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**SORCERY
AS
VIRTUAL
MECHANICS**

The Actualization of
Unseen Forms
in Occult Working

Second and Revised Edition

STEPHEN MACE

For Richard Corey

Sorcery As Virtual Mechanics

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INTRODUCTION

On the cover you will have seen a "Feynman diagram," a type of schematic invented by the physicist Richard Feynman to help account for the interactions of subatomic particles. The diagram I show on the cover represents one of the simplest possible interactions, the mutual repulsion of two electrons (e^-), with a "virtual" photon (γ) acting to transfer the momentum between them. This essay suggests that an analogous sort of transfer operates on the level of human event, one which provides a mechanism for omens and the results of successful conjurations.

On 15 February 1988 I took the first five copies of the first edition of *Sorcery as Virtual Mechanics* to Book World in New Haven, books that also displayed a Feynman diagram on the cover. When I arrived the nightclerk, George, paid me fifteen dollars and I put the five copies on the shelf for retail sale, by that act publishing the book.

Also on 15 February 1988, Richard Feynman died. I swear I didn't even know he had cancer until I read his obituary two days later.

So a bizarre coincidence occurred to mark the publication of a book that seeks to explain the dynamics behind bizarre coincidences. At the least, such an omen would seem to indicate that one should pay some attention to the mechanism the book proposes -- as if omens and such might actually work in that way.

And so I did, carrying the notion into my work in the guise of psychic stress resolving itself in the form of physical event. But never again did I promote any analogy with quantum behavior, and I had no problem with letting the first edition slide out of print. Though the original kernel of an idea held as firm as ever, I had come to think that many parts of the book presented their subject in ways awkward, badly organized, confused, or just plain wrong. And yet still it could claim that omen, which gave it a certain *authority*...

So it happened that when Douglas Grant of Dagon Productions offered to do a reprint, I suggested a rewrite, and he accepted. You hold the result now. It covers the same ground, but eleven years later. The ground itself has not changed.

I salute Peter J. Carroll, Prophet of Anontology, without whose contribution to magickal linguistics this text could not exist in its present form.

I

The one great fault in current magickal theory lies in its inability to postulate a mechanism for such "acausal" effects as omens and the results of successful conjurations. To call omens instances of "synchronicity" only hangs a different name on them, and to say that a spirit makes a conjuration work only begs the question: so we do conjure a spirit; how does *it* cause the desired event?

The terms "acausal" (in this context) and "synchronicity" come from the work of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, one of the first modern Europeans to bring any degree of academic respectability to the study of occult phenomena. By using these two terms, however, Jung placed a sort of black box over the whole question of mechanism -- implying that we can only know what goes into and comes out of a paranormal phenomenon, while what it actually does must remain outside our ken. But the discipline of sorcery cannot tolerate such faintheartedness, since only by coming to grips with the magickal mechanisms may we manipulate them for our benefit. Thus in this first chapter we will recount two experiences of Jung's own, but then must leave him to strike out for frontiers that no academic dare cross.

To begin to treat this question of mechanism we will examine two very different events -- one that almost defines synchronicity, the other a creature of that most modern of sciences, quantum physics. And yet in a way the actors in one event behave very much like those in the other, as if they both operate on the same principle, though on separate bands of the spectrum of manifestation. I would suggest that we can find this principle at work beneath all aspects of manifestation, if only we can see behind the surface interactions -- those that behave according to established notions of cause and effect. I would suggest that "occult" or "acausal" manifestations like omens and the results of successful conjurations occur due to a filling of latent forms, unseen patterns that lie at the root of our world, yet which never show themselves and so must be inferred if they are to be manipulated. These forms operate without reference to physical bodies or events. Rather, they give shape to the bodies and events, and make possible both the fantastic diversity and the innate unity of the physical universe. We could call these patterns God's blueprints for creation. I would that we could exploit them.

Carl Jung recounts the event that I say defines synchronicity in his essay "On Synchronicity," which you may find on page 505 of *The Portable Jung*. In it Jung describes a patient who sought a cure for her emotional and social isolation. This woman generated her alienation through her tendency to bury all her more human qualities under a "highly polished Cartesian rationalism," which allowed her to act as if "she always knew better about everything." These defenses successfully repelled Jung's therapeutic suggestions. Fully aware of the strength of the blockage, he let the therapy plot its own course while he waited for some circumstance with enough power to pierce her psychic armor.

The event came during a session wherein she told Jung of a dream she had had the night before. In it a person "had given her a golden scarab -- a costly piece of jewelry." In the midst of her story Jung heard something tapping on his garden window. Upon inspection he saw a "large flying insect... knocking against the windowpane from outside in the obvious effort to get into the dark room." Baffled, he opened the window and snatched it on the fly. He found he'd caught a beetle -- a scarabaeid rose-chafer (*Cetonia aurata*) with a gold-green carapace -- a golden scarab indeed! So he gave it to his patient, remarking "Here is your scarab" by way of explanation. This incident marked the beginning of success in her therapy, since it "punctured the desired hole in her rationalism and broke the ice of her intellectual resistance." (pp. 511- 512)

Now obviously this fortuitous enfleshment of the woman's dream defies all established notions of physical cause and effect, and so a materialist will instantly decry it as a mere coincidence. But with such dismissals they only whistle past the graveyard, and so academic science does its best to avoid episodes of this sort entirely. And yet according to quantum physics, episodes very much like it happen all the time -- trillions of times a nanosecond -- wherever charged particles interact.

To keep it simple, let us confine our example to just two electrons, the pointlike carriers of negative charge. Let us imagine them as a part of the solar wind -- beta particles, as it were -- streaming out from the sun at thousands of miles a second. Say these two come close enough that their negative charges interact, causing them to repel one another. How do they accomplish this change in momentum?

According to quantum electrodynamics, they do it by exchanging a "virtual" photon. One electron spawns it, the other absorbs it, and so do they repel one another. Physicists call such photons "virtual" because no

outside observer can detect them since the reaction contains them entirely. But they act actual enough, and the electromagnetic interaction operates through their emission and absorption.

I would here especially emphasize just where the photon comes from. It does not come out of one electron and lodge in the other like a bullet fired from one rock into another. The electrons themselves do not change, only their momenta. Rather, the tension caused by the charged interaction creates the photons out of nothing. According to current theory, when the two electrons approach the phases of their Schrödinger wave equations interact, either canceling out or reinforcing one another. But even though these waveforms describe distribution of event rather than any physical characteristic, they still relate directly to physical characteristics like electric charge, and so we could expect the charges on the two electrons to vary. But electron charge does not vary; it remains forever at 1.602×10^{-19} coulombs. Instead the virtual photons appear out of the vacuum and act to readjust the system. The inability of the electrons to make the necessary change in electric charge creates a stress that spawns the photons *ex nihilo*, and by their action do they adjust the system to resolve that stress.

But then this just parallels what happened between Jung and his patient. A tension had arisen between them. There on the couch lay the woman, unable to reach her own feelings due to her habit of rational assurance, using this same logic to keep Jung from breaking this habit, even though she had paid him money to do just that. In the leather chair sat Jung, politely waiting for the tension to build. When it became unbearable, an event occurred which resolved it.

So a tension has to build for this effect to occur. On the level of elementary particles such strains occur as a matter of course, simply because elementary particles cannot vary in their attributes. Their physical constants (electric charge, rest mass, magnetic moment, etc.) never change, so when stresses arise among them they cannot adjust themselves to resolve them. Instead the energy of the interaction creates other particles which transfer the stresses and thus maintain the appropriate conservation laws as required.

On higher levels of complexity, however, this form of creation *ex nihilo* must occur less frequently, since the very complexity of the actors allows them to resolve stress through internal adjustment. We can account for the result of an egg hitting the floor, for instance, with-

out resorting to virtuality. The same applies to baseballs hitting, say, bats. They compress and then expand, and this action mechanically accomplishes the necessary changes in momentum. So long as such mundane mechanisms remain available, no "synchronous" appearance of events out of nowhere can occur.

Thus if we want to generate events by virtual means upon this our plane of human interaction, we must take great pains to force the tensions to accumulate, doing all we can to prevent any premature discharge through an adaptive change on the part of the participants. In the case of Jung and his patient, this meant Jung had to politely put up with her intellectual arrogance while the strain increased. He could allow himself no emotional response that could spark a scene, as that would allow the energy to dissipate in a lot of screaming and yelling, setting them right back where they started on the course of therapy.

In his *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung described another experience he had that follows this pattern, one that acted fundamentally to alter the relationship between himself and Sigmund Freud. During a visit to Freud in Vienna in 1909, Jung found himself obliged to endure a long harangue wherein Freud dismissed all paranormal or occult phenomena, his logic the most empty sort of positivism. Jung kept silent, stifling the urge to contradict his mentor, and then felt as if his "diaphragm were made of iron and were becoming red-hot -- a glowing vault." At that instant a high bookcase gave such a sharp crack that both men jumped back in fear of its falling on them. Jung offered this as a paranormal phenomena: "a so-called catalytic exteriorization phenomenon."

Freud replied that such talk was "sheer bosh."

Jung insisted Freud was in error, and predicted an immediate repetition of the report. As soon as he spoke the words, the bookcase cracked again. "To this day," Jung wrote, "I don't know what gave me this certainty. But I knew beyond a doubt that the report would come again." (pp. 155-156)

Jung went on to say that this episode marked the beginning of the unraveling of his relationship with Freud, in that Freud never quite trusted him again. Like the exchange of a virtual photon between two electrons, the event caused two individuals to change directions with respect to one another.

Of course people disagree and part company all the time and for the most part the process holds no occasion for omens, or even for catalytic

exteriorization phenomena. But Jung quite frankly states that he projected a father image onto Freud, and that as his protege he could not openly oppose him. Thus the tension could find no release through normal means. Instead it built up until it spawned the event that initiated the separation, and this without obliging Jung to take any responsibility for it at all.

Here omens merge with the type of the poltergeist. Poltergeist phenomena generally center around a highly repressed, hostile pubescent child. Repressed hatred amplified by a surge of unformed sexuality will have its release, and at first it gains it through an honest wrecking of the household through paranormal means. If investigators later find that many of the children end up by cheating, this does not oblige us to dismiss the initial outbreak. The outbreak itself would do much to ease the strain; any media attention it attracted would do more; and if in the midst of this attention the effect ceased, the child might find it satisfying to cause it to begin again. And through the attainment of this satisfaction, the child would experience a first conscious awareness of the source of the tension, which he or she could then release through more normal means. Poltergeist phenomena almost never last long. Transient, they seem fleeting, virtual as it were.

This vague sense of unreality applies to all omens, and even to the most successful conjurations. The event occurs but the causal links remain somehow hidden, and so we find it difficult to file the event in memory. Moses raised his arms and parted the Sea of Reeds; he lowered them and the marsh lay as still as before. The materialists dismiss it as a seiche. But the superb timing, we protest, for a seiche to occur just as Pharaoh brought his army up to chop the Israelites to pieces. Coincidence, the materialists shrug. Instead I would submit that seiches, having precedent on the Sea of Reeds, exist as a sort of virtual event in that environment, a form that will actualize when energized by sufficient tension. This could consist of meteorological pressure or the magickally directed fear of the Children of Israel. After all, Moses' mother had brought him as a child unto Pharaoh's daughter, and she'd made him her son, and in his place at court he had learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians, the premier magicians of the age.

At this point I should remark that we may no longer call any of this "acausal." Of course Carl Jung called synchronicity an "acausal connecting principle," but with our hypothesis of virtual mechanics we have

supplied a cause, and so cannot use that word anymore. To summarize the virtual dynamic, it consists of a strain on one level resolving itself through an event on another, often "lower" level, even as the form of the event exists on some sort of "ideal" level "beyond" or "behind" both of the others. The nature of the tension attracts this "virtual" entity from the level above; the energy of the tension actualizes its form as a tangible event on the level below; and the event provides the tension's resolution. In itself the beetle hitting Jung's window could not constitute a miracle; bugs fly, and it did. The miracle, as with Moses, involved the superb timing, as if Something Unseen had orchestrated the event. Virtual mechanics holds that the strain on the level of human interaction -- between Jung and his patient -- caused the patient to define a suitable form on the level of her dreams, a form the tension filled and actualized as an event on the level of flesh and death: the green-gold beetle wriggling in her hand. Jung could see no mechanism for this "acausal" synchronicity because the forms exist on the level *behind* that of human interaction. On this level dreamers dream and sorcerers weave their spells.

II

The dynamic behind omens and the one that operates conjurations both function within the domain of virtual mechanics, conjuring working as a method for generating synchronicities that promote the conjurer's purpose. The act of conjuring manufactures the tension that fills the form the conjurer defines "above," spawning the beneficial event "below."

The particular problems of conjuring involve the definition of an efficacious virtual form, the production of sufficient energy to actualize it, and the focusing of the energy into the form so it does actually fill it, rather than in any way misfiring.

All these procedures have analogues in the quantum realm, and by looking at how things work virtually there, we can gain insight on how to better operate in the realms of psyche and human event. To this end we should examine a second sort of quantum phenomenon: the creation of matter out of pure energy. Like the exchange of a virtual photon between two charged particles, creation of substance from Pure Light involves virtual mechanics. And as an analogue for magick, it closely parallels the method for conjuring taught by the English sorcerer Austin Osman Spare.

To create matter from pure energy the quantum experimenters contrive to cause electrons and positrons to collide at speeds that approach that of light, their mutual annihilation providing the free energy required to make up the substance created. Electrons are, of course, the motes of negative charge that orbit positively charged nuclei to make atoms, and whose movement in wires manifests as electric current. Positrons are the electrons' antiparticles. According to quantum theory, there exists for each particle an antiparticle, and if a particle and its antiparticle should meet, they will dissolve in a burst of pure energy. By bombarding tungsten nuclei with high energy electrons, experimenters operating particle accelerators can produce electron-positron pairs. Magnetic fields can then separate them so they accelerate going opposite directions within a storage ring, where instruments can record the products of their collisions.

What the researchers find depends on how much energy the collisions produce -- this determined by the velocity of the impact. At low energies the electron and positron annihilate to form high-frequency photons: gamma rays. At higher energies, however, massive particles result, mostly short-lived quark-antiquark pairs called mesons. The energies of these particles will just equal the energy liberated by the destruction of

the electron and positron. In fact, at certain 'resonate' energies to which the operators can 'tune' the accelerator, where the energy of each collision equals the mass ($E=mc^2$) of a specific type of particle, particle production can multiply a hundred-fold over energies just a little higher or lower.

I would here emphasize that these heavy product particles do not in any way consist of fragments of the electron and positron. No fragments survive the collision, all mass reverting to a blob of pure, unformed energy. Physicists call this a virtual photon, but it acts like no photon anyone anywhere has ever seen. Unlike the massless normal photons that zip along at the speed of light, these virtual types have very large masses -- up to 30 billion electron volts. Also, since the electron and positron collide with equal masses and speeds from opposite directions, the system has zero momentum, and hence the 'photon' has no velocity. Such an impossible entity cannot last for even a billionth of a second, and so its energy immediately makes actual whatever virtual particles need that particular quantity of energy to come forth. No fragments these, they consist of creations out of the vacuum.

According to quantum theory, while the vacuum has no matter in it, it nonetheless seethes with unfilled forms waiting for energy to provide the substance they need to actualize. Each of these empty forms exists as a virtual particle, and when supplied with sufficient free energy, any number of leptons and quarks can turn from insubstantial patterns into detectable bits of matter. Thus the patterns for the particles exist prior to the particles themselves, as if on some sort of 'formal' level, as if Plato were right! The presence of free energy actualizes the forms, but even without the energy the forms still exist, waiting unfilled -- virtual.

The magick of Austin Osman Spare also calls for the generation of undefined energy -- what he called "free belief" -- which the magician uses to actualize forms defined and implanted in deep mind -- our own, human virtual field -- this through the repression of alphabetic sigils.

Austin Spare was born in London in 1886, died in 1956, and worked both by profession and predilection as an artist. He used sorcery freely both to cause physical effects and also for inspiration in his art. Spare spent several years in the orbit of Aleister Crowley, including time as a member of Crowley's A.:A.:, and two of Spare's drawings appear in the second number of Crowley's *Equinox*. But Crowley's demands for discipline galled Spare, and he could not abide the imposition of Golden Dawn

symbolism onto his psyche. In fact, Spare's reputation as a pioneer of sorcerous methodology rests on his insistence that each individual magician develop a symbolic system of his or her own. We each approach the psychic wilderness from our own unique yet familiar terrain, and our maps each must have the fluidity to adapt to our special orientations.

I should note that this subordination of symbolic tradition to magickal expediency has a venerable precedent. According to the Egyptologist Ogden Goelet, writing in his commentary to the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, scholars have evidence the ancient Egyptians would "invent myths to explain the origins of rituals and ritual instruments, rather than inventing rituals to reenact mythical events." (p. 149) I imagine the Egyptian priesthood did this because through magickal and astral research they would discover previously unknown power dynamics, and these needed an explanatory gloss simply as a way to remember the insight and pass it on to their colleagues. Of course in their culture they would compose such a gloss in mythical terms. Since the newly discovered dynamic would suggest new rituals and implements, the new myth would incorporate these within its narrative. It would serve as the spiritual cover story for an innovation in psychic technology.

This willingness to approach the psychic realms with an open mind, even to the extent of contradicting traditions one's predecessors have carved in stone, serves for me as the ideal for magickal practice. One's gods do best if they wait as a troop of available characters that one can cast in whatever roles arise out of one's circumstances. Nor should one hesitate to recruit new actors whenever need demands it.

Austin Spare's magick centers on the relativity of belief. He felt that the shapes our worlds take depend on what we believe about them. As he writes in his *Book of Pleasure*, "We are what we believe and what it implies by a process of time in the conception; creation is caused by this bondage to formula." (p. 1) Of course much of what we believe results from the parental and cultural programming we have endured since birth, with this programming reinforced each moment by the similar programming of everyone else with whom we have contact, and all the media input too. But these consensual world-views need not trap us. By manipulating our beliefs we may manipulate our realities, if only we can work with enough depth and power. Obviously we need the power simply to animate the operation. But we must also work deeply because when Spare spoke of beliefs, he referred not to conscious, discursive

opinions, but to presumptions built as reflexes and habits into the unconscious mind. If we wish to change this programming, we must make the desire to do so "organic," directing it down into deep psyche rather than letting it flash itself out in fantasy and its inevitable bad reaction. We must make the belief latent, but with a way of focusing desire into it to energize and animate it. For this Spare offered his technique of sigils energized with free belief, a method more than sufficient to make his occult philosophy into a practical psychic technology.

So the sorcerer must learn how to give depth and power to belief. To obtain the depth, Spare's method uses deliberate repression as its tool for implantation. The magician strives to not think about what he or she wants -- this even as he or she charges it by pouring all available energy into visualizing the sigil that represents the wish: a monogram of the desire. To augment this energy Spare used what he called "the Neither-Neither principle," a mental procedure for turning random passion and prejudice into undefined, "free" energy.

So free energy focused into a deeply imbedded psychic form actualizes as a magickal result -- fleeting, perhaps, but still pregnant with consequence. This nicely mirrors the subatomic dynamic of free energy actualizing virtual forms to spawn detectable particles -- short-lived mesons, it's true, but they do function as the particles that transmit the "strong force" that holds the atomic nucleus together. And Spare's source for free energy supports my use of the quantum analogy. Just as the physicists' free energy comes from matter-antimatter annihilation, the Neither-Neither also renders its free belief out of a destructive combination of opposites. The Neither-Neither principle asserts that there can be no "truth" anywhere not balanced by an equally "true" opposite -- an "antitrueth", if you like -- and only perspective and circumstance can determine which seems more true at any given time. A sorcerer can obtain free belief for conjuring by using this principle to dismember any strong passion. To apply it, simply wait until you are positive something is true, then search for its opposite. When you find it oppose it to your truth and let them annihilate one another as well as they may. Any residue you should oppose to its opposite, and so on, continuing the dismemberment until the passion behind the original belief becomes undirected psychic energy -- free belief. Like the "virtual photon" resulting from electron-positron annihilation, this will tend immediately to actualize the first nascent (i.e. virtual) belief it encounters. Thus the magician must

take care to direct it immediately into his or her magickal work, lest it manifest as obsession, fantasy, or in some other way contrary to the magician's purpose.

The Neither-Neither works against all limitations, material objects as well as intellectual opinions and emotions of the heart. If your truth is, for instance, that you own an impressive automobile, simply look ahead through the years, imagining your vehicle's slow deterioration until its final rendezvous with the compactor, and its reincarnation as a toaster.

Once the sorcerer has liberated free belief, he or she must focus it to actualize the specific form that can reify as his or her desire. These forms lie deep and the sorcerer must be sure the energy does not discharge on the way down, before it gets to where it can work virtually. And once it charges the form, he or she must take care not to let it leak out, a leak which can manifest as vivid fantasies of ultimate fulfillment. Just as with Jung and his patient, the sorcerer must encourage the energy to clump and fester in the cavities beneath consciousness -- this by refusing to allow thoughts of the magick to enter awareness, except of course when he or she has energy available to further that magick.

This leaves us with the symbol that serves as the focus for the free belief. Since, again, the wizard must keep the energy insulated to prevent discharging, Spare recommended the use of sigils that appear wholly non-representational, giving no hint of their meaning. Only in this way can the sorcerer move the energy with complete indifference, focusing every bit to actualize the result.

Spare's scheme for non-representationality relies on the use of an alphabetic sigil. To design one, write out your desire in a concise sentence, cross out the duplicate letters, and make a monogram out of the ones remaining. This monogram is your sigil. Memorize it, then put it out of mind until you have free belief -- or any other variety of inarticulate enthusiasm -- available to charge it. At these times visualize the sigil and push the energy into it and through it so it grows brightly in your mind's eye. Continue until the energy exhausts itself and the sigil fades. Then repress all thought of the sigil and banish. Do not allow yourself to think of the sigil again until you have more energy to use to charge it.

Thus in my take on Spare's method,* the repression has two aspects. One tries not to think too much of what one wants, except to the

*Spare's own account tends toward the vague.

extent one has to, refraining from fantasy but not worrying too much if one's goal does come to mind now and then. *But one allows oneself absolutely no thought of the sigil* except when one has energy immediately available to charge it. For instance, if you would meet your soul mate, your True Love, your one and only, then obviously you will have to work on planes besides the magickal. You will have to make yourself available to members of your sexual affinity group, and make yourself attractive to them. This will require conscious thought that at least touches upon the forbidden topic, and it won't do any harm to put off sexual adventurers by telling them that you search for this special person, and they don't quite qualify. Of course you must not fantasize about your True Mate's specific characteristics, the circumstances of your meeting, or how wonderful life will be once you can get it on. Such thoughts draw down your energy but don't help promote your purpose on any plane. Also, they can pin down your future with the beliefs they define, and also the anti-beliefs, since on the level of discursive thought the dual principle remains inescapable.

Of course if you use Spare's magick to find your Soul Mate, you will design an alphabetic sigil to that end, and memorize it. *And then you will repress all thought of that sigil.* You must make this repression absolute. The sigil serves as the conduit that carries the power safely through the level of deliberative thought down into the deep unconscious where the virtual dynamic rules. By visualizing it you open it, so when you do so you had better have energy ready to send down through it. Otherwise you let what you've already accumulated well up and out to waste itself in consciousness -- the occult equivalent of a bunch of gamma rays. The form empties out and no actualization takes place.

To close this section I would offer an overview of our paired sorcerous dynamics -- that of omens and that of conjurations -- with their analogous quantum processes: photon exchange between charged particles and creation of matter out of free energy. The exchange of virtual photons between electrically charged particles provides the best analogy for ominous events because both dynamics resolve stresses between 'charged' entities. The omen impacts upon the 'charged' relationship between two people (or between a person and some aspect of his or her circumstances) and by its occurrence causes them to change directions with respect to one another, just like the photon pops up to resolve the tensions between the charged electrons.

Particle creation out of free energy, on the other hand, provides a better analogy for conjuring because the conjurer has no particular opposing party to serve as an interacting, 'charged' pole. In fact, sorcerers go to some trouble (ceremonial magick, the Neither-Neither, the sex act, power spots, rock & roll, bungee jumping) to manufacture the power they require to energize the operation. Using the Neither-Neither, for instance, the sorcerer puts belief against anti-belief to generate free belief which then actualizes the virtual form signified by the sigil and implanted in unconsciousness through that sigil's repression. Using a particle accelerator, the physicist puts electrons against positrons to produce free energy to actualize the virtual particles seething unfilled in the vacuum -- whichever ones the energy has strength to animate. Thus the results of both the sorcerous and the quantum processes share another characteristic: both will exhibit an apparently random behavior, with only the probabilities fairly certain, not the specifics. True, accelerators can be 'tuned' to specific energies, but this only improves the chances of particle production, with no specific reaction in any way certain. In the same way conjurers can specify their desires so they don't backfire, or misfire, and thus they produce results that promote will rather than bewilder it. But the events that result will still appear spontaneously, unpredictably -- and often only for a moment. Just as with Jung and his patient, the sorcerer works and waits for some 'acausal' event like the scarab at the window, an incident that appears as if by chance but which can in some strange way encourage the accomplishment of the sorcerer's purpose, if the sorcerer has the speed to grab it out of the air. Like pi mesons, such events carry a strong force, but if left to themselves they vanish in an instant, leaving only memories vague like the ghosts of departed neutrinos.

III

Throughout this essay I've been using the word "Virtual" quite freely, and not always in the same way. So to begin this third section I'll summarize the ways I've applied "virtual" to our subject: first in physics and then in sorcery. The parallels between the two fields seem striking, and apt to encourage further speculation, for each of the two realms uses the word in two complementary ways.

In physics the word "virtual" describes:

1.) Particles whose existence theorists infer, but which they cannot detect because they exist entirely within their reactions, and only the products of these reactions present themselves to the instruments. In general, such "virtual" particles pop out of the vacuum to transmit forces within systems whose "actual" components are elementary -- that is, have no internal components to adjust so they might adapt themselves to their changing relationship with one another.

2.) The unfilled forms of particles, forms whose existence physicists infer because if they supply free energy, "actual," detectable particles come into existence. This inference of a virtual pre-state of matter explains creation with electron-positron annihilation, the identical nature of every elementary particle of any given type, and also the probability-driven nature of quantum manifestations. The forms the various particles take exist in the virtual realm, and which the energy actualizes and which it leaves unfilled must remain a matter of chance, no more predictable than which slot on a roulette wheel the little ball will fall into.

In sorcery, "virtual" describes:

1.) A seemingly random event which injects meaning or change into a human interaction, an event evidentially spawned out of the unconscious minds of the participants by energy balked of release by their refusal to acknowledge (through ignorance or psychic inhibition) the fact of its generation. Because such an event has no rational connection to the interaction, those who bind themselves to reasonableness will insist the omen carries no meaning, that it is merely coincidence, this even though it indicates or resolves a specific tension in a decisive way.

2.) The mental form, potential but not yet substantiated, which a sorcerer defines in mind and then energizes so it will actualize as the result of his or her conjuration.

chased us out of the trees and we found we could use our hands to hold tools. But as we shall see, this may have as much to do with the art of sorcery as the science of biology.

So do I suggest that forms for cockroach and human preexist on the virtual level, only waiting for the pain or promise of circumstances to call them into actuality? This would account for evolution's tendency to move in spurts followed by long periods of relative stability. Do species then exist as predetermined conglomerations, finished forms that have inhabited the virtual realm since creation, just like the leptons and quarks? Possibly, but it puts quite a load onto omniscience to expect it to work out Nature entirely in advance. I would prefer to say the species themselves make the improvements in their lines. Just as sorcerers can define forms by conjuring, and dreamers by dreaming, so can any life form desire improvements in its physical vehicle and, if the need grows sufficiently intense, get them.

For example, let us consider the situation of two proto-giraffes -- lovers, in fact -- faced with the problem of providing for the family they so long for. Let us suppose that for millennia the leaves at the tops of the trees had been the prerogative of, say, a race of monstrous camels, but that a virus has recently rendered them extinct. So the treetops flourish, and our proto-giraffes can only reach ten feet. But, perhaps, they have the concept of *long neck* as an ideal, have attained rapport with the virtual image, in fact. If during the sex act both partners wish for this form in their most intense proto-giraffe way, might not their passion actualize long necks in the persons of their offspring?

This of course interprets the technique of sex magick as a direct exploitation of the dynamic for speciation, but then so it goes. We take our dynamics where we can get them. On the other hand, this brings us to the question of when our own species will take the next step. Of course with our mastery of technology, we now have the ability consciously to alter our circumstances long before we accumulate the brute passion for change that speciation requires. So I don't expect it to happen very soon here on earth. Instead it would seem that outer space will provide the environment that demands the New Human, and as soon as we start bearing children in microgravity, the New People will appear. Adapted bones and digestive systems we may surely expect, but what other bizarre new forms -- dynamics of perception and mentation -- will the human unconscious pull up out of the virtual realm to tart up the mix? Tune in next century for the next thrilling episode!

I would note that the supposition that such forms as "long neck" have a virtual existence gains support from those species that appear almost identical and yet have no relation to one another. For instance, sharks, ichthyosaurs and dolphins look quite similar, yet we know them as fish, dinosaur and mammal, respectively -- different species that all chose the form for "oceanic predator." The form waits virtually in the catalogue of Mind, and the species that picks it obtains its powers and its limitations.

The question then becomes, "What defined the first forms for life, especially the key of DNA?" For my reply I must say the conception came from the same Intelligence that set the quantum constants so the Universe nurtures life as well as it does. Thus I presume that Mind does not depend on Matter for its existence, but vice-versa. Mind -- call it God if you like, but only if you consent to call animal awareness God, too -- comes before energy to set the forms that will tie energy up so it can make the solid stuff of the universe. Why? The question has no certain answer, but the schools I favor suggest curiosity and self-pleasure -- God's bewonderment over Its own potential and powers, and also Its desire to enjoy them. Austin Spare called this motivation "Self-love;" in his *Focus of Life* he tells us: "Existence is a continuation of self-realization. To create value where there is none." (p. 8) That is, Mind by itself has no value because Mind without Matter has no consequence, and consequence distinguishes the ephemeral from the real. To make a self-realization that counted, Mind had to solidify a physical ground that would take the shape of its Fundamental Concept and provide a basis for the elaboration of this Concept through the efforts of discrete, living, intelligent points of view: extensions of its Essential Self. The Big Bang began it all, and the elaboration has proceeded apace ever since.

But Mind thus conceived -- the virtual realm as a continuous spectrum stretching from the quantum through the biological to the psychic -- would seem universal, suggesting an at least potential connection to omniscience through any given organism. But if so, why do individual life-forms have so little awareness, generally, of this cosmic connection, their attentions captured instead by the partible sphere? Survival, mostly, in that this dynamic of partition depends on life living upon death, and we do better if we keep focused on staying on the right side of *that* duality. Also, organisms in general tend to direct their attentions most earnestly to their interactions with parents and sex partners, and so does

an identification with partibility impose itself here also, overwhelming any residual awareness of the connection to Universal Mind.

With our virtual understanding to inform us, we have a guide to the operations of this backstage Mind, a guide that can perhaps point out opportunities to exploit it. Sex magick offers a ready example of what might come of inquiries along virtual lines -- the application of the psychosexual dynamic for speciation as a means to promote individual will. No wonder Jahweh objects to it so strongly.

The details of this subject will occupy us for the remainder of this small book; for now we need but look at the one constant law that applies across all bands of the virtual spectrum. Austin Spare called it "the dual principle" and made it a critical part of his system, setting it up as a corollary to the Neither-Neither.

The dual principle reigns as Prime Necessity within the virtual realm. Mirrored in the Taoist yin and yang and in Crowley's $0=2$, it holds that all distinction must assert itself through opposition. If we can distinguish up, we must also deal with down; if life, then also death. On the quantum level this plays out in the opposition of charge, and in the fact that for every particle there exists an antiparticle -- and so the totality of the products of a given quantity of free energy will possess electrical neutrality and an equivalence of matter and antimatter. In biology, life and death and their attendant biochemical cycles keep Nature full-figured and fertile. And in human affairs a balance also asserts itself, though we often act as if it did not apply to us personally, or Culturally, either.

So for every force there appears an equal and opposite response. We risk the least from this principle when we incorporate the necessary dualities into the operation of what we wish to occur. We risk the most when we exalt one pole of a duality while repressing, or at least disregarding, the other. By doing so we defy the balance of power that pervades the web of Nature and thus invite Nemesis to grace us with her care.

A knack for divination will head off any number of disasters along these lines. Operating as random symbol generators to produce omens at will, the runes, cards and coins possess the sensitivity to read our hubris early on and alert us to it before it grows into an enmeshing vice. So it pays to master at least one such system. In my case, memorization through use of the I Ching hexagrams gave me the knack for it, and that kind of unconscious implantation works for the other systems as well. I might

also remark that if you divine for someone else, your subtle rapport with them will count for more than any specific concentration by you on their question. The energies that transform the virtual stresses in the querent's life into the actual symbols of toss or spread come from the querent's depths, far lower than any conscious effort at understanding you the diviner may have the power to make. You need only assert a link to the querent, and then to sever it once you have laid out the figure.

Thus does the dual principle dominate sorcerous methodology also, the diviner acting oppositely to the conjurer, since conjurers manufacture energy consciously and then send it down to the depths, and make a strong effort to give that energy the identity it needs to do its special work there.

IV

Throughout this essay I have used the terms "magick" and "sorcery" rather loosely, and at this point I should tighten up my terminology. We can define magick as psychic technology in general -- any method that enables the practitioner to treat psyche or psychic power as a ground to be mined for pleasure and the profit of one's will. Thus even orthodox religions have magickal techniques that the devout may use to further their devotions and collect their just rewards here on earth. Sorcery, on the other hand, acts as a subset of magick, magick done on the assumption that psyche tends to coalesce into distinct "spirits," each with its own agenda that it works to accomplish whenever it has energy to do so. The art of sorcery consists of identifying or defining these spirits and then binding them so they will obey the sorcerer's will, if he or she has but the presence of mind to command them.

The discerning reader will have noticed the phrase "whenever it has energy to do so" and will wonder if perhaps spirits also act as virtual forms waiting for energy to actualize them, and to this I will answer "yes." In both the realms of sorcery and psychiatry, the notion of spirits as virtual forms -- and the human unconscious as our band on the virtual spectrum -- serves as an effective guide to understanding psyche and applying that understanding to manipulate it as needed. Our psyches consist of clusters of specific agenda -- spirits in a virtual state -- more or less under the control of a central column of awareness and will 'embodied' in a more or less coherent subtle body (Kundalini, chakras, and the energy flows that connect and branch out from them). If we can manage these spirits effectively, we may apply the virtual dynamic to actualize events both 'subjective' and 'objective' as our circumstances might determine. Any power we can conceive of we may define as a specific spirit, bind it to obey us, and then enhance or diminish it as our wills might determine.

Conversely, if we have immature, undeveloped or crippled centers, we will have little control over our spirits, and they will pull us this way and that as they struggle for control, one against the other. If while in such a state a person should try to do sorcery, he or she may lack the power to bind the spirits that respond to the evocations, and so will the 'sorcerer' be obsessed by them. Thus a person who would practice this art must first take care to develop his or her center, and exercise his or

her will, this through a period of practice of yoga, an ongoing development of the subtle body, and ascetic exercises like Aleister Crowley's *Liber III vel Jugorum*: basic training for the struggle to come.

Here sorcery snugs up against psychology, psychiatry and psychopathology -- though admittedly the match doesn't always fit. With many mental aberrations the cause has more to do with faulty brain chemistry than any distortions in or lack of control over the patient's spiritual sheath. We do best to see these as physical ailments that manifest through psychic symptoms. Other problems, however, come directly from the spirits one has acquired over time. What actually happens depends on their nature, their strength, and whether one knows one has them or if they normally keep out of sight, and only spring forth to do their worst when one least expects them.

We can find the origins of the spirits that vex us in genetics, early conditioning, current habits of thought, and possibly (though I would neither affirm it nor deny it) previous incarnation and/or astrological configuration. The practice of sorcery gives one both a means for identifying and controlling these spirits and also an imperative need to do so, since if a previously unacknowledged demon uses the energy of an unrelated conjuration to actualize unexpectedly, the situation can turn catastrophic.

As an example, let us suppose a man's father beat him during childhood. Say this abuse fixed in his mind an association of violence with emotional intimacy, but in a compulsion to be rid of the senseless agony of it all, he buried this association under a layer of outwardly normal personality. Thus it acquired a virtual identity and now functions as a specific spirit. Normally it lies dormant, but if intimacy with another -- spouse, child or lover -- grows too strong, the energy can actualize the form as a physical attack on the person the man loves most. As soon as the energy has spent itself, the spirit will retire -- becoming again virtual -- leaving the man's personal life a shambles and his self-image more twisted than before.

The crux of the problem lies in the shadowy nature of such a spirit. Because of its normally virtual condition, the man will have no real awareness of it as an independent entity, and so will not think of it as a possible source of the violence. Instead he will try to rationalize the violence in terms of his conscious view of things, twisting his understanding of both himself and the person he hits to account for the behavior of the demon.

Since the spirit normally stays virtual, it evades accusation, and when it has energy and actuality, it so dominates that one tends not to have the presence of mind to make inquiries.

Now one can apply both sorcery and psychiatry to this sort of problem, and if sorcery works more quickly and directly, it does so with some risk, and thus requires greater courage and self-control.

In psychiatry the therapist would gradually make the patient aware of the source of the aberrant behavior, allowing the patient to bring it into consciousness, where it would lose its overwhelming power of possession. Or perhaps the therapist would follow a different strategy, and work to dismantle the defenses the patient uses to keep the pathological form hidden in its virtual state. In either case the therapist strives to bring the form into the light.

Sorcery requires a more direct confrontation and so will the sorcerer go looking for the form on its own ground: the dim recesses of the astral plane. More substantial than imagination but without the tensile strength of a dream, the astral plane serves as the arena wherein any spirit we have the wit to define awaits our summons. To begin to control its denizens, the sorcerer must first affirm his responsibility for each and every component of his personality, even parts as yet unknown. Since the man in our example hits his lovers when they aren't hitting him, he has ample motivation to use the techniques of astral projection and conjuration to discover the spirit of his violence. Through this work he may confront the spirit's origins and then bind it so it will obey his commands to it. Then he may tell it to be silent. As often as his intimacies call it into actuality, he must redirect its energy and send it back to its virtual state, until it shrivels from lack of nourishment and holds no threat to his lovers anymore.

Now the crisis here occurs with the astral confrontation, the moment when the sorcerer meets the demon face-to-face. In the case of our example, once the sorcerer calls his demon up for binding he must eschew any sort of evasion or denial. He must look into its depths and acknowledge all the vectors of pain, indulgence, resentment and self-loathing that go together to compose its form. If he can do this audaciously and with sincerity, and learn the demon's true name, pronouncement of a ritual charge will bring it under control. The same applies to every other namable entity within his spiritual sheath. Of course he must have more strength than they in order to master them, but through

exercises of concentration and subtle self-development he can reinforce his center even as his spirits and demons slumber in their virtual state. A sorcerer can also seek out benevolent allies on the mental planes, spirits that can back him or her up during any difficult confrontations.

But of course strength can't do it all. One can have the concentration of a concert pianist, or even a pugilist, but if one does not have the desire to be impeccable, one will simply accept one's neuroses as one's God-given right to be a stinker, and never even think of binding the spirits at the root of them. Thus even a mage like Aleister Crowley, bearer of the Word of the New Aeon, could turn on his friends one after another, justifying his callousness and fiscal irresponsibility with a monumental arrogance. Competence in sorcery does not necessarily make for psychic integrity. It only makes psychic integrity rather easy to obtain if one has the will to acquire it.

V

Having no acquaintance with quantum physics, Austin Spare never mentions the virtual realm, or not as such. Instead he expands the concept of unconsciousness so it includes most of the same terrain, becoming essentially the same thing. Calling it "The Storehouse of Memories with an Ever-Open Door," in *The Book of Pleasure* he describes it thusly:

"Know the subconsciousness to be an epitome of all experience and wisdom, past incarnations as men, animals, birds, vegetable life, etc., etc., everything that exists, has and ever will exist. Each being a stratum in the order of evolution. Naturally then, the lower we probe into these strata, the earlier will be the forms we arrive at; the last is the Almighty Simplicity. And if we succeed in awakening them, we shall gain their properties, and our accomplishments shall correspond." (p. 47)

Thus does Spare present us with a basic topology for the virtual realm, one whose core could easily hold the forms for lepton and quark, though of course Spare doesn't take it that far. But he does suggest that these primeval forms serve as sources of inspiration and power in our surface experience, both magickal and otherwise.

Magickally, we do this sort of work by evoking specific animal forms to take on their power with their knowledge. Taken to the point of obsession, this accounts for Spare's method of atavistic resurgence. On a less intense level of sorcerous practice, one can easily enough visualize taking the form of an animal to obtain its powers for a conjuration or an astral projection. Crowley, for instance, suggests in *Magick Without Tears* taking the form of a hawk to assist in astral travel over great distances. (p. 191) And witnesses report that Austin Spare apparently used the method for obtaining physical strength. In their book *The Search for Abraxas*, Nevill Drury and Stephen Skinner offer a report by Spare's biographer Kenneth Grant concerning an occasion when Spare needed to lift a heavy load of lumber. According to Grant, Spare sigillized the sentence, "This is my wish, to obtain the strength of a tiger," then closed his eyes and visualized the design. The response came at once. The rush of power bent him like a sapling in a gale, but he forced himself steady and focused the energy into his purpose. "A great calm descended and he found himself able to lift the load easily." (p. 66)

I would note, however, that Spare had passed 63 years when Grant first met him, and that he died at age 70 from an emergency operation for

an internal complaint. One wonders if aging wizards show wisdom when they use potent magicks to lift loads they otherwise could not. Even if they can summon the power, can their physical vehicles sustain it?

Be all this as it may, according to Spare this dynamic of possession by animal forms accounts for mundane inspirations as well as occult, for instance technical and scientific innovations. In *The Book of Pleasure* Spare asserts that the resurgence of bird atavisms inspired the inventions that enabled humans to conquer the air. Yes, one might reply, but powered flight required propulsion systems, and what atavisms account for the internal combustion engine? Or propellers? Or jet propulsion?

Well, octopi use jets; rotifers use propellers; and the internal combustion engine consists of an arrangement of pistons. Every air-breathing vertebrate who has ever reproduced, or gone through the motions of trying, has experienced the pressure dynamics of pistons.

The big question for the virtual theorist then becomes: where do these forms come from? Sure, rotifers use propellers, but where did they get them? A flash in their protozoal imaginations made flesh through the efficacious chemistry of unicellular organization? This does strain credulity, but barring random chance (as we surely must), it does imply certain forms had a pre-Creation existence, as if God had worked out at least the basic ones in advance, which the apparent contrivance of the quantum order strongly suggests. Thus a proto-rotifer would access the pre-existent, god-defined form of rotary propulsion, and a proto-giraffe would access the pre-existent, god-defined form of long neck, and the ancestors to the Cro-Magnons would access the Divine Form of Cosmic Intelligence -- the atavism of the Logos itself.

And the next step for humanity? The god-given form of fish bones, that we might flourish in microgravity!

So have I done a *reductio ad absurdum* bit here? Quite possibly. As I remarked in Part III, it puts quite a load onto God to make It have to work it all out in advance. And "long neck," for instance, doesn't take such complex thinking that a giraffe couldn't implant the form without divine assistance. And maybe the protozoa of a given pond and species possess some kind of group mind or some other augmentation of consciousness to make it possible to come up with propellers on their own, too. I surely don't know, so I'll just follow Father Ockham and say that intelligence animated by purpose and armed with effective technique either innate or contrived imposes form onto the virtual realm, form that

free energy can then actualize as object or event. The duration of the form's typical actualization and whether it proves productive or destructive of the original purpose will depend on the intelligence of its design and the extent it incorporates the dual principle within its normal operation. But the imposition of the form does not involve these; it only needs sufficient intent directed by adequate technique.

Thus we allow for the entire spectrum of duration in actuality -- from the eternal invariance embodied in the quantum order, perfectly incorporating the dual principle and set in place before the Beginning with the inertia of the universe to keep it there, to the outlandish antlers on the Irish elk, which could seem practical only to a rather short-sighted moose. Speaking as a disinterested non-elk, I would say their designers did not make any allowance for the dual principle at all, and so doomed themselves to extinction. But whoever first invented it, that special form has attained its place in eternity, and thus awaits actualization by those who would manifest outlandishness -- as any recent visitor to Las Vegas can attest.

Further considerations along these lines follow.

VI

Considering the extent virtual mechanics concerns itself with Large Questions, one might wish to include it in the same category as religion and philosophy, and yet one really cannot since it does not deign to touch the archtarbaby of those two disciplines: righteous living. Virtual mechanics avoids this by virtue of its identity with sorcery, and thus its interest in efficacy and endurance instead of Moral Truth. And yet out of this concern for what works there does arise a sort of sorcerous ethic, one whose dynamics we may readily describe in virtual terms. The laws that result operate more like those of Newton than Moses, though I do not thus assert that all traditional morality necessarily lies in the category of obedience. For instance, the Golden Rule seems to me to fit right into the Newtonian category, and I might also assert that, yes, sexual intimacy invariably carries consequence, and the more varied the intimacy, the broader the spread of the consequence. So you can get almost Puritanical about it if you deal with it abstractly instead of operationally, as an efficient psychic technician must. "Love is the law, love under will."

Looking at it operationally, we discover the crux of the virtual ethic in the dual principle -- the inescapable fact that the assertion of anything implies an equivalent response from its opposition. The process of Creation involves a reciprocal exchange of energy between opposites, and all that wishes to continue to operate in Creation must incorporate that exchange within its dynamics. To glorify any pole at the expense of its opposite will alienate that opposite and cause it to gather its strength in darkness -- until it erupts to impose balance through mutual destruction.

On the level of mundane conjuring, the sorcerer need only use common sense to avoid making the grim mistakes that blundering wizards tend to make. The crucial admonition, entirely at one with the dual principle, consists of this: *don't try to get something for nothing!* To wit:

Don't just conjure for money; if you do that, you'll actualize your virtual status as an insurance beneficiary or an heir, probably in a way you will not enjoy. Instead conjure for some talent in keeping with your true nature, and the ideas and opportunities you need to market it.

Never conjure a specific person into your bed; that risks forging a magickal link with someone ultimately destined to despise you. Instead conjure for a compatible partner with whom you can have a reciprocal relationship.

Don't call up a stream of malign energy to send against your enemy, lest he or she use it as a rope to pull upon, or a straw upon which to suck. Better to wait for your opponents to make their move, thus supplying the situation with energy you may draw upon to better your position in the contest.

Once we leave the realm of straightforward sorcerous mechanics, however, the impact of evil on the dynamics of the virtual realm becomes less clear cut. After all, evil doesn't generally arise out of an ill-informed effort to get lucky, but has more to do with an habitual cast of mind, a feeling for the uniqueness of one's personal struggle, and so for one's entitlement to special dispensations. One might think one has the right to take a little advantage, given the circumstances, and the pain one has had to endure. Or one might feel that one's love has such depth and power, and one's spouse such a constricted view of sexual intimacy, that one has no choice but to seek extramarital release wherever one can find it -- release which for convenience sake (familial, legal, financial, political, social, etc., etc., etc.) one does best to keep "under wraps." Or one might convince oneself that one's opponent surpasses all standards of vileness and so one must accept one's duty to pick up the flag of Cosmic Harmony and do the sucker some serious dirt.

In all these cases the primary virtual impact arises out of the insistence on separation. The declaration of "special circumstances" defines a unique status, cutting the declarer off from the free give and take of energy. Since the acts (theft, adultery, vengeance) that the special status justifies carry a significant charge, the perpetrator must maintain an open flow to dissipate it effectively, a condition impossible in such a constricted state. But the pressure will find an outlet, even by virtual means if it becomes extreme, but generally catastrophic in any case.

We should also consider that deceit itself may have virtual consequences, that the act of suppression can work in ways akin to that of repression, that effort at the one works as well in virtual effect as effort at the other, and will bring equivalent results.

Hence on the level of personal aggrandizement, we can expect some sort of reckoning in virtual terms if the miscreant doesn't mess up in mundane terms before a sufficient charge can accumulate -- stupidity apparently accompanying criminal behavior like yellow-jackets at picnics. But what happens when the behavior is not "criminal" in the strict sense of the word, because neither custom nor authority says that it is?

Anarchy need not reign for this to occur; it happens whenever a miscreant lives in a community of like-minded citizens -- sturdy, upstanding miscreants every one -- and thus has no need to assert a separation, or tell any fibs at all.

For instance, let us take the case of slavery. At one time the best people accepted owning other people as normal, as their right and privilege, in fact. The Old Testament gives detailed rules regulating it, rules that made the Israelites among the most humane in the ancient world, but condoning it nonetheless. And yet now we see it as a conspicuous violation of the Golden Rule, in the same league as rape and murder. This change occurred very recently. George Washington owned slaves and he's the Father of his country. The author of the Declaration of Independence slept with his. But they suffered no mundane punishment for these sins. We can only suppose that the consequences stayed virtual, unseen until charged with political pressure, whereupon they actualized with the slaughter of the Civil War.

But then why then, and not some other time in the thousands of years that preceded it? The times had changed, clearly, and slavery had no place in the new one. But in saying this I open a can of worms bursting in the plenitude of its fullness. To wit: had the times changed in the sense of the rich people acquiring finer moral sensibilities; or in the sense of the industrialization of the means of production requiring free labor instead of chattel; or in the sense of the Northern bourgeoisie imposing their political will upon the Southern agrarian aristocracy? All three, no doubt, only one of which has much to do with ethics. But all contributed to the difference in potential between the slave holding culture and the free one. This generated a distortion that a discharge had to release. Since the tension built up in the political arena, no repression or denial could last for long, and so no paranormal or spontaneous discharge could occur -- only the mundane choice of settlement or war. When the British encountered this tension they kept the discharge political, waffling about until they ended up with compensation for owners and forced apprenticeships for the newly liberated. But then the British had a cash cow in India at the time, and could afford it. In America, where the disputants stood on equal political terms,* the distortion grew so overwhelming that only violent release could suffice.

*As opposed to the British Empire, where the colonials held the slaves and the Home Office could order them freed.

But then what does this say about virtual ethics, or any ethics at all, for that matter? Does an obvious evil only constitute evil when those who see it as evil become able through physical coercion to insist that it does? What about the 5000 years of slavery that came before? Of course some of it one could justify -- captivity as a prisoner of war, or to work off a debt -- but once the institution became established, abuses inevitably followed. Long before the obvious atrocity of the transatlantic slave trade, there served Roman proconsuls who would grind their provincial subjects into poverty simply so they could fill their purses selling the debtors. And yet the best minds of the time accepted this as the way of Nature, and if a few eccentrics like Jesus of Nazareth did demur, it certainly didn't rub off on their alleged followers, as the history of Christianity in the southern United States makes plain.

So much for consensual ethics and the power of faith to transform men. But what about such a consensual evil's effect on the virtual level? What kind of influence would it have on a slave holder who willed to do work in virtual terms -- as a sorcerer, even?

We should not suppose our planter-sorcerer treats his slaves inhumanely; that makes it too easy. Let us suppose that he puts them in the same category as his horses, which he gives the best of care and doesn't hesitate to pasture once they've worked their last. And so his peers will see him as the best of men, an example to emulate. He and they will all belong to the aristocracy; they will all own plantations and hold most of the political power in their locality; and their group ethic will revolve around personal honor, meaning dueling acts as the great social deterrent. The highly structured order of rank in this society will provide our sorcerous slave holder with the edifice of belief he needs to rationalize his acts as an exploiter of human flesh. His flesh is better flesh, that is, a fact intrinsic to the very order of society. With such a belief implanted in him since his birth, he will likely find it sufficient to block his evil out of his awareness, this enabling him to begin his study of magick without serious inhibition. The belief will help him look upon his slaves as familiar spirits -- this identification perhaps made easier by conspicuous racial or cultural differences. But while a wizard holds familiar spirits in place with will and words of power, slaves require firmer methods, and the use of these can spawn disturbing consequences on the planes of mind. Imagine, if you will, our planter-sorcerer emerging from his temple to meet his overseer, waiting with the news that Zeke and Sarah have run

off with their infant child. Does our wizard smile inwardly, gratified that the young couple has the gumption to seek a new life in the frozen north? Or does he tell his man to get out the dogs and mount up? Most surely the latter, if he wants to keep the good will of his slave holding peers, not to mention that of his banker. So what mood will possess him as he rides out with his hounds? Will it be consistent with his vision of the Oneness of All Things?

Not at all likely, I should think. It would seem he has two alternatives for his spiritual state in these circumstances: he either feels bad about what he does, or he doesn't. Both indicate an impossible difficulty.

If he feels bad about it and yet does not choose to liberate all his slaves (which would render his position as slave holder in this example somewhat moot and probably get him called out by one of his aristocratic peers), then he will find his refuge in an excuse. But we make excuses as a way of pleading weakness -- physical, mental, moral -- and so do we declare that we lack the strength to master our circumstances. This differs considerably from the appropriate mood for a sorcerer, who has the inertia of the universe to assist him in the accomplishment of his will. Thus if a person finds it convenient to make excuses, he or she will not likely become anything more than a dilettante of sorcery, or else a casualty of it, since the one who would magickally enhance a crippled psyche solicits psychosis.

This leaves us with our second alternative: that he doesn't feel badly at all about setting his dogs on the trail of the innocents in love. Holding to our assumption that he otherwise acts as a man of good will, he will require a singular frame of mind to carry out this task, one that tells him he is better than they, that he is entitled to own them. This attitude will of course contradict the reality of their mutual humanity -- a fact as subtle as the Light of their auras and as conspicuous as his mulatto children. It will act as a self-contained, self-consistent pattern of response that works to defend his assertion of racial/social superiority, and so we may define it as a distinct spirit. We could see it as a virtual form that becomes actual whenever energized by the defiance of those 'beneath.' Once actual, it acts by transmitting physical intimidation to induce subservience. But because he would share such a spirit with his slave holding peers, and because they would all depend upon it to support their very way of life, he would find it easy to see it as an attribute of a gentleman, a feature of reality like the weight of wood or the opacity of stone, and thus no spirit

at all. When we cannot recognize spirits, however, we cannot control them, and their actions become spontaneous. With the high pitch of power that comes with magickal practice, such an independent actor can obsess with disastrous results. What his aristocratic peers can treat as a 'fact' whose inherent contradictions they hold in the background with thoughts of next Sunday's horse races and the press of accounts payable, will for our sorcerer lurk as the dominant demon unbound, one he may not bind without a sincere examination of its depths, which would lead to the insight that his whole way of life rests upon a lie. But if he does that, he calls the worth of his Word into question, and without his Word, how may he bind anything?

The dilemma is inescapable.

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