and any other. This is very hard to explain. Although various things were of different dimensions, it was as though they were all the same size (and it was the same case with other differences, such as colours, sounds, etc.).

‘No difference between any one thing and any other’. Now, where have I heard that before?

Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing; for thereby there cometh hurt. (*BOL* I: 22)

Well, I never. And here’s me thinking that was just some kind of cheesy moral instruction.

The startling thing is that these occurrences have increased in proportion to my magical development. Every state of consciousness, every magical effect, every revelation gained from the practice of magic itself, I have found, plainly stated (and usually in the most beautiful prose) in *The Book of Law*. Yet I rarely come across a magician who has actually read it.

If you’re serious about magic, and you’ve never read *The Book of Law*, consider doing so. It doesn’t make you a Thelemite, or a religious nut, to study what I have come to consider, through experience, the greatest magical text in existence.

The Secret of Ice Magic?

I first read of the ‘Ice War’ on the internet. The war occurred between various members of the order for serious chaos magicians: The Illuminates of Thanateros (IOT). Peter Carroll, godfather of chaos magic and founding member of the IOT, sums up his view on the war:

Sometime in '89 Frater U.D. formed an alliance with a secretive Germanic martial arts group and attempted to lead sections of the [IOT] ... The more I heard, the worse it sounded. Eventually I publicly accused Frater U.D. of abusing his position and of membership of an ultra right-wing control cult with a seriously nasty agenda. All hell broke loose...

The ice magick philosophy appeared to be a grim and paranoid Thulean atavism which might have had ghastly consequences if Frater U.D. had spread it through the fabric of western esoterics. (Cited in Run, 1996)

After a little investigation, I discovered that Frater U.D. had met a man known as Helmut, who could apparently do amazing magical feats with his *chi*. So impressed was Frater U.D. that he asked Helmut to be his teacher. Other members of the IOT followed, and by all accounts set up residence in Helmut's 'commune', where the master dispensed his teachings.

At this point, being a little wet behind the ears, Helmut's alleged powers piqued my interest (probably just like the IOT defectors). What could this man do that could so easily dwarf the cream of Western occult practice? Where can we learn these techniques, and just what is 'Ice Magic'?

Helmut claims to have learnt his craft from a Sami sorcerer in the Finnish part of Lapland, and anecdotes tell of how he could cause someone's nose to bleed by waving his hand, or swell his arm to twice its ordinary size. Frater U.D. says he coined the term 'Ice Magic' (with Helmut's consent) to describe the practice that furnishes these powers.

After digging around on a few discussion forums, I found a thread concerned with the actual techniques of 'Ice Magic', where it was claimed (I have no idea if this is true or not) that a preparatory practice requires the aspirant to lie down in a forest, without moving, for at least twelve hours. Sometime

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during this ordeal the practitioner will pass a threshold, which will lead to various abilities, such as being able to raise the internal temperature of the body at will.

I must here point out something I find very interesting about chasing powers such as these, especially when you're a magician. If we believe all of the hearsay, and it really is possible to achieve such powers, why would you want to? How does waving your hand and causing a nose to bleed compare to being able to kill someone without touching him or her? Yet you can do the latter (and the former for that matter) with the very first magical technique most novices encounter: sigils.

However, finding an actual definition of 'Ice Magic' proved difficult, but with rumours of a book by Frater U.D. in the pipeline, I thought it wouldn't be too long before I received a definitive answer straight from the horse's mouth.

Spill the beans

That was over eight years ago, and I still don't have my damn book. However, a new interview with Frater U.D. was recently published. Is my wait finally over?

Frater U.D explains that the term 'Ice Magic' is:

...a handy label to put onto this highly complex approach which involved such varied crafts as body control, command over motor functions and the essence of interlocution via the basic tenets of metabolism, ranging to fundamental analysis and mastery of social interaction, societal processes, the determining framework of politics, and lots more.
(U.:D.: & Rietti, 2006)

Eh? That Sami sorcerer had his fingers in a lot of pies. So, why the prefix *'Ice'*?

The 'ice' in Ice Magic is no element as Empedocles might have defined it, nor a contrary to or a complimentary part of 'fire'. Neither does it define the solid state of water; it withdraws itself by this very non-existence from any attempt at polarisation, which in terms of functionality means comparison and contrast. Seeing that magic is defined, as I have pointed out, as doing the impossible, it cannot by its very definition exist. And as the 'ice' in question, by the same warrant, does not exist either, the term Ice Magic, while superficially seeming to constitute a tautology, in point of fact defines and simultaneously calibrates that same conflict-engagement suggested by the attack on reality metaphor.

To be more clear on this point, I'm afraid I'd have to lecture you for an hour or two... (U.D. & Rietti, 2006)

For the love of God, NOOO!

Despite the fact the interview covers eleven pages, Frater U.D. fails to tell us what Ice Magic is, let alone how to do it.

He does however go on to say, at great length, that the 'Ice War' was nothing more than a paranoid delusion in the minds of the British members of the IOT, who were having a flashback to the Blitz.

Dad's Army

Recently, whilst investigating Hitler's involvement with the occult, I came across the work of an amateur astronomer, called Hans Hörbiger (Wikipedia, 2008). In 1913, Hans published *Glazial Kosmologie*, in which he claimed that celestial bodies are in fact made of ice, or at least covered in a thick layer of it. The book goes on to say that the earth frequently attracts smaller planets (or blocks of ice) such as the moon (the current

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moon is apparently the sixth one the earth has had) and that many hitherto 'mythological' catastrophes actually occurred as a result of these bodies hitting the earth.

Remarkably, Hörbiger's theory was popular for a brief period during his lifetime, but was largely considered bonkers by the time of his death in 1931.

Das Ist Gut, Ja?

Himmler, however, thought Hörbiger's ice theory was by the far the best thing he'd ever heard, and went out of his way to revive scientific interest in it by looking for corroborating evidence. He also elaborated on the theory in the hope that scientific proof for Hörbiger's theory would lend validity to his Ariosophic beliefs.

The main thrust of Himmler's 'scientific theory' was that the Aryan civilisation (the survivors of which now reside in a hole near Antarctica) existed at a time when the earth was a barren, frozen wasteland; indeed, this was considered an Aryan paradise, whereas the common conception of Eden (i.e. hot, tropical, lots of flora and fauna) is only a paradise if you are of polluted or inferior stock. A dash of Nazi logic later, and the theory takes a further demented turn: if the Aryans have superhuman powers, and the Aryans live in a frozen, barren wasteland, therefore the frozen, barren wasteland must be responsible for the Aryans' powers.

I don't know about you, but I'm off to stick my head in the freezer.

Surely Not

I can't be one hundred percent sure I'm not having a flashback to the Blitz here, but I can see startling similarities between Himmler's ice theory and Helmut / Frater U.D.'s ice magic. Both involve 'superhuman powers', and both involve living in a cold environment. And if the practice detailed above is accurate,

ice magic actually advocates exposure for a prolonged period of time to the cold.

But then, if we accept that ice magic and the Nazi ice theory are one and the same, we would have to accept (on the basis of the many witnesses that claim to have observed Helmut's powers) that the ice theory is actually valid.

Don't Call Me Shirley

The fact of the matter is that Helmut was practising *internal martial arts*. This is something that everyone seems to overlook when they attempt to fathom what ice magic actually involves. If you want to develop abilities that many would consider 'superhuman', such as Helmut's, you can take up one of the following martial arts: Tai Chi, Ba Gua or Hsing Yi. I know from experience that Hsing Yi requires the practice of remaining stationary (usually stood up, but various other chi-building practices offer variations, such as lying down) for prolonged periods of time. Some Hsing Yi schools will not teach the student any movements or forms until they have practised standing (called *wu chi*) for a minimum of two years, as this is essential to building the required 'power' with which Hsing Yi works.

Given the choice of either practising an internal martial art at a reputed school inside a warm building, or living in a commune where an ego maniac bosses me around in the freezing cold, it doesn't take a genius to work out I'd choose the former. And if I did want to be an internal martial artist, I certainly wouldn't look to a magician to teach me. Especially one who talks a lot but doesn't actually say anything.

An Open Letter to the Magical Community

With the advent of the communications age and the cult of the individual, magic can no longer be defined by any one specific religion, morality, lineage, region, political agenda or aesthetic.

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As a result of this, and for the first time in history, Western magicians, shamans, pagans, Buddhists, Voudonists, Naths, alchemists, sufis, Thelemites, Wiccans, yogis, Qabalists, heathens, rune magicians, chaotes, and every other magical denomination, now stand side by side as a magical community.

Not only has this community never existed before, but popular interest in the occult, and so the magical community itself, is growing exponentially. Speculation abounds as to why this might be, but there is no doubting this is a very exciting time to be a magician. This has inevitably led some magicians to conclude that the magical community is going to save the world and create heaven on earth.

Unfortunately, although a number of individuals within the magical community may share certain aspects of magical culture, such as a tradition or group affiliation, the magical community itself cannot be united by one single cause or aim, no matter how altruistic.

This is the nature of diversity and, in my opinion, something to be celebrated. It's a shame diversity often leads to conflict. The occult scene is dogged by incessant bickering and political posturing, which rarely benefits anyone involved. After finding myself embroiled in one too many pointless debates, I came to the conclusion that a focus on personal creative output is far more rewarding. However, I very much care for the future of magic, and—in light of recent events concerning Ultraculture⁶⁴—I feel that sticking my head above the parapet might just be worth it for everyone involved.

Ultraculture was a knee jerk reaction to living in exciting times, and has ultimately been a victim of its own naivety. This isn't to say that Ultraculture is over, or that it doesn't have its merits; no doubt it will carry on for a good few years, but it can

⁶⁴ Ultraculture was a movement and virtual community inaugurated by Jason Louv, with the original aim of uniting practitioners of all magical persuasions in large-scale group-magical activities. In practice the initiative struggled, and disintegrated further after controversial postings on-line—by Louv and others—alleging that the tradition of Voudon is of itself evil and damaging. See: <http://tinyurl.com/ynkrrd>. To date, Ultraculture survives as an eponymous journal. See: <http://www.ultraculture.org>.

no longer pretend to be a representation of the magical community.

The teenage dream is over. So how do we proceed? Where does the magical community go from here?

Obviously, starting a new movement to unify the magical community is to repeat the folly of Ultraculture. That is not to say that starting a movement, tradition or magical society isn't worthwhile or commendable, but that no single magical culture can be the community itself. The future of magic does not lie with agendas, beliefs, traditions or morality.

The steady growth of the global magical community is happening regardless of what we do, what aims we have, what beliefs we ascribe to. We do not need to evangelise magic, or seek to convert those that are not interested, because they are coming when they are ready and of their own free will. We do not need to find an overall purpose or aim for magic, because the overall purpose or aim of current events already exists and demonstrably has nothing to do with any specific magical culture.

What then? Do we just get on with our own lives until the current events come to some kind of conclusion?

No. Like any community, we have a duty. Not to God(s), not to the planet, not to any ideology, but to each other.

Should a fellow member of the community need help and guidance, whether newcomer or veteran, we have a duty to provide the benefit of our own experience, should it be useful to that person. The problem is ensuring that our experience is both available and accessible.

With the exponential growth of people suddenly finding themselves called to a magical tradition, I believe it is imperative for each of us to shout from the rooftops who and what we are, so that we may function as a beacon for those that need a little support and guidance from someone who has been there before.

What accessible, relevant resources are there for a kid that finds himself approached by the Lwa or the Tivar? Where can

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someone who suddenly experiences spontaneous Samadhi find help and guidance? Is the fourteen year-old girl who has discovered she can make wishes come true really losing her mind?

Instead of incessantly bickering over semantics on a forum, let's start our own magical journals and societies; instead of lamenting the lack of good magical instruction available, let's write our own grimoires and our own interpretation of tradition. Instead of waiting for the Next Big Thing to arrive, realise it's already here: *you*.

The Buddha sought neither to argue nor to convert, but to teach those with ears to hear. We can do better than that: let's seek neither to argue nor to convert, but to offer our own experience for those that may benefit from it, not as a teacher, but as a fellow human being.

As a community, we don't need a new movement or brand, or another messiah; we simply need to recognise we have a duty to each other. This isn't a manifesto, but a call to arms. Where's your blog? Where's your book? Where's your podcast? Where's your movement? Where's your experience? Where are *you*?

If You Find This World Bad...

Last Sunday I experienced sleep paralysis. It wasn't the first time; when I was seventeen or so, I awoke to find myself immobilised, with a 'grey' alien materialising next to my bed. Luckily, I knew all about sleep paralysis, so I simply performed a spot of object concentration. Within a couple seconds (although it seemed a lot longer), I could move again and the alien had dematerialised.

I found this very interesting, as I didn't really have a great interest in UFOs or *The X-Files*. Why an alien, and not a sweaty demon?

Although I didn't write off the entire phenomena of alien abduction as a bizarre midnight trick of the mind, I certainly

believed that whatever is experienced during sleep paralysis is most certainly nothing more than a subjective psychological event.

Cave

Further episodes over the years seemed to corroborate the psychological explanation, until I took a trip to Granada last year. My girlfriend and I stayed in a mountain cave that had been converted into an apartment. During the first few days, we both heard a voice on two separate occasions saying very unpleasant things.

Towards the end of the holiday I dreamt that something nasty was approaching our bedroom. When it came into the room, it leapt onto my chest, at which point I woke up in sleep paralysis. I let out a bizarre muffled cry, and then mentally conjured a flaming pentagram, which exploded in white light, encompassing the room.

I came out of the sleep paralysis to find my girlfriend visibly shaken. I calmed her down, and we went back to sleep. I then had a number of bizarre dreams all involving some person or other trying to trick me into letting him or her back into the apartment.

The next day I performed the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram, and I even employed a bit of rosemary I acquired from a gypsy woman, just for good luck. Next, the front door began locking itself without the aid of a key. It was only on our way home that I realised the apartment was on 'Cemetery Road'.

Hag

In light of what happened in Granada, and the fact I am often taught sorcery in my dreams, I'm now of the opinion that sleep paralysis is the result of a visitation by some entity or spirit. Yes, there is a good deal of subjectivity, which may explain the 'ET encounter', but in my experience there is far more to it than

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simply 'dreaming whilst awake'. After quite a few experiences of sleep paralysis, I'm yet to have one that involves a complete scenario characteristic of dreaming. It's always an entity, in my room, terrorising me (although I tend not to be that terrified, knowing what it is and how to deal with it).

The more I do magic, the more I'm convinced explanation is nothing more than a denial of what is actually experienced.

Evil Bastard

Last Sunday I woke up paralysed. I didn't bother opening my eyes—I just visualised an averse pentagram (I'm more of a 'Star Ruby' man these days) and out I popped. However, a nasty feeling still lingered. I sat up, took a few deep breaths, looked around the room for a bit, and then lay down again. As I rolled over to go back to sleep, I heard a deep, rasping voice say: 'Alan'. It seemed to come from the far corner of the bedroom, and it didn't sound too friendly.

You may not believe this, but I glanced over at the corner of the room, then decided to go back to sleep. Regular magical practice takes all the excitement out of the supernatural.

I dreamt I was in a dusty town or village, sometime in the past. The whole universe felt like a terrible machine; much like Philip K. Dick's 'Black Iron Prison' (Dick 2001, p.54), except instead of black iron, the whole place seemed to imply sharp steel. I dreamt about Jack the Ripper and his murders as occult ritual. He was a result of this 'machine', and everybody else I encountered was its victim. I came to a drinking fountain, long dried up, with a tattered bandage wrapped around it. Leaning over, I noticed a number of small greasy marks on the bandage. The marks were faded images of Jesus and his disciples, and intimated that the story of Jesus—of what happened to him and his disciples, of what they had to contend with—was far, far more terrible than we can conceive. It was almost as if their suffering had fundamentally changed the hell they lived in, gradually transforming the world into our present-day reality. I

noticed that the tiny image of Jesus was different from the others; it was almost completely blotted out by a bloodstain. I began to cry uncontrollably, repeating over and over: 'It's too hard, it's just too hard.' Then I understood this was the reason Jack the Ripper did what he did.

I wasn't too chuffed when I woke up. I felt like I'd literally been to hell, and it used to be our world.

Much like *The Book of the Law* (Crowley, 1976), I've always found Philip K. Dick problematic. Is it really possible to accept his visionary genius, whilst turning a blind eye to his personal convictions? The man spoke in myth and metaphor about experiences I recognise; yet he also claimed the Roman Empire never ended and he was living a parallel life in the year 70 A.D.

In 1977, Dick delivered a speech to a stunned French audience, entitled: 'If you find this world bad, you should see some of the others'. He ended with the following:

[The God of the Old Testament said:] "For I am fashioning a new heaven and a new earth, and the memory of the former things will not enter the mind nor come up into the heart". When I read this I think to myself: I believe I know a great secret. When the work of restoration is completed, we will not even remember the tyrannies, the cruel barbarisms of the Earth we inhabited... I believe that process is taking place now, has always been taking place now. And, mercifully, we are already being permitted to forget that which formerly was. And perhaps in my novels and stories I have done wrong to urge you to remember. (Dick 2007, p. 258)

Whichever way you look at it, the entity responsible for my dream wanted the same thing as all the other entities that appear during sleep paralysis: to terrify. But the question remains: was it terrifying me with anamnesis?

Nondualism and the Dawn of the Beatific Vision

Enlightenment is a gradual process with a definite end: a complete understanding, on an experiential basis, of existence itself. Existence is inclusive, and so any fundamental insight must necessarily apply to all things, including the one thing that necessitates realisation in the first place: the experience of ignorance.

In the early stages of the process, the Zen practitioner searches desperately for the Ox of Enlightenment, following its tracks through the forests and mountains, only to discover—through a gradual process of realisation—that he was tracking his own footprints all along. (See above, p. 139.)

Such a description of the experience of enlightenment is useful in facilitating the expectation of a certain stage within the developmental process. However, it is very easy to take this conceptualisation of enlightenment out of context and conclude we need simply roll up the meditation mat and proclaim ourselves enlightened. Why bother with the search when we can take a direct path to non-duality?

Unfortunately, non-duality is an idea: it is not the experience of enlightenment. 'We are already enlightened' is a belief: it is not the experience of enlightenment. Acting as though everyone and everything is enlightened is a behaviour: it is not the experience of enlightenment.

Non-dualism, if not part of a developmental map, or a method of integrating the actual experience of realisation, serves no function beyond mystifying enlightenment and deluding the lazy.

No amount of intellectualisation will alter the fact that enlightenment is a process, with definite steps that constitute a critical path. A grape will not become wine by placing it in a bottle, no matter how great our grasp of fermentation.

Would it then be fair to say that non-dualism is the privileged position of the Master, the magician who has reached the end of the process of enlightenment?

Although it is true that a magician in the later stages of the developmental process has realised the holiness of all experience, including everything that was, is and will ever be, it is a non-sequitur to conclude the redundancy of magical practice.

For in our ignorance the search was folly, but in our enlightenment the search is the joy of divine expression.

Enlightenment means all is as it ever was: and this is the Dawn of the Beatific Vision.

Chinese Whispers: The Origin of LAM

The alien invasion has been so subtle we didn't notice it happening. When did the word 'alien' come to mean a bug-eyed, anatomically-challenged, grey-skinned dwarf with an anal probe for a handshake? How did a close encounter with the 'Greys' become such an everyday occurrence, their cold, dark eyes monitoring our every move from posters, TV shows, books and bongs?

There are a growing number of people, albeit mostly Satanists, right-wing Christians, ufologists and occultists, who believe they know exactly when the Grey first reared its bulbous head and probed its way into our collective unconscious, and – more astonishingly – whose fault it is.

Aleister Crowley, arguably the greatest magician of the 20th Century, included a curious portrait in his *Dead Souls* exhibition of 1919, held in Greenwich Village, New York. With its planetoid-like cranium, its virtually non-existent nose and lack of ears, Crowley's strange drawing bears a striking resemblance to a Grey. According to legend, Crowley later claimed the portrait to be that of 'his guru', whom he had 'drawn from life' (Staley, 2007).

In the same year, Crowley included the drawing as a frontispiece to his commentary on Mme Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*. The picture is entitled 'The Way', and it comes complete with the following inscription:

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LAM is the Tibetan word for Way or Path, and LAMA is He who Goeth, the specific title of the Gods of Egypt, the Treader of the Path, in Buddhistic phraseology. Its numerical value is 71, the number of this book. (Crowley 1974, p. 733)

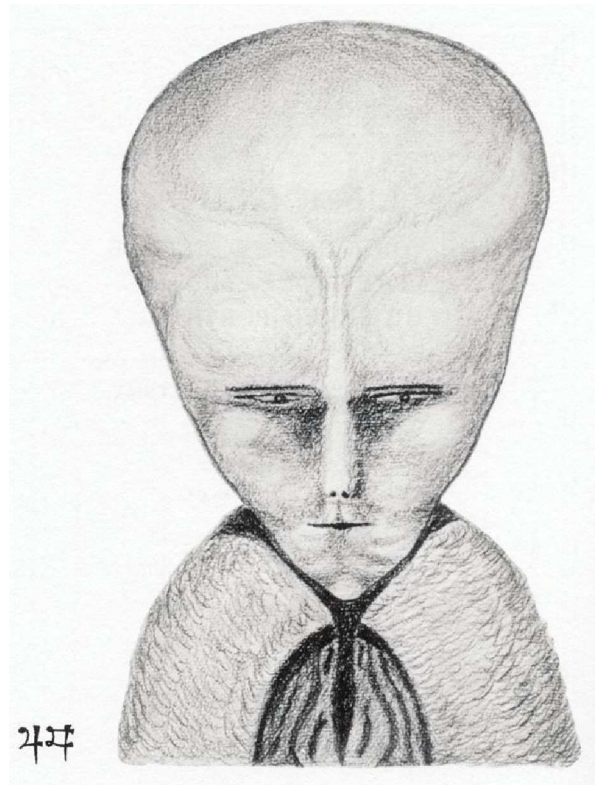


Figure 20: The Portrait of LAM.

Crowley left no record of the origin of the portrait, nor does he mention it in any of his writings, including his *Confessions* (Crowley, 1989). It wasn't until May of 1945 that the picture resurfaced. Crowley's friend and pupil, Kenneth Grant, was leafing through an old portfolio of Crowley's. According to Grant, Crowley agreed to let him keep the picture if he could correctly guess the subject. Grant went away for a long hard think, and came back confident he'd won his prize: a Trans-Plutonian extraterrestrial!

Despite the fact Grant had failed to solve the puzzle, Crowley later handed over the portrait anyway, after Grant kindly popped out to fetch Crowley some heroin to relieve a particularly nasty asthma attack (Staley, 2007).

Almost three decades passed before Grant republished the picture in *The Magical Revival* (1973) as indeed – despite what Crowley might have said – a Trans-Plutonian entity, named LAM. Since then, Grant’s magical order, the Typhonian O.T.O., has developed a cult dedicated to establishing contact with LAM. Instructions for how to do so can be found in their infamous ‘LAM Statement’ (Grant, 1987).⁶⁵

According to the foreword written by Michael Staley, a prominent member of the Typhonian O.T.O, ‘it is certain... that the drawing arose from the Amalantrah Working’, and: ‘it has become apparent that LAM is in fact a trans-mundane or extra-terrestrial entity, with whom several groups of magicians have established contact’ (Grant, 1987).

In January of 1918, a year before his *Dead Souls* exhibition, Crowley came into contact with a discarnate intelligence calling itself ‘Amalantrah the Wizard’. Through a number of ritually induced visions, Crowley interviewed Amalantrah for over six months, and had this to say in his *Confessions*:

[Amalantrah] lived in a place as definite as an address in New York, and in this place were a number of symbolic images representing myself and several other adepts associated with me and my work. The character of the vision served as a guide to my relations with these people. (Crowley 1989, p. 833)

Unfortunately, the only record extant of the Amalantrah Working ends prematurely on June 16th. No one knows what occurred during the remainder of the visions, but thanks to the

⁶⁵ Originally published in the magazine *Starfire*, vol. 1, no. 3.

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works of Grant, a growing number of conspiracy theorists are convinced the Amalantrah Working caused a tear in space-time, creating a gateway allowing LAM passage into our dimension.

In other words, Crowley not only let the Greys in, he was also the first alien contactee!

The symbolism of the *egg* features heavily in the Amalantrah Working. In the 'LAM Statement' much is made of the similarity in shape between LAM's head and an egg. Similarly,



Figure 21: Frontispiece to *The Confessions*
(Crowley, 1989).

it's this shape that reminds us most of the Greys. But couldn't the same be said of Crowley's 'idealised self portrait' that serves as a frontispiece to his *Confessions*?

And if we bear in mind that the LAM picture is monochrome, hence the grey colour, and that Crowley's genius didn't extend to his draughtsmanship skills (and by that I mean

he couldn't draw for toffee), then on what basis can we say this is an accurate drawing of an extraterrestrial?

Grant obviously took the name 'LAM' from the inscription in Crowley's commentary on *The Voice of the Silence*, despite the fact LAM is defined as 'the Tibetan word for Way or Path.' (If anything, shouldn't his name be LAMA, considering 'LAMA is He who Goeth'?) Blavatsky had claimed *The Voice of the Silence* was a fragment of an ancient Tibetan text channelled from her Tibetan masters. Might Crowley's mention of 'LAM' in the inscription appear simply because it is the Tibetan word for a concept discussed in the book, rather than a hint at the name of an 'extraterrestrial entity'?

Often, websites or books promoting the LAM hypothesis only include a cropped image of the portrait, focussing on the head. If we look at the original picture as it appeared in *The Voice of the Silence*, we see in the bottom left-hand corner a strange and usually ignored figure. It appears to be the number 49, written in a pseudo-oriental script.

Considering how Crowley challenged Grant to identify the subject of the picture, perhaps '49' is a deliberate clue to solving the subject's identity. Each sentence in Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* is numbered. This is sentence no. 49, followed by Crowley's commentary:

49. Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.

Compare the scene in Parsifal, where the scenery comes to the knight instead of the knight going to the scenery. But there is also implied the doctrine of the tao, and only one who is an accomplished Taoist can hope to understand this verse. (See "The Hermit of Esopus Island," part of *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, to be published in *The Equinox*, vol. III) (Crowley 1974, p. 754)

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Not only is this sentence explicitly concerned with the concept of 'the Path', or what is called 'LAM' in Tibetan, but also Crowley equates the Path (LAM) with the doctrine of the Tao. But why the reference to 'The Hermit of Esopus Island'?

In his *Confessions* we learn that it was during a magical retirement on Esopus Island that Crowley made a new translation of Lao Tzu's *Tao Teh King*, and recovered the memories of his past lives. The retirement culminated in an experience so profound Crowley was moved to claim: 'In a single instant I had the Key to the whole of the Chinese wisdom' (Crowley 1989, p. 840).

Interestingly, Crowley performed this retirement (p. 838) immediately after the Amalantrah Working (which ends on p. 836), but immediately before he wrote his commentary to *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 842). In other words, Crowley's commentary, and (I think it is safe to assume) the portrait for the frontispiece, came immediately after the events on Esopus Island.

Discussing the memories of his past lives, Crowley tells us:

I merely remember that I was Ko Hsuen, a disciple of Lao Tzu, the author of the King Khang King, the classic of purity; which, by the way, I translated into English verse during this retirement. (Crowley 1989, p. 839)

When Crowley died, so too did the only means of ascertaining the identity of LAM, but there is no case for entertaining the ludicrous extraterrestrial fantasies of Kenneth Grant.

Crowley described the subject of the portrait as 'his guru' and 'drawn from life'; the portrait was drawn just after Crowley remembers being a disciple of Lao Tzu; the drawing includes what appears to be the number of a passage in *The Voice of the Silence* that explicitly references the magical retirement where Crowley remembered his past lives; the inscription given in *The*

Voice of the Silence discusses what Crowley considered to be the Tibetan equivalent of the Tao; and the portrait originally appeared as part of an exhibition called *Dead Souls*. Doesn't it seem more reasonable to assume we're looking at a portrait drawn by a Naive artist of the Taoist master Lao Tzu, rather than a Trans-Plutonian extraterrestrial that forced its way into our dimension?

Perhaps the biggest mystery is not the identity of 'LAM', but the fact that this drawing, which the artist himself didn't consider worth mentioning in his autobiography, has gained more attention than Crowley's commentary on the book to which it was a frontispiece, not to mention his translation of the Taoist classic the *Tao Teh King*, arguably his most important work from this period.

It hardly needs to be stated that the LAM fantasy did not originate with Crowley, whose legacy is undoubtedly concerned with genuine spiritual experience:

No one has understood what Lao Tzu meant by either Tao or Teh. I, possessing... experience of the spiritual states which Lao Tzu is discussing, was able to produce a lucid and coherent version of the classic. (Crowley 1989, p. 837)

Why ignore that large body of work left to us by Crowley, which he considered of genuine spiritual import, to focus instead on an inconsequential drawing with a view to promoting an extraterrestrial fantasy?

It's likely that Grant has bequeathed an enduring legacy in the LAM myth but, by rights, I think that picture really belongs to me.

GRIMOIRE

Three-Step Meditation

The following three-step method of meditation, when performed for a minimum of half an hour every day for an average of five years, will lead to enlightenment.

The 3 Bs

Remember the following: Be still; Be at ease; Be aware.

Practice

Step One: Be still. Whether sitting on the floor, a chair, or lying down, the first step in meditation is to remain completely still. Sitting in a difficult posture, with every muscle in the body rigid, is not required. Choose a comfortable position and simply decide to remain still. Once this is underway, move onto step two.

Step Two: Be at ease. Meditation requires *no effort*. Any emotional tension, such as the desire to perform meditation correctly, should be relaxed. Any thoughts that encourage worrying should be let go. When in meditation, you are at ease. When this is accomplished (and this should be experienced as a genuine feeling of being at ease) move onto step three.

Step Three: Be aware. How much effort is required to be aware? Sensations such as thoughts, feelings and physical experiences occur regardless of how much effort is made. When meditating, simply be aware of what is experienced. Do not think—this is an action; allow thoughts to proceed without being involved. Do not feel—this is an action; allow emotions to manifest as and when they will. To be aware is to be present, and it requires *no effort*: you are already doing it!

Problems

If a problem occurs executing one of the steps, return to the previous step.

If movement occurs during meditation, start again from Step One.

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If you find it difficult to perform Step Three, go back to Step Two.

It is imperative during this practice that you *do not skip a step*.

In the beginning, you will probably find that within a few seconds of attempting Step Three, you need to go back to Step Two. This is fine, and it will probably take a few sessions before the alternation between Steps Two and Three becomes less frequent, and the 'knack' of meditation is achieved.

Once this is experienced, it will be apparent that meditation is not an action, but a cessation of effort, and a gradual realisation of what you really are.

For a model of the results of Three-Step Meditation, see 'The Magical Progressive Experience Model', p.135, above.

Ball of WUNJO

Statement of Intent: *It is our will to immanentize transpersonal consciousness.*

The company sits in a circle facing away from one another. In the centre, behind them, is an orange. In the hands of each member is an A4-sized sheet of tinfoil. Each temple member stares into the tinfoil, scrying into the disjointed shards of their reflection, lost in private reverie.

This is the incoherent waking dream that we call 'everyday consciousness'. But as the members continue to stare, slowly a transcendent awareness builds of how we are habitually locked into this closed, ego-bound state we describe as 'individuality'.

Repeating inwardly a silent mantra, 'All in the same world; all at the same time', awareness of our limited, ego-bound consciousness increases until it becomes unbearable. Then, as the spirit moves them, the members rise. As a group, they hold aloft together the orange in their left hands, wrapping the individual sheets of tinfoil over the orange in successive layers, with their right hands. Once their right hands are freed, they press their right palms flat against the top of their heads,

assuming bodily (with bent right-elbows) the form of the rune WUNJO.

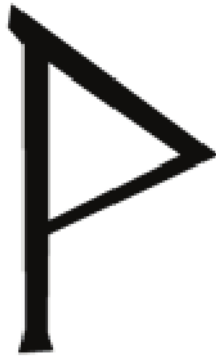


Figure 22: The Rune WUNJO. Divinatory meanings include: joy, happiness, 'coming to oneself', success.

As each member makes the escape from their prison of individual consciousness, they begin to chant in a waterfall-gouda⁶⁶ pattern: WUNNNN-JOOO. As the group chants and collectively holds aloft with their left arms the solar symbol of the orange, now wrapped in the discarded shards of everyone's ego, a transition to a powerful and inclusive transpersonal consciousness is effected and grows to a crescendo.

And then – banish with laughter.

You now have in your possession an orange wrapped in layers of tinfoil, filled with WUNJO. Use this as a focus of further rituals for healing, or anything with a transpersonal intent.

Pathworking: Invocation of Hermes

This pathworking can be used to invoke Hermes, with the intention of heightening creativity and imagination. Begin with

⁶⁶ Waterfall-gouda is a term applied to a style group chanting. Instead of chanting in unison, each participant chants at their own rate and pitch. Each participant chooses how and whether to harmonise or make discords with the other participants.

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a relaxation exercise, ideally one which leads the participants to become aware of themselves, relaxed, in the here and now. At some point during the relaxation add lemongrass oil to an oil burner.

... And now, something is starting to happen. A perfume is entering your awareness: fresh and citrus-like. It smells of sherbet lemon. And as you become aware of this vibrant perfume sparkling in your nostrils, you begin to sense a presence. An orange glow is spreading from the upper left-hand corner of your vision, coming down closer towards you, a bright orange that is almost gold, which you feel against your skin as a tickling warmth, prickling down the left-hand side of your body and spreading throughout. Invigorating you. Filling you with energy.

The god Hermes steps gently from the left towards you. He looks directly into your eyes. He has taken the form of a slim, naked man, but you recognise him from his winged helmet and boots, and the staff in his left hand, around which two glowing snakes entwine in a double helix. The wings and the snakes flap and writhe, like images caught in a repeating loop of film.

Hermes's gaze is open and frank, but at the same time intense and mischievous. His eyes produce inside your mind the same feeling of vibrant energy that his orange glow sends across your body. Is it safe to be this close to a god? Will you wake up with radiation burns in the morning? Your worries evaporate as you concentrate on his expression. You see that you are loved and protected by this deity. You realise that although he might tease and perplex you, he would never knowingly cause you harm.

He takes your right hand. His touch is hot. The orange glow spreads from him and now it emanates from you also. Both of you are shielded inside the tingling light. Inside this boundary, you are protected. Remember that the power and energy of a god shields you. You are safe.

Hermes nods, and you feel that you are falling backwards. Let yourself go. There's no need to resist, because he's holding onto you, inside the shielding glow, and you are sinking inside

your own head. You're slipping backward into the past, sliding down the corridors of your memories with increasing speed. But Hermes grips your arm, guiding you as if he knows precisely where you need to be. The wings swish on his helmet and boots, sounding as if they were made of tin. Soon you begin to slow down.

And now, with Hermes at your side, protecting you, a scene from your past begins to form. You see yourself at a moment when you were engrossed in a book, or in a picture, or in a story told by someone. Maybe it was one of the first times you ever had this feeling, of entering through the page, the words or pictures, into another world, another reality.

In your memory, where are you now? Imagine that you look up from what you are doing. Take in your surroundings. If you are not alone, who is with you? At what stage in life do you find yourself? What sounds and what smells surround you? What time of day is it, and what is the season? Try to picture the quality of the light; the mood of this vanished day.

Most of all, connect again with the story, the words or the images that held your attention. Imagine it's all in front of you again. What details remain in your mind from that time? Feel again the fascination drawing you. Irresistibly you're forgetting yourself again. Your sense of time and of self is slipping as you give yourself up to the story and its images. Remember the feelings that it gave you; the magical experience of absorption.

Hermes has vanished from view. But in the same moment that you notice his absence, you feel him at your side again, and now he steps forwards. The memory, the scenery around you, dissolves in his orange glow. He smiles, the god of artists and poets. This moment that you remembered was actually a gift from him to you, given long ago. He's happy to help you re-live it.

And now he leans forward, as if he's about to whisper a great secret. You strain and move closer, so his lips are next to your ear.

It's only words, he says. You made it up. None of this is real.

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Having deconstructed himself, Hermes fades away. You listen to the god banishing himself with laughter. And now, you are becoming aware of yourself again, sitting or lying in this room, here at — — —, on — — —, waking up to yourself in the here and now, with the memory of what you experienced fresh and vivid in your mind.

Possession by the Archangel Uriel

Uriel features heavily in the apocryphal *Book of Enoch* (Charles, 2003) as a messenger of God, from whence (via John Dee) Enochian magic is derived. Uriel isn't one of the biblical angels (Raphael, Gabriel, Michael) but is usually included alongside them to make a neat quaternity. He is commonly attributed with the element of earth.

This ritual for obtaining possession by Uriel is adapted from an operation described in A. E. Waite's *The Book of Ceremonial Magic*.⁶⁷ (We decided to dispense with the candles made of human fat and the psychic nine year-old boy, for reasons of expediency.)

Materials: a glass vial, freshly filled with water; three white candles; black gaffer tape to make a triangle on the floor.

Whilst preparations are made, the assembled party chants repeatedly: *Gabamiah Adonay Agla, O Lord God of Powers, do Thou assist us!* The candles are placed at the corners of the triangle and lit. The operator takes position inside the triangle and enters into trance by his or her preferred means.

Uriel is evoked into the vial of water by the assembled party, who now begin chanting: *Uriel, Seraph, Josata, Ablati, Agla, Caila*. Once Uriel has manifested inside the water, the operator opens the vial and drinks it. Uriel then assumes the physical body of the operator.

So far we've obtained excellent results by this method. Possession by archangel has its own peculiar quality: oddly impersonal and mechanistic, yet at the same time very

⁶⁷ Available in mass market paperback form as *The Wordsworth Book of Spells* (Waite, 1995). See Chapter VIII, §6 for the original Uriel invocation.

emotionally charged. Uriel seems to have difficulties stepping down his presence to a human level. He has a tendency to speak in Enochian, or bastardized Enochian-English, but we hope that over time he'll settle down into English.

Invocation of Tezcatlipoca

Tezcatlipoca is the Aztec trickster god of the night and of magic. The work I've done with him so far has been concerned with development of magical and psychical abilities. We hope to do more work with this entity, as the watershed of 2012 approaches, the zenith of his power arriving in 2008 (Pinchbeck 2006, p. 243). Here is an invocation that can be used to help manifest his presence.

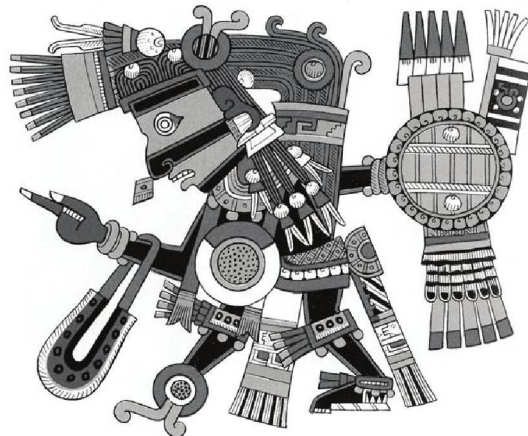


Figure 23: Tezcatlipoca.

Tezcatlipoca, Smoking Mirror,
Lord of the Near who created Himself;
God of the night wind and Sower of Discord,
whose servants we are —
I invoke you!

Capricious creator, great speaker,
bane of the traveller at midnight crossroads,
mocker who watches,

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knowing that we are
slaves to your amusement,

yet I invoke you! Lord of the Hunt,
patron of princes, jaguar
god of night and of sorcerors;
wielder of the obsidian mirror,
from whose place you watch me.

I make this offering and ask your blessing,
seeking your aid, you who sees all men.

The Sheepshagger Oracle

It was a dream that first alerted me to the divinatory properties of *Sheepshagger*, a novel by Niall Griffiths (2001). Having put my dream to the test, I can confirm that *Sheepshagger* is an eerily prescient vehicle for bibliomancy.

I recommend that you wrap your copy of the book in a ceremonial cloth. The questioner should hold the book with closed eyes whilst he or she, and the assembled party, bleat loudly and in unison, like a ewe mounted by a ram. Whilst bleating, the questioner should turn the book around and upside-down rapidly, so that it is uncertain which way up it is, and then the book should be held aloft—at which moment the party falls silent.

Reaching beneath the cloth, the questioner should extract the book, open it to a random page, and thrust his or her finger onto any point in the text. The sentence upon which the finger falls is the oracle's answer to the question.

Sheepshagger seems especially good at answering questions concerned with personal development, but I'm confident it will give an interesting answer to any dilemma you chose.

I asked it: *What results can be expected by those who decide to follow this procedure?* It replied:

...this exposure has at last robbed him of all lingering sobriety and adrenalin and he can for the moment do or move no more.

You be will be awestruck, evidently. (The book is also a very good novel.)

Ritual of Expulsion

This rite of expulsion by righteous anger draws on the power of the Archangel Kamael, the presiding angel of Mars (or *Geborah* on the Tree of Life). Collected from various internet sources, here are some random facts about Kamael:

- Kamael is responsible for diluting illusion and when invoked he brings the ability to see things for how they really are.
- He is a Prince Regent of the Powers and one of the great Archangels of the Divine Presence.
- He is also, along with Michael, a Regent of War and a Supreme Regent of both the planet Mars and the astrological sign Aries.
- He almost fell (or was destroyed) when he tried to keep God from giving the law (the Torah) to Moses, believing that the people were not ready to receive it.
- When invoked, he appears in the guise of a leopard crouched on a rock.
- 'It is a name,' says Eliphas Lévi in *The History of Magic* (Lévi, 1981), 'which personifies divine justice.'
- A legend speaks of Kamael being in charge of 12,000 angels of destruction.
- The meaning of the name Kamael: 'He who sees God.'

This rite can be performed solo or in a group. Its aim is not to destroy or injure the target, but simply to remove or excise it from the experience of the participants. Recommended

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statement of intent: *It is our will that this target of our righteous anger shall be expelled from our lives.*

The Seal of Kamael (below) is drawn in black on a red sheet of paper and displayed on the altar. Before the Seal are lit five red candles, arranged in a pentagon. The participants write or sigilise on a small piece of paper (preferably also red, with black ink) the name of the target object or person that they wish to be expelled.

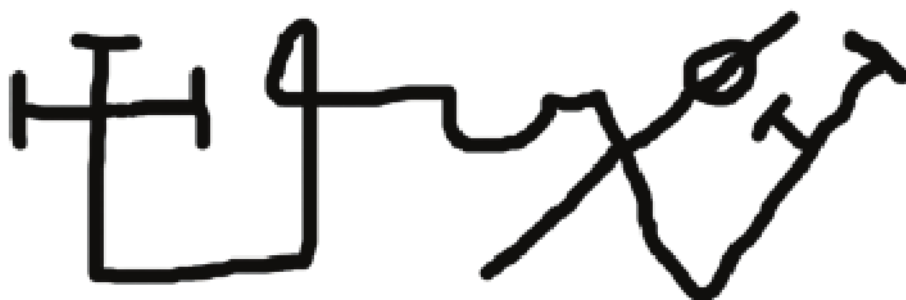


Figure 24: Seal of the Angel Kamael.

The participants face the altar and chant twenty-five times the mantra: KAMBOGILE, which is a verbal sigil condensed from Qabalistic phrases used to invoke Kamael. Whilst chanting, the participants allow their righteous anger toward the target to gather strength and express itself howsoever. After the twenty-fifth repetition, the party turns quickly 180° and stuffs the sigilised pieces of paper into their mouths, which they chew vigorously and as fast as possible into a pulp. The wad of paper is then spat forward with maximum force, just as the target of the working shall be expelled from the participants' universe.

When all have spat, banish by hearty congratulation of one another on the power and accuracy of the spitting, or – if alone – by laughter.

Qabala Magic: Vision of Malkuth

Elsewhere in this book I have sung the praises of Ted Andrews's *Simplified Qabala Magic*. (See above, p. 250.) Using this book and its methods, here is an account of a meditation on the first sephira, *Malkuth*, and the vision attained therein.

Method

Sit comfortably. Light a candle. Put some oil in the oil-burner. Visualise the colour of the sephira (for this and other items, see *Correspondences*, below). Chant the God-Name of the sephira, alternating between external vocalisation and an inner, 'astral' chant. After a degree of focus has been attained, switch from the God-Name to the sephira's Archangel-Name.

At the entrance of each sephira is an altar between two pillars, on which burns a lamp. Before the altar appears a personage, the guardian of the sephira. As you attain focus, this vision and the guardian will appear. Ask the guardian for admittance and if granted you may proceed. The veracity and good-will of any entity you encounter may be tested by chanting in its presence the Archangel-Name; if the entity is up to no good, the name will dissolve it. If you remain uncertain and the name yields no reaction, then the God-Name certainly will.

Correspondences

For *Malkuth*, as follows: the candle should be olive-green; the oil should be of sandalwood; the colour is olive-green or russet-brown; the God-Name is ADONAI HA-ARATZ; the name of the Archangel is SANDALPHON; the guardian will appear as a young woman, crowned and enthroned.

The Vision

The guardian was animated; pleased to see me, almost. I tried to start a conversation, but instead of answering she led me to a clearing in which was a huge, green crystal, spiky and irregular. From its centre rose a pyramidal apex. Many beings swarmed

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and reclined over the crystal, most of them naked, most of them elementals, but some were human.

There was a rhythmic pulsing, in time with my heartbeat. I entered the crowd of bodies and lay against the crystal, a vivifying energy filling me.

'Have I had enough? Should I have more?' I asked the guardian, after a while.

She answered that it was impossible to have either too much or too little. It couldn't overload or harm me; I could fill up on it forever, or make do with a little.

The pyramid in the centre was attracting my attention. Frozen figures were locked inside, and greenish light glowing within. The figures looked like Hindu gods in headdresses and ornate armour, suspended inside forever.

I turned to the guardian.

'Can I ask some questions?'

She remarked that this was boring, but I could if necessary.

'Am I taking the right course in my efforts to be a writer?'

She showed me the image of a sick lion; a beast looking weak that ought to be strong.

I realised maybe I shouldn't ask her questions, but should make statements instead.

'I want to ditch my job and get a new one. Get me a new job!'

My surroundings exploded into green waves of energy. The guardian—seemingly in response—led me into a dingy building. There was a basement smell of damp. There were thick carpets and heavy furniture. It felt like an old cinema, worn and decaying.

In a room, propped on a table, was an entity shaped like a flat, African mask. Its face was geometric, blank, but brightly coloured with purple, pink and chocolate-brown. The mask said it would help me. It glowed suddenly with a brilliant white light that illuminated the basement and filled me with energy.

Then I was outside, on top of a building with a drab, sloping roof. A camel-like creature approached and said it would help me too. It smiled, but then I remembered that Uvall, one of the

Goetic demons (with whom I'd had trouble in the past) often took the form of a dromedary (Crowley 1995, p. 47-8).

I chanted the Archangel-Name, 'SANDALPHON', as I'd done when I first encountered the mask. Whereas the mask had persisted, the camel-creature immediately fell to pieces. Beneath its disguise was a demonic face. Each time I chanted 'SANDALPHON' the demonic face disintegrated, revealing another beneath, but soon the creature was gone.

'This is *my* demon,' I realised. 'The one that prevents me from connecting properly with other people.'

I asked the guardian to take me back to the crystal. That's where I spent the remainder of the vision, among the bodies of living beings. I let the rhythmic energy of the crystal fill me up.

I asked the guardian if I could visit again. Her answer seemed positive. Before I left, she changed the colour of the landscape. The soil, leaves and trees turned from olive-green to a shade of russet, like rust or dried-blood.

Personal Demons

This ritual allows a group of practitioners to expose and confront their demons in a controlled setting. It was performed after I realised how constantly critical I am of other people. I found my interior carping so impossible to control that casting it from my mind into a demon seemed the most reasonable means of handling it.

Each participant chooses a personality trait or behaviour over which they require more control. They then take some time to personify this entity, by drawing its seal, giving it a name (e.g. 'LOLOTRANON'), visualising the physical form it takes ('an emaciated bald man wearing glasses with round, black lenses'). Everyone in the group describes their demon, with its powers stated in *positive* rather than negative terms. For instance, my demon, which manifests as needless criticism of others, nevertheless has positive attributes: it is useful for cutting down to size bullies and overbearing authority figures, and for deflating egos in circumstances where this is

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appropriate. The aim is to harness the demon and employ it intentionally, rather than allowing it to run riot. It is up to each participant whether he or she wishes to reveal to the group the negative aspect from which their demon manifests.

The seals of the demons are collected and placed in a pile. About the pile, with black gaffer or duct tape, a triangle is made. At each corner of the triangle a candle is lit. The company evoke their demons into the triangle by holding their breath to the brink of unconsciousness – or by whatever method of gnosis is preferred.

Once the demons are evoked, the company proceeds to the end of the room where they turn their backs on the triangle of art. Everyone chants at their own pace the following mantra: *This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine.*⁶⁸ Whilst the others keep their backs turned, each person takes a turn to approach the triangle for some quality time with their demon, silently or out loud, as they wish. I took the opportunity to tell my demon it had been cast out from my mind, that now I exercised full control, and that it would no longer be allowed to disparage others unless I willed it.

When everyone has had their turn, the leader of the rite gives the demons license to depart. Banish thoroughly. The triangle is dismantled and everyone retrieves their demon's seal for future summonings. Repeated use of this ritual could form the basis of a group grimoire of personal demons, as an alternative to traditional sources such as *The Lesser Key of Solomon* (Crowley, 1995). Such a grimoire could prove powerful, since it would be based on personality traits of group members.

Bad Song, Good Song

I've heard it said that certain Native American traditions hold that to sing something is to bring it into being. Reality is *sung*. Therefore, when someone is having a bad time, it's because they have a bad song inside them.

This ritual eliminates the bad song and revives the good.

⁶⁸ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, V.i.

Each member of the party goes into their own space, closes their eyes, and allows their bad song to surface. This might be a song with negative associations to a miserable time in one's life; or an inane or inept tune that you sometimes discover running in your head at times of stress; or simply a song that sums up for you all that's shitty about the world.

After the bad songs have had time to establish themselves, the person leading the rite (Person A) opens his or her eyes and goes to another person at random (Person B). Placing a hand on Person B's shoulder, Person A teaches him or her 'the good song'. (It might be a good plan to have 'the good song' written somewhere on a placard.) Person A repeats 'the good song' until the bad song is eradicated from Person B's mind.

A powerful choice for a 'good song' would be a short, well-established mantra. One of my personal favourites is the Adi Mantra, or: ONG NAMO, GURU DEV NAMO, much beloved by practitioners of kundalini yoga.

Persons A and B then move together toward someone else. (If the group is particularly large, they could approach a separate person each.) Person B then teaches 'the good song' to the newly chosen person. Thus it proceeds, the good song becoming louder and louder, eventually drowning out all the bad songs, until the whole group sings the good song together, which they will most likely continue to do for a while, until they're bored.

Banish with laughter.

The Arrow of Outrageous Fortune

Someone is undergoing a period of bad luck We want to put a stop to it, so on the floor is a plastic arrow, from a child's archery set. We process in a circle, chanting at the arrow, over and over, with increasing energy:

*Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune*

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*Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them...*⁶⁹

Glossolalia may well result. In any case, after a certain amount of energy has been raised, the leader of the rite picks up the arrow, and the chant changes abruptly to the name of the target person—e.g. *'Bruce! Bruce! Bruce! Bruce!'* or whomever. When a crescendo is reached, the leader of the rite snaps the arrow in half and immediately, everyone falls silent.

Banish with silence.

Portunes: God of Small Things

Portunes is the Roman god of keys, doors, grain silos, farm animals and harbours.⁷⁰ Having read about him all that I could find on the web, it struck me that he presides—in effect—over the small but useful things that we take for granted, which are invisible to us until they cease to function or go missing.

This is a rite to assist someone who has lost a commonplace but essential item, or for whom something that the rest of us take for granted has suddenly ceased to function.

We form a circle and place in the middle a collection of objects we ordinarily carry on our person—things that work well, without us even noticing them, such as: keys, cash-cards, lighters, combs, etc. A lighted candle is also placed in the middle.

An old, unused key is then passed deosil around the circle. Each participant holds up the key and addresses an epithet of praise to Portunes, channelling the god's blessing into the key, which is his traditional emblem. (See below for some example epithets.)

When the key has passed completely around the circle, a fire is lit from the candle. The key is placed on the fire, and as it burns all chant ecstatically: *'Portunes! Portunes!'*

⁶⁹ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III.i.

⁷⁰ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portunes.

When the fire is out, banish with laughter. If appropriate, the key can be given to the target of the rite, for use as a talisman. The Romans observed the Portunalia on August 16th or 17th, so this rite is likely to be particularly effective if performed on or around that time of year.

Some example epithets for bigging-up Portunes:

- Hail Portunes! Whose motto is: 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it!'
- Great god, Portunes! Whose power we underrate, until his favour is withdrawn.
- Mighty Portunes! Guardian of common objects that keep us safe.
- Portunes! God of small things whose power is vast.
- Crafty Portunes! Adapter of Nature to our needs.
- Praise Portunes! That we might rest, yet still we live and prosper.
- Sweet Portunes! He sets us free from worry.
- Gracious god, Portunes! Without whom every road in life is blocked.
- Divine Portunes! Free movement, health and prosperity are his gifts.
- Portunes the expedient! Without asking, he delivers us.
- Wise Portunes, to whose servants is guaranteed long and happy ignorance.
- Portunes, subtle god of taken-for-granted things! A burning key is his emblem.

Talking to Steiner's Angels

This working has its background in Rudolf Steiner's writings on angelic beings. (See above, p. 257f; 260f.)

Make a pentacle, of a substance and scale appropriate to the size of the working. (You will determine the size of the working by reading below.) For instance, a small-scale working may require a pentacle drawn simply on a sheet of paper; a medium-

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sized working may involve a pentacle traced in the floor in salt; a larger working could employ thick gaffer or duct tape.

In the pentagon forming the central portion of your pentacle, install a light source: a candle, candles, or a lamp. (See diagram.) In the triangular sections of the pentacle (its 'arms'), install the appropriate entities that will function as the sense-organs of the type of angel to be invoked.

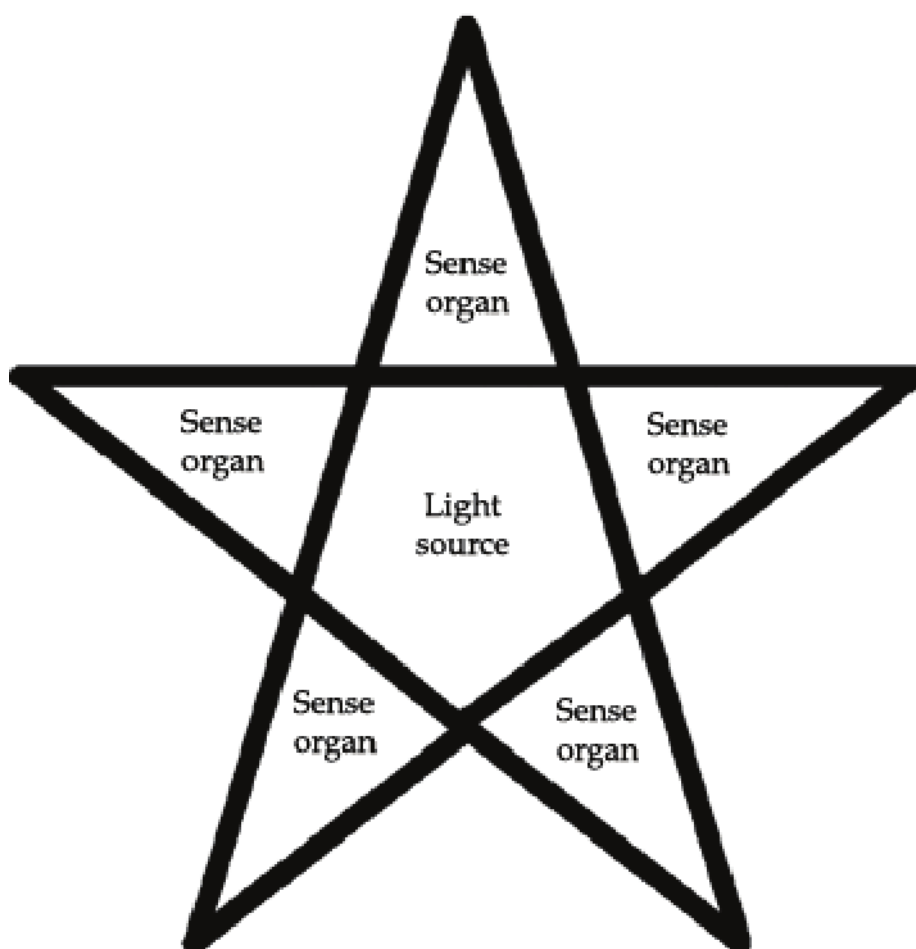


Figure 25: Arrangement of the Pentacle.

Steiner provides us with a model that describes the different levels of the cosmos, and the ranges of perception enjoyed by different types of living entities within that cosmos. The human world, for instance, embraces the realm of minerals, plants, animals and other humans. The world of the angels, which is a level higher, incorporates plants, animals, humans and other angels.

Our sense organs are not themselves available to our perception, because the actual medium of our perception forms the ‘ground’ of all the levels of the cosmos that are available to us. In other words, the level of our sense-organs is the level below the lowest that we are able to perceive. For humans, this level is unnameable because it is imperceptible. The level of the sense-organs of angels, however, is perceivable to humans as the *mineral* level. For archangels, it is the level of *plants*. And so on. In other words, minerals (or crystals) and plants are the sense-organs of (respectively) angels and archangels. The schema, in full, is as follows:

Type of Being	Sense Organ
<i>Powers</i>	<i>Human beings</i>
<i>Principalities</i>	<i>Animals</i>
<i>Archangels</i>	<i>Plants</i>
<i>Angels</i>	<i>Crystals</i>
<i>Humans</i>	<i>(Unknowable)</i>

Figure 9. Beings and Their Sense Organs.

When your pentacle has been assembled, the light source installed, and the entities that constitute the sense-organs placed in the arms of the pentacle, the party forms a circle around the outside. Each member enters a light trance by a preferred means (we’ve found ‘Sufi-grinding’⁷¹ very suitable). A designated person then addresses a formal request to the entity for its presence. This can be prepared in advance, but it’s good to extemporise! Then the designated person waits, and allows a word to arise in his or her mind. When this word is spoken, the

⁷¹ Sitting cross-legged with a straight back, place your hands palms-down upon your knees. Move your upper body in a circular motion, stirring your spine, making the focus of the movement a point as close to the base of your spine as you are able. Synchronise your breathing with your motion: an in-breath as your upper body comes forward; an out-breath as it moves back. The direction of movement may be reversed from time to time, to alleviate fatigue.

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person seated immediately clockwise allows a word to rise in their mind in response, without pause for rational thinking or censorship. The aim is to allow words to flow in turn from each participant as quickly as possible, forming phrases and sentences. This is the communication from the angels.

It's best to record the sessions electronically and transcribe the results afterwards, so as not to inhibit the flow of words. If humans are employed as sense-organs, they should not participate in the formation of sentences, but should remain in a trance state with their eyes and minds open. With a bit of imagination and organisation, a designated person or persons could communicate with the being in a question-and-answer format, using the rest of the party as a medium.

It might be noted that the format of this ritual provides the capacity for communicating with entities of even higher orders than those listed by Steiner. For instance, to contact an entity that had the angels as its sense organs, five smaller pentacles could be placed in each arm of the main pentacle, with a human operator assigned to each, using minerals to evoke an angel into each arm (and so on, with the maximum possibility of sub-pentacles containing humans, providing access to an almost unimaginably elevated entity that had Powers as its sense-organs).

Talking to the Dead

This is a method for contacting the dead that utilizes Kundalini yoga and Rudolf Steiner's theories on afterlife communication.

Theory

Steiner's theories on the lifestyle of the dead are involved and exotic. He shuns the techniques employed by spiritualists in favour of a more introspective approach. His theories also pay observance to how the realms of the living and dead intersect.

On the mental state that best facilitates communication, Steiner writes:

...the moments of waking and falling asleep are of particular importance for intercourse with the dead. In our whole life there are no single moments of falling asleep or of waking when we do not come into relation with the dead... Suppose we want to ask the dead something. We can carry it in our soul, holding it until the moment of falling asleep; for that is the time to bring our questions to the dead. Other opportunities exist, but this moment is the most favourable. (Steiner, 1918)

In order to induce this state in a group setting, physical exercises from kundalini yoga will be used. Their application is twofold: firstly, to physically tire the participants, so that they are likely to fall into a drowsy, liminal state during the relaxation period that follows; and secondly, the function of the particular exercises chosen is to stimulate the sixth chakra – the ajna chakra, or ‘third eye’ – whose activity concerns inner vision and psychic powers.

The most peculiar feature of Steiner’s approach, however, is detailed in the following passage:

Strange and grotesque as it may seem, the whole form of intercourse to which we are accustomed in the physical world has to be reversed when intercourse is set up between the Earth and the dead. In the physical world, when we speak with a human being from physical body to physical body, we ourselves are speaking. When we speak, we know that the words come from us; when the other man speaks to us, we know that the words come from him. The whole relationship is reversed when we are speaking with a dead man. The expression ‘when we are speaking’ can truthfully be used, but the relationship is reversed. When we put a question to the dead, or say something to him, what we say comes from him, comes to us from him. He inspires

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into our soul what we ask him, what we say to him. And when he answers us or says something to us, this comes out of our own soul. It is a process with which a human being in the physical world is quite unfamiliar. He feels that what he says comes out of his own being. In order to establish intercourse with the dead, we must adapt ourselves to hear from them what we ourselves say, and to receive from our own soul what they answer. (Steiner, 1918)

In other words, the question that the party addresses to the dead person is in reality the dead person's answer; and the answer received is in fact the real question that the living participants are sending!

Furthermore, Steiner suggests the dead receive most clearly messages that have an emotional rather than a purely verbal or factual content. The party should be instructed before the session begins that their 'questions' to the dead should not be thought of as invitations for direct verbal exchange, but as more open-ended messages with—as far as possible—an emotional import.

Kundalini Exercises

Exercise 1: Lie on your stomach with your palms downwards on either side of your chest, fingers pointing forward. Push yourself up with your arms into a press-up position, taking care that your toes are curled under, and that your pelvis, chest and head are lined up precisely with no rounding or sagging of the spine. Close the eyes, and turn the gaze inwards and upwards toward the 'third eye'. Breathing should be long and deep. Hold the position for three minutes.

Exercise 2: Kneel, or sit with crossed legs. Put your palms together as if in prayer and press both thumbs into the space between your eyebrows. Press firmly. Close the eyes, and roll the gaze inwards and upwards to the point at which the thumbs are pressing. Hold this pose for three minutes, with long deep

breathing. Release the thumbs and sit with hands in your lap. Keep your eyes closed and retain the focus on the third eye. Chant the mantra: 'Sat Nam', with a separate out-breath for each syllable. Continue for three minutes.

Method for the ritual

1. Form a circle with a muted light-source in the centre.
2. Perform Kundalini Exercise 1.
3. Relaxation for about five minutes in silence, lying on the back with eyes closed, everyone allowing themselves to fall into a state between waking and sleeping.
4. Everyone sits up and takes a few moments to write their message to the dead person, using the ideas and images that occurred to them whilst they relaxed.
5. Perform Kundalini Exercise 2.
6. Take some time to write on the other side of the paper messages received, using ideas and images that arose during the second exercise.
7. Review the results.

It's probably best not to reveal to the party that the 'questions' and 'answers' will be reversed, otherwise this might set the intellect working during the session and prejudice the results.

Steiner's approach is subtle and counter-intuitive. You may find that it's necessary to do some additional work on the results obtained, filtering out any extraneous imagery or verbal (i.e. non-emotion-based) ideas. Pronouns may also need to be switched around because of the reversal between questions and answers that Steiner insists upon.

Our posthumous interview with Robert Anton Wilson (see next article) was gained using this method.

Posthumous Interview with Robert Anton Wilson

To our knowledge, this is the first posthumous interview given by Robert Anton Wilson since he departed this life on January 11th, 2007. We tracked down Bob using a combination of

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Kundalini yoga and Rudolf Steiner's theories on afterlife communication. (See previous article.) Most of the communication was verbal, but at certain moments visual imagery was sent and received.

US: We feel empty, like a pyramid floating through a void.

BOB: How are you all?

US [giggling]: No worries, mate!

BOB: Thanks. I'd be nowhere now, if you hadn't shown me the credibility of the occult and led me onto the path that I'm now following.

US: Hail Eris!

BOB: There is a secret order of concealed masters, sometimes referred to as The Great White Brotherhood, sometimes referred to as The Secret Chiefs, working toward a dubious aim behind the scenes.

US: [a mental image of a pair of sinister dark glasses.]

BOB: How are you all feeling where you are? Are you alone, or with each other?

US: Fucking *yeah!* Is anybody?

BOB: Was I a worthwhile being?

US: You don't know shit, but you're learning. Use your time wisely. There is more.

BOB: You have my gratitude and respect. I have some regrets, but there is hope. [A mental image of a spiral of light.]

US: Consult your pineal gland! To get a message to you requires words without any substance, a lack of physicality. You should, if you try hard, get some new words from us.

BOB: We've talked across time and space so well whilst I lived. I will continue to have this ability from the place I'm in.

US: We got the impression you will be back!

BOB: [Mental image of an eye staring from a radiant brick pyramid.]

US: Consciousness is from the living. We are conscious; we have thoughts. The dead only have memory of life.

BOB: *Are you conscious?*

US: Everything you need to know is in Saturn (or maybe that should be *Binah*). It's all literal.

BOB: Whatever the level of weirdness you have experienced, I'm determined that what I experience will be as weird, if not weirder! Thank you.

Inoculation Against Paranoia

Spiders can't help making flytraps, and men can't help making symbols. That's what the human brain is there for—to turn the chaos of given experiences into a set of fairly manageable symbols. Sometimes the symbols correspond fairly closely to some of the aspects of the external reality behind our experience; then you have science and common sense. Sometimes, on the contrary, the symbols have almost no connection with external reality; then you have paranoia and delirium. (Huxley 2002, p. 220)

This ritual was performed to relieve a specific person of paranoid psychosis, and also to inoculate all participants against paranoid delusions.

The company forms a circle. One person, the 'target', sits in the middle with his or her eyes closed. In the circle, each person adopts a delusional belief system; they are free to think up their own, or can use one supplied on prompt cards made available beforehand. (See examples, below.)

The people in the circle crawl toward the target and whisper at the same time directly into his or her ear delusional nonsense based on the paranoid belief-system they have adopted. The target listens to this madness for a while, but fights back by reciting the following mantra:

*Spiders can't help making webs;
I can't help making symbols.
Just because I think it,
doesn't mean it's true.*

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The whispering continues, until the target recites the mantra a further three times, with increasing conviction and volume. At this, the circle retreats and falls silent. The target re-joins the circle, touching a person on the shoulder, who then becomes the next target. This sequence is repeated until everyone has had a turn at being the target.

The rite is ended by everyone chanting together the mantra for a further four times. Banish with silence, and then with laughter.

Prompt Cards

Some sample paranoid-delusional systems:

- The British royal family are alien lizards. They're going to eat us.
- Organisations in Florida are teaching people telepathy, then beaming out messages to scramble my brain.
- Chinese secret agents are following me, projecting suggestions into my mind, to make me do something bad.
- Neo-conservatives in America are crashing the world economy on purpose. They're going to reduce the world's population by one third.
- Under the Houses of Parliament is a huge mind-control machine operated by the government. The closer I get to it, the less I can control the voices in my head.
- Everything on the TV is about me. They're using code, but every night they talk about what I've done during the day.
- Most people have been replaced by alien-made replicas. Ask a replica to choose a number between 5 and 12, and it'll always say: 7.
- The devil has a radio transmitter that controls everyone, except me. The devil writes all the songs on

the radio. If I listen to the radio, he'll take over my mind.

- People in the street keep calling me a 'fucking idiot', but deny it when I challenge them. It's sending me mad!
- Cats and birds have chips in their brains. The cats are watching me, and when the birds sing, they're reporting my movements to the government.

The Magic 8 Ball Opera

The *Magic 8-Ball* is a plastic toy in the shape of an oversized black pool ball, manufactured by Mattel. On its bottom is a clear plastic window. Divinatory answers to YES/NO questions appear at random in the window. Although more common in North America, a Magic 8-Ball is a useful piece of temple equipment anywhere in the world.

The following ritual bypasses the 8-Ball's usual divinatory function and employs it as a tool for enchantment.

Method

Place the 8-Ball on the altar. Participants approach the altar in turn and express their desire as a question beginning with the word 'Will'. For instance, if someone wants a pay-rise this month, they ask the 8-Ball: 'Will I receive a pay-rise this month?'

The questioner then stands aside, and the other members of the temple consult the 8-Ball in turn. As soon as each temple member receives an answer, he or she begins to move about the space, singing out the answer repeatedly in an operatic style. This continues, until all temple members except the questioner are moving about singing (hopefully harmonising with one another!)

The questioner walks among the other members, listening to the answers, until he or she locates a person singing an answer that corresponds with the desired outcome. If two or more members are singing the desired outcome, the questioner might

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choose the person giving the best performance. If no one is singing the desired outcome, then the questioner is at liberty to request any person to consult the 8-Ball again, repeating this until the desired outcome is being sung.

A slap on the back of the chosen performer by the questioner is the signal for all singing and motion to cease. After a moment's respectful silence, the chosen performer delivers a solo improvisation on the answer, which is received by the other temple members with applause or jeering, as appropriate.

The answer sung by the soloist is the outcome that will manifest in the life of the questioner.

How To Scry An Enochian Aethyr

Dim the lights and ignite some incense. Banish the temple, using your preferred banishing ritual. Recite aloud the Nineteenth Enochian call, inserting at the appropriate point the name of the aethyr you wish to scry.⁷² Do this in Enochian rather than English, if possible, but don't get hung up on pronunciation. Make an effort, but in our experience the angels don't mind if your accent is bad.

It's important to scry the aethyrs in strict order, beginning at the outermost (TEX, No. 30) and working inwards (to LIL, No. 1). Scrying the aethyrs leads the magician through a developmental process, as each is progressively more subtle than the last. Attempting to scry an aethyr out of sequence, or one for which you are as yet inadequately advanced may result in hazy or confused results. That said, most magicians should be able to manage the first few outermost aethyrs without much difficulty.

After the call has been recited, vibrate the names of the governors of the aethyr. Each aethyr has three of these, except for TEX, which has four. And then: *Shazam!* The aethyr is open. So close your eyes and watch the show.

⁷² You can obtain a text of the Nineteenth Call on-line from freepages.misc.rootsweb.com/~cgb143/call19.html, or invest in a copy of *The Enochian World of Aleister Crowley* (Crowley et al., 2002), which contains the call and much else besides.

There's a lot of scope for flexibility in how you chose to work. If you're in a group, one person might scry, with the others reciting the call and / or the governors' names. Conceivably, everyone could scry simultaneously, each receiving their own vision and comparing notes at the end. Those who are scrying might prefer to enter a trance state whilst the call is read, by commencing pranayama, performing kundalini yoga, ingestingentheogens, or having an orgasm. Whatever floats your boat. Alternatively, simply adopt a comfortable position and see what happens.

Our preferred way of working is for one person to scry and relate the vision aloud, with the others participating by prompting or asking questions if the flow of images dries up or becomes ambiguous. We've also found it very useful to make an audio recording of the proceedings, which can be written up, referred to, and circulated afterwards.

It's important not to censor or be too rational toward the images that arise in the mind. Very often, the full significance of a session won't become apparent until you take it away, think about it, and maybe even do some research on the symbolism of what was seen. We've noticed that some of the images may be precognitive, pointing to events or impressions in the scryer's life that haven't yet occurred. We've also found that the scryer may fall spontaneously into trance states during the vision, and the depth and quality of the trance may also impart a meaning.

Whatever Enochian magic is, it involves a process of exploration and development, so it's best not to approach it with any rigid expectations.

If the vision becomes incoherent or ceases after a time, this may be a sign that the session is over. Tiredness is an even clearer signal that it's time to stop. One of the nicest things about Enochian magic is that the spirits seem to have our best interests in mind. Unless there's a clear feeling that you should do otherwise, there's no need to banish once the vision is over.

Salgye Du Dalma: Dakini of Clear Light Dreaming

Salgye Du Dalma ('She Who Clarifies Beyond Conception') is a Tibetan dakini (a goddess) who presides over sacred sleep (Wangyal 1998, p. 153-6).



Figure 26: Salgye Du Dalma.

Specifically, she's in charge of 'Clear Light Dreaming', a high and subtle state of non-dual awareness attained during sleep. Beyond lucid dreaming, this is a state of consciousness in which all sense perception, mental imagery and identification with objects falls away, leaving only the light of non-localised consciousness, which adepts describe as possessing a milky blue luminescence. (I'm not sure how that works if there's supposedly no sense-perception, but who am I to argue?)

If you experience a dream of the Clear Light, this is an excellent preparation for your death, after which—according to the Tibetan teachings—you'll pass through the *bardos* or 'transitional states'. You'll need to cultivate a similar state of mind to that of a Clear Light dream, in order to escape an otherwise inevitable rebirth.

I hope to experience a dream like this one day (preferably whilst I'm still alive) and so—to this end—we performed the following puja in honour of Salgye Du Dalma. Your statement of intent needn't specifically refer to Clear Light Dreaming; this is a suitable ritual for calling upon the goddess in any situation where clear perception, wakefulness, and the piercing of illusions are prerequisites.

Preparation

Print out a picture of Salgye Du Dalma⁷³ and place the image on your altar. Light a candle before the image. Assemble the participants in a semi-circle. One person leads the ritual, marking each stage by striking a singing-bowl, or by whatever other signal you prefer.

Contemplate the image for a moment: Salgye Du Dalma dances with a body made of light, in her right hand holding a curved knife, and in her left a bowl made from the top of a skull. She is said to abide in the heart chakra. She is poised atop a white moon disk, which sits upon a golden sun disk, which itself is on a four-petalled lotus.

Raising Energy

A signal is sounded. The participants sit and recite in unison the mantra: OM AH HUM. This is a well-known Tibetan Buddhist mantra. The syllables are the seed syllables for body, speech and mind. By reciting the mantra, you are bringing these aspects of yourself into union, obliterating the distinction between them.

We found it most effective to recite the whole mantra in a single, long breath, the group breathing and chanting in unison, vibrating each part as slowly and for as long as possible. It was hair-raisingly powerful.

⁷³ Get one from: <http://tinyurl.com/l6spre>.

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Entering the Clear Light

When a suitable level of energy and focus has been attained, the signal is sounded again. The group falls silent and begins pranayama, with eyes closed.

The breath pattern we used was a combination of the classic forms known as ‘easy breath’ and ‘alternate nostril breath’.⁷⁴ Kneeling or sitting cross-legged, with a straight back and the head erect, lift the left hand to the nose with the fingers straight and pressed together, the edge of the little finger facing away from the face. Block the left nostril with the side of the thumb. The right hand rests on the right knee in gyan mudra (tips of the thumb and index finger touching; other fingers straight but relaxed). Breathe deeply and slowly through the right nostril. Feel the air fill the belly, then the chest, and then the tops of the lungs—almost to the throat. After the lungs are filled, slowly allow them to empty, pushing out the last of the air slowly and calmly, with the abdominal muscles, before taking the next deep breath.

After about twelve breaths, swap hands, and breathe through the left nostril. Keep alternating the hands, every dozen or so breaths.

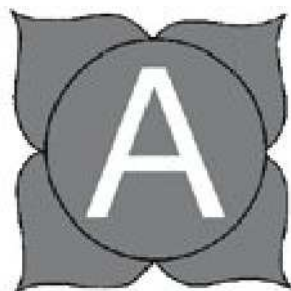


Figure 27: Red lotus,
white ‘A’.

When the leader of the rite senses that a suitable level of tranced-out bliss has been attained, another signal is sounded. The person closest to the left-hand of Salgye Du Dalma ceases pranayama, and lifts the candle from the altar. The candle is taken in a clockwise direction to each member of the group,

⁷⁴ For these and other highly potent breath patterns, see Shaw (2004).

holding it as close as is sensible to each member's closed eyes, whilst they continue pranayama.

The person holding the candle visualises a four-petalled lotus flower, coloured bright-red, with a letter 'A' in its centre.

With their right hand, they project from their mind this image onto the throat chakra of each person in the group. (The throat chakra is positioned roughly where the neck meets the shoulders.) When this has been done for each member, the person holding the candle resumes their pranayama, after passing the candle to the person on their immediate left, who sets off around the group in the same manner.

When all members of the group have visited every other member with the candle, then the leader may signal the end of the ritual.

The red lotus is part of a traditional technique of Tibetan dream yoga, for inducing lucidity during sleep. Ideally, it's the Tibetan equivalent for the letter 'A' that is visualised, but to a Western eye this a complicated beast, so a Roman 'A' is more convenient, and probably just as effective.

A Servitor of Healing

Recently, we've felt a need for a servitor of healing. Personally, I create servitors only if I suspect I'm going to use them a lot. When I decide they're no longer of use I'm always very diligent about disassembling them. I suppose I'm superstitious about the traditional 'rule' that you should never have more than three or four servitors (else you'll dissipate their effectiveness) and they shouldn't be left cluttering the astral plane after you've done with them.

Allow me to introduce FALAHNENGA. Her material base is a green aventurine crystal, stored in a jar alongside her sigil.

We gave birth to her in a group ritual, amidst a cacophony of voices, as each of us shouted at the sigil her attributes and her instructions:

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YOUR NAME IS FALAHNENGA * YOUR NUMBER IS 41 *
YOU ARE A SERVITOR OF HEALING * YOU MANIFEST
AS A BEING OF WATER AND FIRE HELD IN PERFECT
BALANCE * YOU HEAL ALL CONDITIONS OF DISEASE *
YOU INTERVENE GENTLY, BRINGING THE BODY BACK
TO HARMONY WITH NO SIDE-EFFECTS * YOU CAN
HEAL MANY PEOPLE AT ONCE BY REPLICATING
YOURSELF * YOU FEED ON THE DISEASES THAT YOU
DESTROY

We also taught her the mudra that is made to activate her: on both hands, extend the index and middle fingers; bend the ring and little fingers right over at the knuckle, and hold them in place with the thumb; then take the left hand palm upwards and place its extended fingers so that they cross the extended fingers of the right hand, also palm upwards.

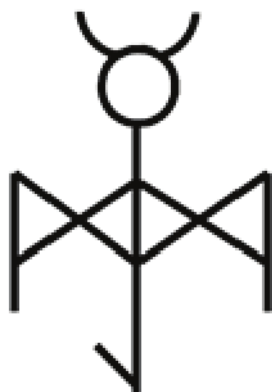


Figure 28: The sigil of FALAHNENGA. (A little bit of Hermes and a whole lot of runes.)

After FALAHNENGA was well and truly programmed, we sealed her crystal and sigil into the jar, and chanted her name for a good while. Then she was ready for use.

You're free to use her too, if you like. Simply make the mudra, visualise her sigil, state your intent, and then use whatever method you prefer to attain gnosis. We chose to chant the Siri Gaitri mantra, which is often used in kundalini yoga for healing purposes. It goes: RA MA DA SA, SAR SAY SO HUNG.

Be sure to tell us about the spectacular results you will achieve with this servitor.⁷⁵

Chakra Check-Up

Under the weather? Spiritually blocked or suffering more existential angst than usual? Then give this ritual a try, which will activate your chakras and remove from them any psychic imbalances or blockages.

The subject lies on his or her back, on the floor, robed or naked, depending on the climate and the friendliness of the company. To each of the rest of the party is given a candle. For this purpose I've discovered that non-drip Hanukkah candles are absolutely perfect, as long as they're held upright throughout the ritual.

The remainder of the party gathers about the subject, kneeling or standing, however they feel most comfortable. The candles are lit and the subject closes his or her eyes. Everyone – including the subject – chants slowly for one full breath the *bija* ('seed') mantras, which activate the chakras successively, starting at the base of the spine and working up to the head. Each bija mantra is chanted unhurriedly, by everyone, three times.

The sequence is given on the next page, starting at the *bottom* of the list. (You may sometimes come across slight variations on these mantras. If you find another version that you prefer, please knock yourself out.)

Whilst chanting, it is the job of the subject to relax. The candle-holders, meanwhile, should use their candles to scry the air above the subject's body for signs of disturbance in the vicinity of the activated chakra.

You may see 'threads' of pain or disturbance in the air; you may glimpse other kinds of astral imagery; or you may experience another kind of intuition or a non-visual sympathetic response. If the chakra is healthy, or if you're not in the right frame of mind, you may experience nothing.

⁷⁵ Email: thevoice@thebaptistshead.co.uk.

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What's important is that if you do experience something then you should act upon it. Move your body or your hand into the place where the disturbance appears to arise, and then accept the disturbance into yourself on the subject's behalf. The reason the subject is suffering is because he or she hasn't been able to accomplish this for themselves, for whatever reason, so it's up to you to try and achieve it instead.

OM	<i>crown</i>
SHAM	<i>third-eye</i>
HAM	<i>throat</i>
YAM	<i>heart</i>
RAM	<i>solar plexus</i>
VAM	<i>sacrum</i>
LAM	<i>base of the spine</i>

Figure 29: Chakras and Their Seed Mantras.

When you have chanted each mantra three times from LAM to OM, start at OM again, and chant each one more time in sequence back down to LAM, to earth the energy.

Anything nasty you may have taken into yourself from the subject will be dispelled by whatever banishing ritual you choose do next.

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