

**INSIDE
A
MAGICAL
LODGE**

GROUP RITUAL IN THE WESTERN TRADITION

JOHN MICHAEL GREER

1998

Llewellyn Publications

St. Paul, MN 55164-0383 U.S.A.

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FIRST EDITION

First Printing, 1998

Cover design: Tom Grewe

Cover photo: Terry Wild

Interior illustrations (pp. 65, 141, 142, 144, 145, 168, 172, 186):

Carrie Westfall

Editing and book design: Ken Schubert

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Greer, John Michael.

Inside a magical lodge : group ritual in the Western tradition /
John Michael Greer. -- 1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-56718-314-X (pbk.)

1. Magic. 2. Friendly societies. I. Title.

BF 1621.G74 1998

135'.4--dc21

98-35791

CIP

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Printed in the United States of America

Llewellyn Publications

A Division of Llewellyn Worldwide, Ltd.

P.O. Box 64383, Dept. K314-X

St. Paul, MN 55164-0383, U.S.A.

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Introduction

It is one of the most vivid memories of my childhood: the old sword gleaming in my grandfather's hands, its blade engraved with strange symbols and with my own name. My grandfather was in one of his rare reminiscent moods, and so the sword had come down from the attic and out from its leather case. It had belonged to his father, John William Greer, who had worn it as a member of a lodge; the symbols on it had something to do with the lodge, but my grandfather (who had never joined) didn't know what.

Years later, as my grandparents were leaving the Pacific coast lumber town where they spent nearly all their lives to move to a Sun Belt trailer park, my father waved me over in the middle of a long-distance phone call. "You remember your great-grandfather's sword," he said, covering the mouthpiece. "Do you want it?"

It arrived about a month later, still in its brown leather case. I unpacked it and stared at the symbols on the blade and the hilt, wondering what they meant. They had to do with a lodge, I remembered, but I had only the dimmest idea what a lodge was. The sword went into my closet, a treasure and a mystery.

That was about the same time I first began to study ceremonial magic. A handful of books I found in libraries and bookstores had awakened me to the fact that there was something huge and strange behind the "Do Not Enter" signs set up in front of magic by modern Western culture, something that called to me with an

intensity I could not ignore. Those first books led me to others; they also taught me the first, fundamental practices of the system created by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, an English magical lodge of the late nineteenth century whose teachings form one of the most potent approaches to Western magic. I began to find my way through the wilderness of a powerful and neglected tradition, learning ancient symbolism and philosophy, testing my understanding against the touchstone of magical practice and the realities of everyday life.

Meanwhile the old sword waited, a message I did not yet know how to read.

It was my magical studies, in the end, that gave me the key. Hints and references in the Golden Dawn papers led me to chase down the origins of certain old symbols in the unfamiliar world of nineteenth-century fraternal lodge traditions. That sent me to the stacks of a university library, and to a dusty volume more than a century old where emblems I recognized from the old sword were connected to the name of a fraternal order. When I told my wife about my discovery that evening, she gave me a startled look and said, "They have a lodge here in Seattle, you know. There was an article about them in the morning paper a week ago."

I found the article at the library the next day. It told how the lodge, once hundreds of members strong, had dwindled away to a handful of retirees; how a few younger men had joined in the last two years; how old and young members alike were trying to keep up the lodge's traditions and community service projects. I mulled it over for a few days, and wrote the lodge a letter. That led to phone conversations with the lodge secretary, to an application, to an interview, and finally to a hot summer evening when I and two others sat in a little, dusty room with no windows, waiting for our initiation.

I was about ten minutes into the initiation ceremony itself when I began to notice something very familiar about what was going on. Magic was never mentioned, before or afterward; many of the older members of the lodge were devout Christians, and would have been horrified at the thought that their treasured ceremonies had any link with occultism. Still, the ritual I experienced that evening had deep connections with the material I'd studied in the

Golden Dawn papers. Those connections became even clearer as I passed through other initiations and became an active member of the lodge.

At the same time, I found myself looking at the Golden Dawn documents themselves with new eyes. Points I had missed or misunderstood took on unexpected meanings as I compared them with my growing knowledge of lodge work. The Golden Dawn was itself a lodge organization, I realized, based on the same foundation of ideas and techniques that fraternal lodges use—and I came to see that this foundation, unspoken and usually unnoticed, forms a hidden dimension to many of the traditions of Western magic.

That realization was the beginning of an adventure, one that still continues. In the years since that first initiation, I rose up through the degrees of the order I had joined, and finally earned the right to wear my great-grandfather's sword. I became a member of several other lodge organizations, fraternal and magical, and—with a small group of friends who shared my interest in the lodge system's magical side—helped found a new magical lodge in order to explore the interface between lodge traditions and magical practice. I saw three lodges born, watched two die, and followed these and still others through many of the stages of their life cycle. I studied secret documents on ritual and symbolism, and traced the information in them back through the murky history of the lodge system to their roots in forgotten traditions. Along the way, I learned a good deal about lodges, about magic—and about myself. Finally, as I worked on my two previous books on Golden Dawn magic and thought about what I had learned during the years of my magical training, the connections between magic and the lodge system came to occupy more and more of my thoughts.

The impulse that finally set me writing this book, though, came from a different source. One wet afternoon a year or so after I joined that first fraternal lodge, I was discussing magical group work with a friend who had a good deal of experience in the local pagan community. We compared notes on lodges and covens, and talked about the problems that beset various magical groups—problems that mostly revolved about the ordinary, practical tasks of making decisions, assigning responsibilities, and getting organized

for the “real work” of magic. “Do you know what our problem is?” my friend said finally. “We have too many High Priestesses and not enough secretaries.”

It was at that point that I realized that the lodge system had something else to offer modern magicians. Traditional lodge organizations have several centuries’ worth of experience in dealing with the everyday problems of running a ritual working group, and long ago devised ways of dealing with problems that continue to wreck far too many modern magical groups. The lodge tradition thus has practical as well as magical lessons to teach, I saw, and as I began to piece those lessons together, the nucleus of this book began to take shape.

How to Use This Book

Inside a Magical Lodge is designed to be a complete introduction to the traditional lodge system and its magical possibilities. It’s intended for those who are simply curious about lodges, for those who belong to lodges, for those who are thinking of joining lodges, and for those who want to explore the possibility of creating new lodges.

There are two things left out of this book that some readers may expect to find in it, however, and it may be worth mentioning them here for the sake of clarity. First, while most of the material covered in this book has its roots in my own experience as a member of several different magical and fraternal lodges, there are certain limits that need to be acknowledged. As an initiate of several different orders, I have been given access to ritual texts and a variety of other secret documents, and the rituals of several other orders have come into my possession by a variety of channels. In fairness to the orders involved, and in recognition of the central role of secrecy in the lodge system—a role discussed at some length in Chapter Five of this book—I have not included any of this material here. Instead, in Chapters Six through Eleven, I have shown how a magical lodge is constructed from the ground up, and the rituals and secrets of the lodge created in these chapters has been used to illustrate how the lodge system works in practice. Readers who hope to learn the secrets of existing lodge organizations without joining the lodges in question, therefore, will have to look elsewhere.

Second, I have not included detailed instructions in magic in this book, except where it's necessary to show how the magical side of lodge work can be handled. Partly this is a matter of sheer limitations of space, since a book that included both the lodge system and magic would have to have either too many pages or too many omissions. Partly, it is a reflection of the fact that there are already many capable books on magic in print, and readers who want to learn the nuts and bolts of magical work have plenty of options. Partly, though, it is a recognition of the fact that magical lodge work can be carried out effectively using any system of Western magic, not only the Cabalistic magic of the Golden Dawn tradition that I personally know and teach. The material covered in this book can be combined with whatever approach to magic you prefer—Cabalistic, Pagan, Thelemite, Celtic, astrological, Wiccan, esoteric Christian, Enochian, or what have you—to form an effective method of magical lodge work. This is one measure of the flexibility of the traditional lodge system, a flexibility we'll be exploring in many more contexts in the pages ahead.

The book is organized into three parts. The first, from Chapter One through Chapter Five, is theoretical and historical. It starts out with a discussion of how the magical lodge system came into being, and goes on to explore the foundations of the system in terms of structure, symbolism, magic, and the art and practice of secrecy. The second part, from Chapter Six through Chapter Eleven, is illustrative. It goes step by step through the construction of a complete magical lodge system, from its basic symbolism and structure to its ritual and magical workings, and finishes with an imaginary visit to a lodge meeting, where all these things are put to work. The third part, made up of Chapter Twelve, Chapter Thirteen, and the appendix, is practical; it provides detailed instructions for those who want to take part in lodge work themselves, either by organizing a new lodge or by joining an existing one.

There are two ways to approach this material, and different readers may want to choose one or the other depending on their interests and learning styles. Those who are more interested in the history and theory behind lodge work, or who prefer to tackle a subject starting with the core ideas and proceeding from there, will

want to read these sections in the order given, starting with Chapter One and going straight through to the end. Those who are more interested in getting to the practical details, or who prefer to start with specific examples and work their way to the underlying principles, may find it easier to read this book more or less backwards, starting with Chapter Twelve, Chapter Thirteen, and the appendix, then backtracking to Chapters Six through Eleven, and finally going to the beginning and reading Chapters One through Five. Either way will provide a workable introduction to the material we'll be covering.

During my journey into the world of the traditional lodge system, I have had the help and friendship of a great many people in and out of the lodges I have joined. Many of these, for a variety of reasons, must remain nameless here. My gratitude and thanks remain with them all.

Among those who can be named, a profound debt of thanks is owed to my wife Sara, who has accompanied me all through my journey into the mysteries of the lodge system, offered her own insights as a magician and a member and officer of several lodges, and read and critiqued my writings on lodge matters from the first tentative articles to the final drafts of this book. In this as in all else, her support, insight and love have enriched my life immeasurably.

Earl King Jr., friend and fellow-student of the Mysteries, also took part from the beginning in this exploration of the lodge system, and many of the ideas in this book had their origins in our late-night discussions after lodge meetings. His insights and comments continue to keep me on my toes.

Special thanks are also due to Al Billings, Lou Cabeen, Renata Chung, Catherine Kehl, Mark Newport, Craig Perras and Lesa Whyte, who all took part, in one way or another, in the development and testing of the material in this book; to Madhuz Dershem, Doug Helling, and Darren Lay, who helped me explore the interface between fraternal and esoteric lodge traditions; and to Gordon Cooper, Erynn Laurie and Helen Adams-Honeycutt, who read and offered helpful comments on this book. A warm thanks to all!

Finally, there is a special debt owed to one other person: John William Greer, my great-grandfather. Though we never met—he

died more than forty years before I was born—his legacy, and the link we share as initiates of the same order, has been a guiding presence throughout the making of this book, and through the journey that gave it birth.

Chapter One

The Traditional Lodge System

In legend and reality alike, the magical lodge has a central place in the occult traditions of the Western world. Dion Fortune's "Dr. Taverner" stories, and many similar works of occult fiction, have traced out the image of the magical lodge in its classic, legendary form: a mysterious and secretive group of men and women guarding ancient teachings of power, living in a kind of "space between the worlds" where the drab details of life in a modern industrial society coexist with a hidden world of secret meetings, ornate robes, exalted titles, glittering symbols, mysterious rituals, and books crammed to the bursting point with forgotten mystic lore.

The image is a compelling one. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about it is that it's a fairly accurate one as well. Many of the writers who created the legend of the magical lodges were themselves active members of lodges working with Western magical traditions, and they drew extensively on their own experiences in their fiction. At the same time, a good many of the people who organized actual magical lodges in the West were strongly influenced by these same fictional accounts. In organizations such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, where this dance of legend and reality was at its most intense, the boundary between fiction and fact becomes very difficult to trace. Furthermore, as we'll see, the "between the worlds" quality of the fictional image is also a critical

element of the real magical lodge, and one of the most important tools which the lodge system offers to the modern magician.

The magical lodge has become so much a part of the common notion of magic in the West that it's easy to lose sight of just how odd a thing it actually is. There's nothing else quite like it anywhere in the world's other esoteric traditions. It has little in common with the temples, ashrams, and monasteries of those systems more comfortably established in their own cultures, and very little more with the apprenticeships and informal working groups common in less organized or less socially acceptable traditions. It is, notably, a part-time affair—lodge members spend most of their time as ordinary members of society—and yet, during the few days a month most magical lodges are open, lodge members enter into a secret world of transformative ritual which can be as intense as anything in more ordinary, “full-time” spiritual systems.

The magical lodge itself stands at the center of an entire culture of procedures and patterns, ways of shaping and defining space and time, and a body of visual and performance arts dominated by potent symbolic images. All of these have only the thinnest of relationships with the habits of other esoteric traditions, or with the mainstream spiritual movements of Western culture. Nearly all of these things are shared, though, with a motley collection of social clubs, charities, and insurance cooperatives lumped together as “lodge organizations.” It's hard to imagine a Buddhist monastery and a men's drinking club, for example, sharing the same organizational structure, the same ways of doing business, even fine details of practice and imagery. This exact relationship exists, though, between magical lodges of the Golden Dawn type and such utterly non-magical bodies as the Loyal Order of Moose.

These oddities have a history behind them, and a glance back through that history will help make sense of the unexpected features of the magical lodge system. It will also provide a useful introduction to the practical uses and applications of magical lodge technique—the primary subject of this book.

Lodge Origins: Myth And Misinformation

Any attempt to trace the history of the lodge system back more than a couple of centuries leads straight into a quagmire where few landmarks and no paths guide the traveler. Wild speculation and deliberate obscurantism are far more common here than simple fact. On the one hand, academic historians until recently shunned the topic of lodge organizations altogether: you can still read any number of social histories of late nineteenth-century America, for example, without learning that fraternal orders were a massive presence on every level of society, with a total membership that has been estimated at forty per cent of the adult population and with major impacts on the culture and politics of the age.

For their part, writers belonging to lodge organizations have too often plunged into the deeps of the past with far more enthusiasm than scholarship, finding the marks of lodge gavels all through human history. The pretensions of one major fraternal order were famous enough to earn an entry in Ambrose Bierce's satirical *The Devil's Dictionary*:

Freemasons, n. An order with secret rites, grotesque ceremonies and fantastic costumes, which, originating in the reign of Charles II, among working artisans of London, has been joined successively by the dead of past centuries in unbroken retrogression until now it embraces all the generations of man on the hither side of Adam and is drumming up distinguished recruits among the pre-Creational inhabitants of Chaos and the Formless Void.

This has its modern echo in the recent flurry of books linking Freemasonry, on the most dubious of evidence, to the medieval Knights Templar—a frequent target of Masonic mythologizing in past centuries—and through this to a baroque maze of speculations involving the Holy Grail, the Ark of the Covenant, bloodlines supposedly descended from Jesus of Nazareth, and so on. Not all of these works come from the pens of Masons, but all of them have their roots in the giddy climate of speculation fostered by Masons of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who were usually far more interested in giving Masonry a romantic history than in tracing its

actual origins. Similar speculations, it must be admitted, gathered about many orders in the past—the Odd Fellows once provided themselves with ancient and wholly fictitious Roman origins, for example, just as the various Druid orders once manufactured links with the Celtic past to prop up shaky claims to vast age. It was a custom of the time, and one that has by no means died out today.

The mythmaking of overenthusiastic Masons and their ilk, though, pales to insignificance next to the dizzying claims made by the propagandists of some magical lodges. In the writings of Theosophically influenced magicians such as Dion Fortune, for instance, the entire sweep of human history—including those vast and unrecorded ages projected onto the conveniently blank screens of assorted lost continents—is shaped and driven by the rise and fall of mystic orders under the sway of the Great White Lodge. Of the same kind, though not on the same gargantuan scale, are the numerous accounts of groups such as the Essenes, the Pythagoreans, the original Rosicrucian society and so on, which put ideas, structures and terms straight from nineteenth-century lodge practice into contexts where they simply don't belong. In this kind of writing, the lodge system starts to look like a stable rock amid the currents of historical change—which is one thing it most certainly is not.

This habit of inventing ancient origins for modern innovations isn't limited to the realm of lodge organizations, of course. The continuing attempts to manufacture a Stone Age pedigree for modern Wicca show another example of the same process at work. At the same time, this sort of mythologizing tends to obscure the creativity and adaptability which give the lodge system much of its strength. As we'll see in the next chapter, too, it tends to support certain distortions of the lodge system which have been far too common in magical circles. For this reason, above all, a clear sense of the real history of the lodge system is worth having here.

Lodge Origins: The Medieval Guilds

Still, it's almost disappointing to turn from the sweeping vistas of lodge pseudo-history to the more pedestrian realm of serious historical

research, where lodges in the modern sense of the word can't be traced back farther than the sixteenth century. The roots of these first lodges can be followed back a few centuries more, but those roots are economic, not esoteric; they lie in the guilds of the Middle Ages.

The guilds were the cornerstone of medieval economics. Part trade association, part religious confraternity and part social service provider, they were usually organized on professional lines, so that each town of any size would have its own carpenters' guild, stonemasons' guild, goldsmiths' guild and so on through the whole range of medieval crafts. The guilds set and enforced wage, price, and quality standards within a town or small region. Their three-level membership structure included apprentices, bound to a master for a fixed term of years in order to learn the trade; journeymen, fellows or companions—terms varied—who worked as wage laborers and quite often traveled from town to town developing their skills; and masters, self-employed, who had to produce an example of their competence for public display (a custom that has given us the word "masterpiece") and had voting rights in the guild. There were plenty of exceptions, but under ordinary circumstances a competent craftsman could expect to pass through all three stages during his career. Guilds provided funeral and survivor benefits to their members and dispensed charity to the community at large; they were normally an important part of their communities' political structure; they also had an extensive ritual life, ranging from masses for the dead through banquets and saint's-day festivities to initiation ceremonies in which legends of the guild's or the craft's foundation often played a central part.

The guilds themselves were creations of an age when each town was an independent economic unit. When improvements in transportation and shifts in production linked regions and nations more closely, guilds collapsed or changed into other forms. In the process, though, they spun off a related kind of organization which had a wider role in the post-medieval world.

This type of group—there's no good English word for it, so "proto-lodge" will have to do—came into being when certain groups of people, more mobile in physical as well as social senses and so more able to define their own identity outside the rigid patterns of

medieval life, began to organize along guild lines. One set of these proto-lodges took shape among stonemasons, whose trade required them to travel from one construction project to another. Another emerged among journeymen of a wide range of trades, particularly when the decline of the guild system began to choke off the prospect of advancement to master's status and self-employment. In these cases and others, the typical features of guild organization—levels of membership, initiatory rituals, origin legends, funeral benefits—were combined with new elements derived from the special needs of traveling workers.

First among these were recognition signs, by which members could identify themselves to other members in strange towns. These signs had to be kept from nonmembers, and this fostered a concern with security—a concern which grew more significant as these groups began to try to improve their wages and working conditions. Since membership in these proto-lodges was usually a matter of free choice, they also developed a more democratic way of conducting business than the guilds had typically used.

It's a good sign of the nature of these organizations that the best early evidence we have for their activities comes from condemnations leveled at them by the civil authorities. Thus English stonemasons were being denounced as early as the fourteenth century for organizing to raise wages, and *compagnonnages* (journeymen's associations) in France were coming under attack for similar reasons by the end of the sixteenth. Still, the early seventeenth century saw such bodies in existence over most of western Europe.

It was around this time, however, that the final ingredients of the lodge system entered the picture, from the unlikeliest of sources: an opening up of contacts between one of these trade unions of the Renaissance and the resurgence, in full swing during the same years, of the traditions of Western magic.

Lodge Origins: The Hermetic Contribution

Three glimpses of the early history of what is now called Freemasonry show what was happening.

In 1638, a long, highly erudite, and amazingly bad poem titled “The Muses Threnodie” was published in Edinburgh, containing the first recorded reference to what we would now call Masonic secrets. The relevant lines read:

*For what we do presage is not in grosse
For we be brethren of the Rosie Crosse;
We have the Mason Word and second sight,
Things for to come we can foretell aright*

The Mason Word, the secret sign by which members of Scottish stonemasons’ lodge could recognize each other, is here identified as something magical, like the mysterious Rosicrucian movement and the second sight of Highland seers.

Three years later, on May 20, 1641, the records of the stonemason’s lodge in Edinburgh report the admission to membership of one Sir Robert Moray. Moray was not a stonemason; he was a practicing alchemist and a student of Hermetic traditions, and later became one of the founding members of the Royal Society, the great English scholarly organization which helped jump-start the scientific revolution.

Five years after that, on October 16, 1646, Elias Ashmole wrote in his diary that he and his cousin were among those initiated into a lodge of masons at Warrington in Lancashire. Ashmole was not a stonemason either; he was a student of magic and alchemy, and the compiler of the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*—the definitive collection of English alchemical writings in verse—and later on he became another of the founding members of the Royal Society.

What was under way in each of these cases can best be described as a spectacular case of mistaken identity. In England and Scotland, a number of educated men interested in the traditions of Hermetic magic had discovered the stonemasons’ lodges in their communities, and had leapt to the conclusion that these lodges were a survival of secret traditions of initiation handed down from the distant past.

How did this happen? The fine details aren’t clear, but the overall context is. Some of the factors were:

The prevailing mythology of secret societies

The explosive religious and political stresses of seventeenth-century Europe spawned rumors of secret societies on a grand scale. The

amazing Rosicrucian phenomenon, in which two short pamphlets proclaiming a hidden body of Hermetic adepts ignited a continent-wide furor and caught the attention of some of the greatest minds of the age, is one measure of the intensity and believability of those rumors. These were not lessened at all by the fact that a wide range of real secret societies—political, religious, and magical—are known to have existed during this time.

The Hermetic respect for practical knowledge

In the previous century, an improbable figure with an equally improbable name—Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus Paracelsus von Hohenheim, alchemist, doctor and magician—had shocked the learned community of his day by urging physicians to seek out medical knowledge from wise women, peasants and gypsies, not simply from dusty Latin texts. Paracelsus' seventeenth-century followers, and Hermetic thinkers generally, turned this theme into a major part of their assault on the petrified scholastic thinking that dominated the universities at that time. In this context, the idea that a group of ordinary stonemasons might have secrets hidden from the rich and learned could easily be believed in Hermetic circles.

The legacy of Vitruvius

This same way of thinking had given Marcus Vitruvius Pollio's *Ten Books on Architecture* (the one important ancient work on building to survive the fall of Rome) the status of a seventeenth-century bestseller. Vitruvius' approach combined a focus on geometry and proportion drawn from the mystical teachings of Pythagoras with a deeply practical streak. He claimed that architecture, since it drew on all other arts, was the supreme art, and in the Renaissance this claim was accepted by a great many people. This once again gave the builders' guilds a claim on the attention of Hermeticists.

The origin myth of the masons' guilds

By the late Middle Ages, legends of the origin of the building trades told in English and Scottish masons' lodges claimed that the craft of stoneworking had descended from the sons of the biblical patriarch Lamech, who carved all the secrets of the world on two pillars so that they would be preserved through the coming Flood. The legends went on to claim that these secrets had passed to the legendary sage Hermes Trismegistus, who discovered one of the pillars, and

that architecture had reached its full perfection in the building of King Solomon's temple. All three of these stories were common-places of the legendary history of the late Middle Ages, and the myth as a whole is not much different from other medieval craft origin legends. At the same time, the elements of this legend had also been used as important symbols in the Hermetic traditions of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

All these factors, and others, helped create an atmosphere in which a stoneworker's craft organization could be mistaken for the remnant of an ancient initiatory tradition, and could begin to attract members whose interests lay not in the building trades but in symbolism, ritual and magic. Once this happened, the lodge structure used by mason's lodges and similar groups came to be seen as the proper way in which such traditions should be organized. At the same time, the Hermetically inclined gentlemen who became the first "accepted Masons" did not come to this odd relationship empty-handed; they brought with them the mental furniture of the Western magical and Hermetic traditions, and above all the dazzling use of visual images, symbols and emblems central to Renaissance magic. The ceremonial life of working stonemasons before the Hermetic influx seems to have involved few or no symbolic images and very simple ritual methods. From this point on, though, the use of emblems and an effective grasp of the inner mechanics of ritual became a common feature of the whole spectrum of lodge organizations.

The Golden Age of Lodge Organizations

The impact of these Hermetic elements was central to the explosive spread of the lodge system during the next two centuries. While Freemasonry provided the initial point of contact for this fusion of Hermetic traditions with the lodge system, and thus became the first and most typical lodge organization in the modern sense of the word, it did not stay the only one for long. The spread of Freemasonry in Britain, Europe and North America was followed—quickly in the first two cases, more slowly but more spectacularly in

the third—by the emergence of a fantastic range of lodge organizations built on similar lines.

There's a tendency, largely fostered by Masonic researchers, to lump all these other lodges together as simple plagiarisms of Masonry that don't deserve serious attention. Common as it is, this sort of Masonocentrism is a barrier to understanding the lodge as an evolving phenomenon, for it was largely outside of Freemasonry that the lodge system developed in new ways—ways which tended to find their way back into Masonic lodges by roundabout channels. Masonic traditions provided many elements of the common language of lodge practices and symbols, and served as a starting point for a wide range of projects. At the same time, the elements of the lodge system were used in increasingly innovative ways as lodge organizations spread out and explored new niches in society.

This process took place in two directions, one focused more on the magical elements of the fusion, the other on the heritage of the guilds. On the magical side, groups of occultists, alchemists and students of other hidden traditions increasingly borrowed lodge forms and procedures for their own work. Much of this, especially early on, involved setting up various magical versions and offshoots of Freemasonry, but other traditions—those based on surviving fragments or imitations of Druid teachings, for example—were also reworked into lodge systems from an early date. By the nineteenth century, magical lodges with no connection to Masonry or any other existing lodge system were coming into existence all over the Western world.

On the other side of the interaction, Hermetic approaches to symbolism and ritual penetrated into circles where magical traditions themselves found few other footholds. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in particular, a whole range of fraternal lodges came into being, using the rituals and symbolism of the lodge system as a foundation for mutual support and charitable work in the community. Most English and American Freemasonry falls on this side of the lodge spectrum; so do other surviving eighteenth-century lodge organizations, such as the Odd Fellows and the Ancient United Order of Druids; so, in turn, do nearly all of the spectacular array of lodges founded during the nineteenth century, running all

the way from major orders such as the Grange and the Knights of Pythias to little-known oddities like the Bagmen of Bagdad and the Concatenated Order of Hoohoo.

These lodges and their members had little in common with the kind of straightforwardly Hermetic approach that was central to the occult lodges, and was imported into the higher degrees of a handful of the older fraternal orders. Their activities focused instead on the concerns and circumstances of daily life. This focus, though, gave them an immense appeal at a time when a social “safety net” of the modern sort simply did not exist. Fraternal lodges raised money to support sick members, pay for funerals and provide for widows and orphans; they organized barn raisings and work parties for mutual help, established insurance programs, and became the nucleus for all kinds of community action. In an age before public assistance, they offered one of the few ways for working-class families to survive the prolonged illness or death of a breadwinner.

It’s no wonder, given this, that the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in America and Canada can be described as an age of lodges. Something like two thousand different lodge organizations flourished in North America during that time, with a combined membership by 1900 that totaled four out of every ten adults. Despite the stereotypes, this wasn’t just a movement of white males; women’s lodge organizations made up a large percentage of the total, and ethnic groups shut out by racism simply organized lodges of their own.

The flourishing of lodge organizations during those years might best be seen as the growth of a zone of contact between the magical and fraternal elements of the lodge tradition. It was in this zone that the lodge in its modern form was developed, and all present lodge organizations, magical or fraternal, have their roots in it. It’s by way of this zone of contact that certain lodge procedures became all but universal among magical groups in the Western world; it was through the same zone that some startling magical material came into purely fraternal settings—that, for example, the Grange created a full-scale reenactment of the Eleusinian Mysteries of ancient Greece as its Seventh Degree ritual, and the Knights of Pythias borrowed material from the Pythagorean tradition for their own system. At the same time, the two trends that shared the zone

of contact equally traced the fault lines along which the zone ultimately broke down.

On the fraternal side, the cultural changes that brought the modern world into existence worked against the survival of the zone of contact. The crucial contributions the Hermetic tradition brought to the lodge system—its grasp of ritual methods and its understanding of the role of symbolism—rose out of ways of thinking that became increasingly difficult and thus increasingly uncommon as the modern world developed. Inevitably, a lack of direct contact with the magical sources of lodge imagery and ritual technique led many fraternal lodges to water down or throw out many of the symbolic and ritualistic elements that made their ceremonies effective in the first place. Although there are exceptions, it's generally true that the more recently a fraternal order was founded, the smaller the part played in it by symbol and ritual. This process was completed in this century by the emergence of service clubs such as Rotary and Kiwanis, which have no ritual element at all.

In the realm of the magical lodges, though, the process was more complex. As we'll see in more detail in Chapter Two, some crucial aspects of the lodge system never managed to find a secure foothold in the world of magical lodges, and so there's a sense in which the zone of contact never completely formed on the magical side at all. Still, some of the elements of organization and structure that the magical lodges did borrow began to break down at the same time that the fraternal end of the spectrum was losing touch with the inner sources of its strength, and—for reasons we'll discuss shortly—the great majority of these elements gave way a little later on.

It's ironic to note that even as this process was beginning to pick up speed, near the end of the nineteenth century, one particular magical lodge was on the verge of breakthroughs that brought about a radical transformation in the most crucial elements of the lodge system itself. That transformation did not solve the problems besetting the magical lodge system—in fact, in some ways it amplified them—but it opened up a vast array of new potentials for the magical use of the lodge system, potentials which will be central to most of what we'll be exploring in this book.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

These possibilities rose out of the work of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, far and away the most famous of modern magical lodge organizations and, to a great extent, the source of most current ideas and fantasies about what a magical lodge is or can be. Sheer limits of space make it impossible to tell more than a fraction of the Golden Dawn story here, but the Order's innovations are of such central importance to current magical lodge practice that it's necessary to take at least a brief glance at its history in order to see how these developments were born.

The Golden Dawn was founded in 1888 by the remarkable Dr. William Wynn Westcott, a practicing Cabalist and magician who was deeply involved in the shadowy world of Victorian English magical and quasi-magical lodges, and the equally remarkable Samuel "MacGregor" Mathers, a gifted student of esoteric traditions who claimed a Scottish heritage he probably didn't have and magical abilities he certainly did. Both Westcott and Mathers were active Freemasons, and equally active members of the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* (SRIA), a quasi-Masonic body devoted to the study of Rosicrucian traditions. Into Westcott's hands—to this day, no one is quite sure how—came a mysterious document written in cipher, which proved to be an outline for the initiation rituals and teachings of a magical order. Deciphered by Westcott and expanded into workable rituals by Mathers, this "Cipher Manuscript" became the cornerstone on which Westcott, Mathers and a circle of talented magicians built the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

Their great innovation was a crucial shift in the way that the ritual work done behind lodge doors by the Order was related to the ritual work done by initiates on their own, as part of their personal magical training and practice. These two traditions of ritual, despite a common link with Renaissance Hermeticism, had developed separately and often had very little in common with each other; in previous magical lodges they had commonly been treated as separate fields of work. In the Golden Dawn, by contrast, they were combined into a single structure of ritual work. At the same time, this shift did not involve any movement away from the elements of the

older lodge system. Quite the opposite; traditional lodge technique and symbolism were at the core of the Golden Dawn curriculum, but they were transformed and expanded so that they could be used equally well in lodge work and personal practice.

As we'll see in the chapters to come, the elements of the older traditional lodge system can be understood as Janus-faced entities looking in two directions at once: toward the outer realm of organization and practical affairs, and toward the inner realm of meaning where the symbols and rituals of the lodge have their primary function. It was the insight of the Golden Dawn's founders, in essence, that a third face could be added—a face looking toward the realm of individual magical practice. In the process, they accomplished a second time what the first Hermetic Freemasons had done in the seventeenth century: they incorporated a crucial part of Hermetic technique—in this case, the practical methods of ceremonial magic—into the heart of the traditional lodge system.

The scope of this achievement can best be shown by a specific example. The following passage from *Golden Dawn Manuscript Z-3*, "The Symbolism of the Admission of the Candidate," analyzes one element of lodge technique in terms of the three faces just mentioned. The numbers at the head of the paragraphs relate them to practical (1), symbolic (2), and magical (3) levels of meaning.

The Password

1. *Merely to guard the Secrets of the Order against any Members resigned or not working; hence, changed each Equinox.*
2. *It is an affirmation of the different spiritual as well as the different physical constitutions of the candidates—that all natures cannot be the same without evil and injury resulting thereby—but that each nature should be brought to its own Kether—the best of its kind. This too, may be done in all things. It is the basis of Alchemy.*
3. *It should be pronounced as if attracting the Solar Force—the Light of Nature, during the six months following the Equinox at which it is issued, as a link with the Solar Force, between that and the Order. This password, therefore, may also be used in a magical ceremony as attracting the support of the Light of Nature acting on natural forces.*

The first interpretation given here is a straightforward matter of fraternal lodge practice, a means of telling those who belong to a given order from those who do not. The second one is an interpretation on a symbolic level, a little subtler than the sort commonly found in other fraternal or magical orders but not really different from them in kind. The third one seems to be unique to the Golden Dawn and some of its descendants: an application of the method to magical practice. An initiate of the Golden Dawn who wished to carry out a magical working to shape the forces of nature might use the password in this sense, as a way to bring the state of consciousness awakened by the Equinox ceremony into focus in the ritual he or she was working. The same principle on a much larger scale appears throughout the Golden Dawn magical curriculum.

In this way the collective work of the initiations and other group rituals of the Order became the foundation for the individual magical work of its members. At the same time, and critically, the group rituals came to draw on many of the specific techniques of Golden Dawn ritual magic, and entered into a new dimension of power. Thus, the initiated Golden Dawn magician working a magical ritual makes use not only of the abilities he or she has developed in individual practice, but also of the potent patterns established by the initiations he or she has experienced. In turn, the practice of individual ritual work helps the magician participate more fully and effectively in the initiatory work itself. Where older magical lodge systems had treated personal practice and lodge work as two distinct subjects, the Golden Dawn fused the two into a single structure that strengthened both.

The Golden Dawn: Death and Resurrection

This expansion of the traditional lodge system made the Golden Dawn approach to magic a brilliant success. Ironically, though, this success did little to keep the Order itself alive. Within twelve years of its founding, the Golden Dawn blew itself apart in the first of a long series of disastrous political crises. The causes of its failure are complex, and will be discussed in detail in the chapters to come.

For our present purposes, though, the critical point is that this failure led to a flowering of magical groups on a scale never before seen in the history of the West—and then, paradoxically, played a part in bringing about the eclipse of the lodge system that the Golden Dawn had revolutionized and used so effectively.

The first result of the Golden Dawn's collapse, of course, was a series of attempts to put the pieces back together. Several members of the original Order immediately founded their own magical lodge systems based on the Golden Dawn tradition and its insights into lodge work. Mathers himself founded several new lodges, changing the Order's name to *Alpha et Omega*; Dr. Robert Felkin and the poet W. B. Yeats, both senior Golden Dawn adepts, did the same, founding a rival Order named the *Stella Matutina* (Morning Star). Even Arthur Edward Waite, who had tried to redirect the original Order into his own quirky brand of Christian mysticism, founded a Golden Dawn offshoot that counted the Anglican mystic Evelyn Underhill and the poet and occult novelist Charles Williams among its members.

At the same time, other Golden Dawn "alumni" went in different directions. Aleister Crowley, who had joined the Order in its last years and played a significant role in the quarrels that blew it to pieces, used the Order's magical teachings as one of the elements in his own magical system of Thelema. The *Ordo Templi Orientis* (Order of Templars of the Orient), which he joined and reorganized, survived his death to become one of the largest magical lodge organizations in the world today.

Another important offshoot was the Fraternity of the Inner Light, founded by Violet Firth Evans (better known by her pen name, Dion Fortune). The FIL's system combined substantial parts of the Golden Dawn teachings with British pagan materials, Christian mysticism and large doses of Theosophy into an quirky but effective system. From the FIL, in turn, emerged a substantial number of other orders working along similar lines, most of them in England; the FIL and several of these daughter orders have also survived to the present time.

The real flowering of the Golden Dawn tradition, though, came after former *Stella Matutina* member Israel Regardie published his collection of the Order's papers and rituals. Regardie had

become disgusted by the incompetence and petty politics he saw at work in surviving Golden Dawn circles, and came to believe that the entire system would be lost unless it was taken out of the hands of its few surviving adepts and made available to anyone who was interested. His publication of *The Golden Dawn* in four volumes between 1937 and 1940 marked a watershed in the history of modern magic, and in the history of the magical lodge as well.

Since that time, the Golden Dawn system has become far and away the most popular magical tradition in the Western world, and basic Golden Dawn practices such as the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram have been borrowed, with or without acknowledgement, by an enormous range of magical groups and systems. Lodges working the Golden Dawn system have multiplied—there are now more Golden Dawn lodges in the world than ever before in history—and other lodge organizations such as the Ordo Templi Orientis are flourishing as well.

It may seem surprising, given all this, to say that the magical lodge in its classical form is on the verge of dying out. In an important sense, though, this is true. Although most of the modern magical groups retain traces of the traditional lodge system, few understand that system in any depth, and fewer still recognize the ways in which magical work in the Golden Dawn and other, related traditions depends on the lodge system for much of its power and meaning. Many of the most important parts of the traditional lodge system have all but vanished from common use in the magical community. This, in turn, has its roots in an unexpected event: at the same time that the current flowering of magical groups began, the fraternal lodges of the Western world went from slow decline into freefall.

The Decline and Fall of the Fraternal Lodges

To an extent that has rarely been recognized, the growth of magical lodges in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had the parallel growth of fraternal lodges as its hidden foundation. Many magical lodges arose as straightforward offshoots of fraternal lodges, as we've

seen, or (like the Golden Dawn) drew extensively on fraternal lodge systems for core elements of organization and symbolism. In addition, many magical lodge members also belonged to fraternal orders, and the fraternal lodges thus provided a kind of boot camp for lodge work, providing a body of techniques and approaches that could be applied to an wide range of magical lodge activities.

This reliance on the fraternal lodges turned out to be a double-edged sword, though, when the fraternal lodges themselves began to go under. The emergence of modern mass society, with its impersonal institutions and its global problems, made the small-scale social and charitable activities of traditional lodges seem quaint and out-of-date. Ideas of self-help and local organization lost popularity in the face of attitudes that saw government programs as the solution to all social problems. At the same time, as mentioned above, the fraternal lodges themselves were losing touch with the inner world of symbol and ritual which gave them much of their meaning, and the situation was not helped by real problems with racism and sexism within some lodge organizations.

The result has been a massive drop in lodge membership in the second half of the twentieth century, especially among the younger and less conservative people who have spearheaded the current magical revival. Most orders have seen their membership plummet to a few percent of what it was at the end of the nineteenth century. In nearly every case the decline is still continuing. A handful of the larger orders have managed to reorganize and keep functioning fairly well at this sharply reduced scale, but many more have become little more than small groups of retirees going through half-remembered motions, and a very large number have gone out of existence altogether.

There's a whole dance of ironies at work in this situation. Plenty of modern pundits, and a fair number of otherwise perceptive thinkers, have written and spoken movingly about the way that the lack of ritual and tradition in our society has left it psychologically and spiritually deficient. At the same time, the very organizations that offer the traditional ritual initiations of Western culture are going out of existence because too few people are interested in them to keep them alive. Those involved in the various alternative spirituality movements in our culture have scoured the

world in search of ritual systems, borrowing—if that is the right word—rites and traditions from every imaginable source *except* the one which is a part of America's own cultural heritage. Meanwhile the surviving fraternal orders struggle to preserve an amazingly rich tradition of ritual, art and community betterment in the face of all but universal indifference.

This paradox has many facets, but it is particularly important to modern magicians in the West, for the disappearance of the fraternal lodges has choked off a vital source of experience and knowledge at the very time when the current renaissance of the magical arts could have used it most. The dependence of the older magical lodges on fraternal training meant that an enormous amount of the traditional lodge system was simply assumed in magical documents, and it's principally by way of those documents and more recent books—not, as in previous times, by initiation into a functioning magical lodge—that the magical revival of the last few decades has gathered new members and spread through our society. As a result, because most current magical lodges have been founded by people with little or no experience of the traditional lodge system, much of that system has been misunderstood, misapplied, or simply discarded in current practice.

The same thing has happened in other branches of the modern magical revival, such as Wicca, which has a large number of little-noticed connections with the magical lodge system. Whatever the original sources of modern witchcraft may have been, Gerald Gardner—who popularized it in modern times—was also a member of at least two different magical lodge organizations, and he borrowed significant elements of the lodge system for his creation or reorganization of the Old Religion. Many of those elements are still in place in British traditionalist covens, though most have been garbled or forgotten in more recent traditions of the Craft.

All this is simply the other side of the breakdown of the zone of contact between magic and the lodge system discussed earlier. Just as the fraternal lodges lost track of the Hermetic elements that gave their initiatory systems much of their effect, the magical lodges have lost track of the traditional approaches to organization, symbolism and lodge work that played a primary role in their success.

Many modern magical lodges, covens, and circles have an extremely good grasp of the teachings and techniques of magic. Knowledge which was once the jealously guarded property of a few is now freely available at bookstores and public libraries, and the sheer number of serious practitioners of Western magical traditions is probably greater than ever before in history. At the same time, the ways of handling organization and governance, myth and symbol, initiation and ceremonial work that the magical lodges of the past inherited from their medieval and Renaissance sources—methods evolved over hundreds of years to deal with the common problems faced by a working ritual group—have been all but forgotten by modern magicians.

It could be argued, of course, that this is a good thing. Trying to reinvent the wheel is not always a bad idea; there's always the possibility that the new wheel will actually turn out better than the old. Still, the modern magical revival has been plagued from its beginnings by major problems with group process. Most people who have been active in the magical community for any length of time have seen many promising magical groups form, only to collapse within months in the face of endless bickering, petty politics, or the abuse of power by those in leadership positions. It would be nice to say that these are the exception and not the rule, but in most parts of the magical community the failures seem to outnumber the successes by an uncomfortable percentage.

The traditional lodge system offers another approach to these problems. In the surviving fraternal lodges, a set of organizational and ritual skills have been tested and polished over centuries, giving rise to a tool kit of proven approaches that can be put to work in almost any kind of organization, but that are a particularly good fit for the needs of a working magical group. Over four hundred years ago, those approaches were first united with the powerful techniques of the Hermetic tradition to make the first true magical lodges. That same fusion is still a possibility today, for those who wish to explore a neglected but powerful realm of magical tradition. Showing how that fusion is accomplished, and how it can be put to use by the modern magician, is the purpose of this book.

Four Facets of the Magical Lodge

One of the more important things to realize, in exploring the potentials of the magical lodge, is that the traditional system of lodge work is a unity. However diverse its origins may have been, the entire system works together to accomplish a range of different but equally necessary goals at the same time. A single element of lodge practice—for example, the password mentioned in the Golden Dawn document quoted earlier—can function in many different realms. Even the most straightforward details of organization and governance can have potent symbolic and magical meanings; similarly, the symbolic and magical sides of lodge work have practical and structural implications that cannot be ignored.

The unity of the magical lodge system will be a constant theme in the chapters that follow. Still, for the sake of clarity, we'll need to look at the magical lodge from each of four perspectives.

From the *perspective of structure*, the magical lodge is a group of people who come together for the purpose of carrying out certain specific kinds of magical work. In turn, this requires space, time, and material resources, all of which have to be provided for by the lodge or its members. Meanwhile, members need to be trained in lodge procedure and in the performance of the lodge's ritual work, decisions have to be made and carried out, and any conflicts which come up between members have to be handled in a way that doesn't disrupt the lodge or interfere with its work. All these things depend on a set of practical techniques of organization and governance, which have evolved to carry out these necessary tasks.

From the *perspective of symbolism*, the magical lodge is a pattern of symbolic images and ideas that define every aspect of the lodge experience. This pattern may be built up around a legend, a tradition, a deity, or a philosophical structure like the Cabalistic Tree of Life, or it may simply be a cluster of symbols which relate to one another and are meaningful to the lodge's members. Whatever its core, though, the symbolism provides the context for everything and every action in a lodge, and it guides the structural and magical activities of the lodge in a host of obvious and subtle ways, above all else in the initiation rituals of the lodge.

From the *perspective of magic*, the magical lodge is primarily a temple in which a set of collective magical rituals are performed. If these rituals are to go beyond the purely symbolic, the lodge needs to have certain connections with the inner sources of energy, and at least a basic set of magical techniques that can be put to work effectively in lodge ritual. Because of this, the magical lodge is often also a school of magic, in which lodge members are trained in the theory and practice of some specific system of magical work. The practice of common rituals and common magical disciplines, in turn, tends to create a pattern of subtle energies—an *egregor*, in magical terminology—which is both a source of power for lodge members and a guiding presence capable of influencing the lodge and its members in many ways.

In the traditional lodge system, finally, all three of these aspects are brought together in the context of a fourth perspective, a *perspective of secrecy*. The work of a magical lodge takes place in secret, for reasons that go far beyond the merely practical; considerations of structure, symbolism and magic all play a part in the forms and applications of secrecy in the lodge system. It is through the art and discipline of secrecy, in the final analysis, that the magical lodge enters into the “space between the worlds” mentioned at the beginning of this chapter—a space where the potentials of the lodge system can come to full flower.

These four perspectives, taken together, outline the elements of the magical lodge system. In the next four chapters, we’ll explore each of these in more detail, to show how the traditional methods of lodge work make it possible for the magical lodge to accomplish its goals on all levels. In the process, we’ll probe some of the deeper issues that underlie the workings of the system to provide a solid foundation for the practical work to come. At the same time, though, certain of the ways the traditional system was adapted by past magical lodges have proven to be sources of trouble in practice, and we’ll examine these potential pitfalls as well.

Fundamentals of Lodge Structure

A magical lodge can take many forms and be many things. If it's going to function at all, though, there's at least one thing it has to be: a group of people who are able to put together the resources of space, time, and material needed for the lodge's work, and who can do so with a minimum of bickering, confusion, and hurt feelings. However strong a magical lodge may be in the inner realms of power, it needs to be able to function in the outer realm of everyday life as well: to arrange for a meeting space, provide robes and equipment, assign responsibilities in and out of ritual, and in general see to it that everything needed for ceremonial work is there when the portal is closed and the rite begins. A group that can't manage at least this much isn't likely to last long or get far.

The traditional methods of lodge organization and governance can thus be understood as the support system needed for all the other aspects of the life of a magical lodge. Just as the stability of a building depends on the strength of its foundations, the stability of a magical lodge depends in large part on the smooth functioning of this support system. While the methods of lodge organization we'll be discussing here aren't foolproof by any means, they have evolved over hundreds of years to meet the demands of lodge work, and they sidestep a substantial number of problems that have wrecked too many modern magical groups.

These traditional methods of organization operate on a number of levels. Starting with specific ways of structuring space and time within the lodge, they go on to provide methods for assigning responsibilities among the members, for handling the process of decision-making, and for conducting the necessary business of the lodge. All these have parts to play in providing a solid base for the lodge's magical work.

Defining the Magical Lodge

The first and most fundamental step in understanding lodge structure, though, requires us to look at the very definition of a magical lodge. Many older descriptions of magical lodge work have put a particular body of secret knowledge, a system of initiation, a transmission of power, or an adept teacher or leader at the center of the magical lodge structure, and insist that without this center a real magical lodge can't exist. All these definitions, though, are founded on a very problematic set of claims—claims that rise out of attitudes we'll be discussing at some length a little further on in this chapter—and it's hard to take such claims seriously in the face of the actual historical reality of magical lodges in the West. For all the grand (and often grandiose) talk about secret wisdom transmitted in unbroken succession from the dawn of time, what the actual record shows is that every magical lodge whose origins are known was cobbled together from available materials by a small group of enterprising magicians, without the benefit of any of the resources mentioned above.

There is, fortunately, a simpler and more straightforward way to look at magical lodges—a way borrowed, with certain alterations, from the way fraternal lodges have defined themselves for hundreds of years. From this perspective, a magical lodge is:

A group of people who work together to accomplish a common magical purpose using traditional lodge methods.

You may want to read through this definition more than once, because it underlies most of what we'll be covering in this book. It has three parts—a group of people, a common purpose, and the traditional methods of lodge work—and each of these needs to be present for a lodge to exist.

More important than the things this definition includes, though, are the things it does *not* include:

A specific pattern of initiations

It's quite common, in books on magic, to present some particular set of initiatory grades as though it's the only valid one, with long discussions of Greater and Lesser Mysteries, the three (or seven, or ten) grades of all true initiation, and so on, all based on some particular lodge organization's pattern of grades or degrees. All of these show a fundamental misunderstanding of what initiation is and how it works.

To some extent, the process of human spiritual development does seem to follow a single general pattern, and it can be useful or convenient, in some situations, to talk about the stages of that process in terms drawn from lodge practice. It's crucial to remember, though, that the process of initiation can be used to help bring about any desired changes in the initiate, and can do so by using an infinity of different steps and stages. Systems of initiation that are equally valid and equally effective can have entirely different purposes, patterns, sequences and results. Doing initiation rituals is a part of the core body of lodge tradition, and many of the techniques of initiation are part of the "standard kit" of lodge methods—but the goals, directions, and specific sequences of initiation are not.

A system handed down from the past

One result of the inflated historical claims made for the lodge system is a tendency to think that a lodge can't be valid if it doesn't follow a tradition rooted in the distant past. As a result, too many lodges have lied about their age with the shamelessness of teenagers trying to buy drinks. Although it's common enough in fraternal and magical lodges alike, this sort of thing is silly as well as dishonest. It's entirely possible for a system of magic or a set of rituals to be gray with the dust of centuries and still be largely or wholly useless. There are advantages to working with older traditions, of course, and these will be discussed in more detail later on. Still, a lodge can use brand-new rituals and a freshly devised system of magic and get very far indeed. After all, the original Golden Dawn can be described in exactly these terms.

An “apostolic succession” of power

Certain systems of thought, in the Western magical tradition as well as in other traditions of magical and spiritual thought around the world, insist that magical or spiritual standing depends on being part of a chain of transmission from teacher to student or initiator to initiate. Claims like these have been taken to extremes in too many cases, but they’re based on a certain degree of truth. These transmissions of power are quite real, and they play an important part in some lodge systems. Still, they’re *useful* for a lodge, not *necessary*. They are a basic function of the egregor, the collective energy built up by magical lodge work, and any lodge that builds up an effective egregor will find itself with an effective transmission of power.

An adept

It’s also been claimed many times that for a magical lodge (in the true sense of the term) to come into being or offer real initiations it must have at least one member who has reached some particular level of magical or spiritual attainment. There’s some truth in this, for it takes a certain amount of skill in magical technique to handle the most demanding roles in magical lodge initiation. An experienced magician will have much less trouble with this phase of lodge work than someone new to the art. At the same time, the levels of skill that are generally needed are a good deal less exalted than some writers suggest. Two or three years of systematic daily practice with basic magical methods such as the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram and the Middle Pillar exercise, or their equivalents in other systems, will provide a functional minimum of skill. Anyone who has worked his or her way systematically through the Golden Dawn material, the writings of Franz Bardon, or any other fairly complete magical system is more than qualified to handle any aspect of magical lodge work.

A magical lodge, once again, is a group of people who work together to accomplish a common magical purpose using traditional lodge methods. All these other things—particular systems of initiation or transmissions of power, ancient teachings or living adepts—can be added to a lodge, and while it’s certainly true that they can be useful to have, none of them are *necessary*. All that’s

needed to make a lodge is a group of people, a common purpose, and the “standard kit” of lodge technique. It is to this last that we now turn.

The Lodge as a Pattern in Space

Like everything else that takes place in the realm of matter, lodge work occupies space. The particular demands of the lodge tradition, though, place a number of specific requirements on the space used for lodge work.

There are, broadly speaking, two classes of activities that go on in a lodge. One class is made up of ritual work of various kinds, such as initiations or the ceremonial installation of lodge officers. The second class is made up of meetings in which lodge business is discussed and carried out—where bills are paid and projects considered, officers elected and candidates for membership proposed. In a magical lodge, this second class of activities often includes magical instruction, which may involve lectures, demonstrations, or exercises involving some or all of the lodge members.

Each of these places its own demands on the lodge space. In terms of ritual, the lodge space needs to be closed off from the outside world, both to limit distractions and to preserve the traditional secrecy of lodge ritual. It needs to have a good deal of open room so that the officers don't interfere with one another while moving about, and so that the candidate's attention during initiations can be focused on one symbolic image, object, or event at a time without being distracted by others who are too close by. The candidate in many initiations is blindfolded for at least part of the time, and so a level floor with few obstacles is a good idea. There also needs to be a place for the candidate to wait before entering the lodge space for the initiation ceremony.

In terms of meetings, the lodge space needs to allow every member of the lodge to see and hear what is going on. For reasons that will be discussed later on in this chapter, the officers chosen by the lodge to carry out various duties need to have specific, easily identified places in the room, and those officers who are expected to write things down during the meeting should be provided with

desks or the equivalent. Here, too, the requirements of secrecy can be an issue, since the obligations of secrecy used by most lodges include lodge business among the things to be kept private.

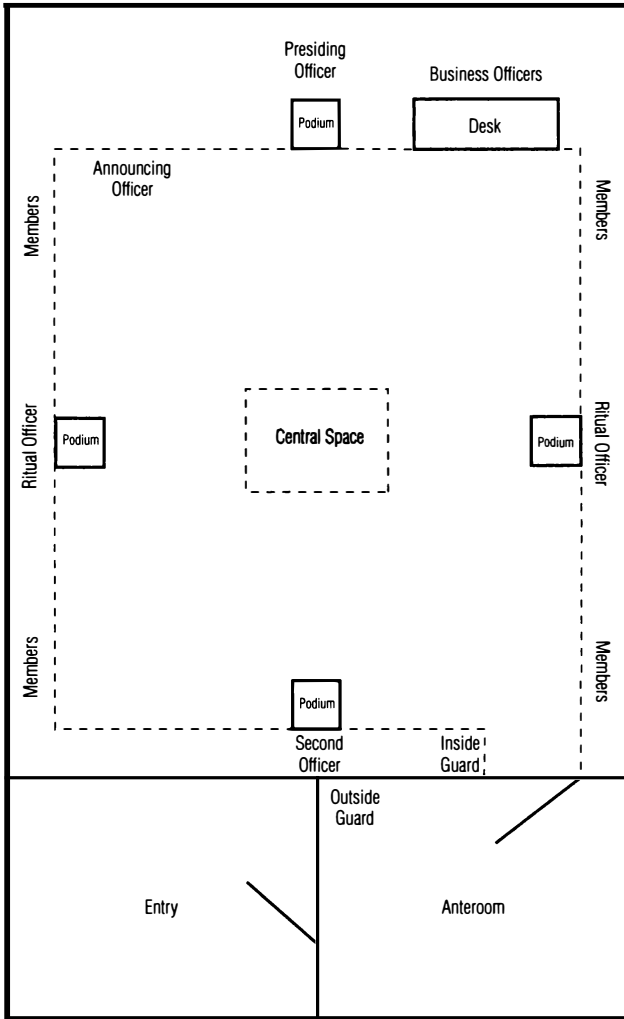


Diagram 2-1

The combination of these various needs has produced a common standard lodge architecture that has been adopted by nearly every lodge organization in the Western world, and which is mapped out in Diagram 2-1. The basic pattern is a rectangle with

seats along the walls. Most of the officers of the lodge sit along the short sides, in places marked by podiums or other pieces of furniture. The chief officer usually sits at the center of the short side farthest from the door. The business officers—secretary and treasurer, or the equivalent—and an officer who makes formal announcements all sit nearby. The second officer, who assists the chief, usually sits in the corresponding position on the other short side. Other officers may sit at the center of each long side. Those members who don't hold an office usually sit on the rectangle's long sides as well.

The center of the open space may have an altar or some other symbolic object in it, or it may be left empty. Either way, it's usually the focus of ritual activity in the lodge, and the line connecting the center with the chief officer's station is usually the major axis of energy in lodge work. The door of the lodge is on the short side opposite the chief officer, and opens onto a small room, called the antechamber. From this, another door opens onto the outside world.

There are a few common variations on this pattern, all of which preserve the essential elements while bringing in other factors that may be needed for the lodge's work or symbolism. Some lodges with three major officers put the second officer on the side wall and the third-in-command on the wall by the door, leaving an empty space or a seat for a minor officer on the other long wall. Some with six major officers divide the long walls into thirds instead of halves, and have two officers on each long side. A few place an officer out on the floor, assign the functions of the inside guard to the announcing officer or second in command, or move the presiding officer over into a corner. It's also not unheard of to have two "centers" in the lodge room, with something different—an altar, a pair of pillars, a carpet, or whatever the lodge symbolism requires—at each. Some of the possibilities are shown in Diagrams 2-2 through 2-5 on the following pages.

This basic lodge architecture has a great many advantages—some obvious, some less so. In terms of the needs of ritual, putting the seats around the sides leaves the largest possible amount of space free for ritual work, and there's ample room to set up props and tableaux without interfering with the movement of the participants.

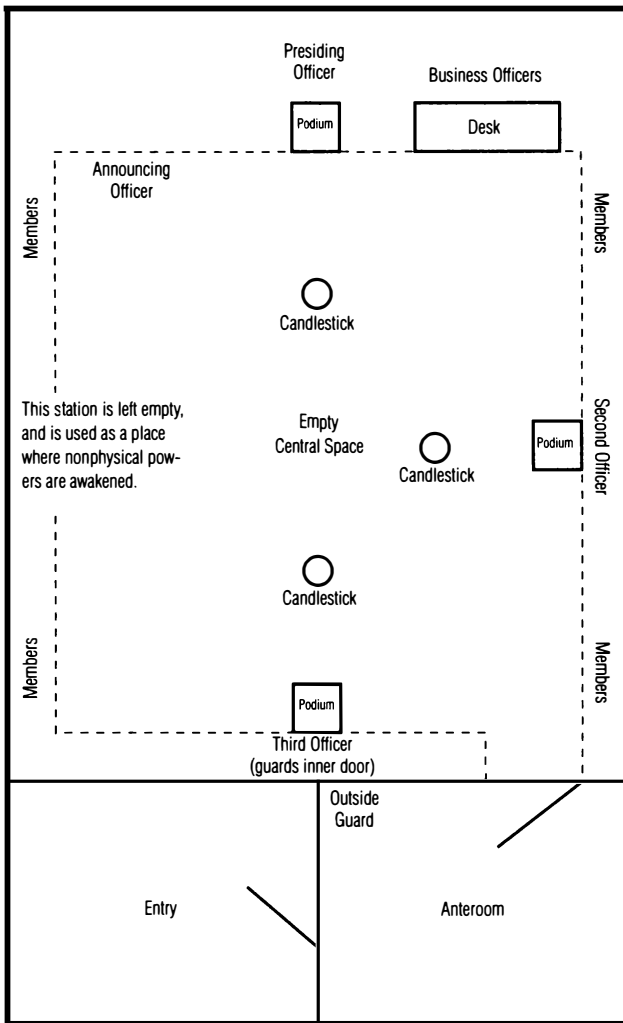


Diagram 2-2

The empty space becomes a blank slate in which almost any imaginable pattern of polarities and interactions can be traced out. The antechamber provides a place in which the candidate for initiation can wait while ritual props and gear are being set up or changed. It also provides a place to leave coats and bags, and allows a guard stationed there to control access to the lodge space and to keep anyone from listening at the door.

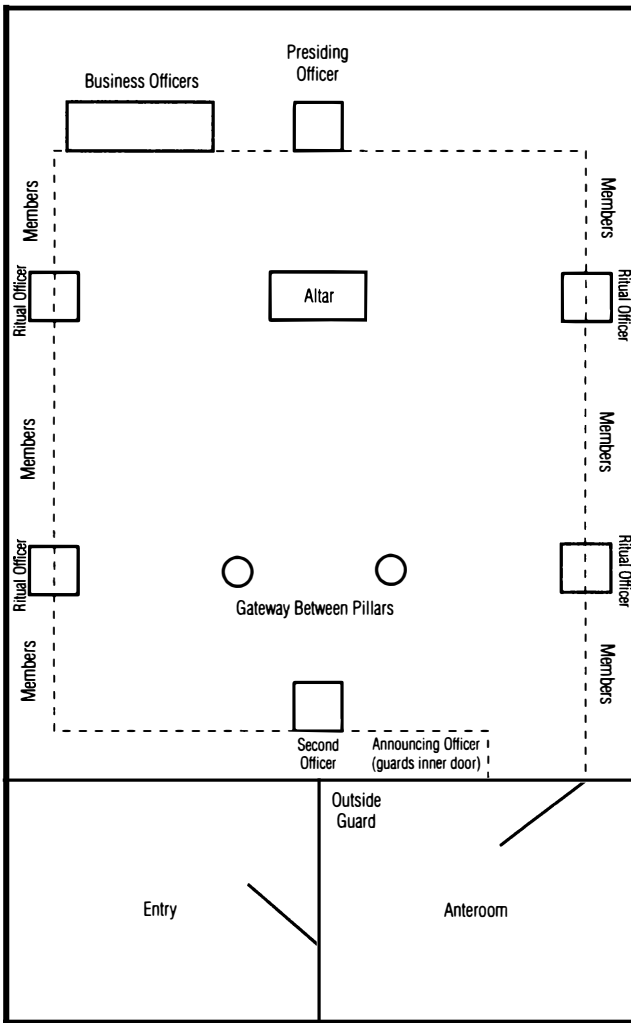


Diagram 2-3

In terms of the needs of meetings, the arrangement of seats has most of the benefits of the circle of seats used by many less structured modern groups. The lodge design allows everyone present to see and hear everyone else clearly, and makes it easy for any member to take an active part in lodge discussions. At the same time, there's never any doubt about who is responsible for carrying out any given duty in the lodge. The clearly-marked places of the officers play an

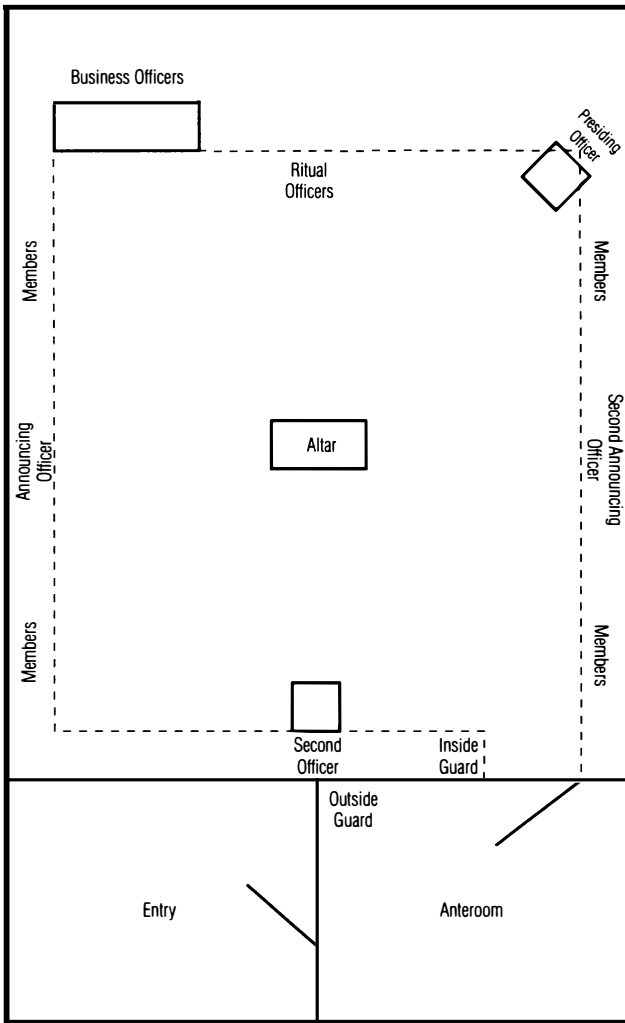


Diagram 2-4

important role in the lodge's method of handling issues of leadership—a method that is one of the treasures of the system, and that we'll be exploring in detail later on.

As with the definition of the lodge given above, though, one of the most important factors in this patterning of space is a matter of what is *not* there. This can be seen clearly if a lodge is compared to, say, a church, an auditorium, or most of the other structures used

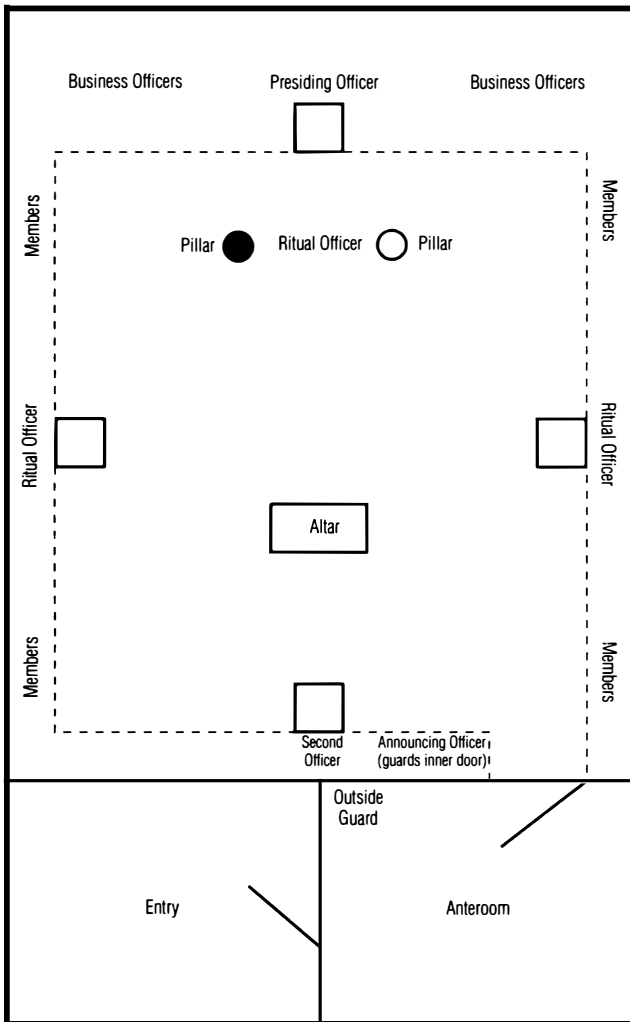


Diagram 2-5

for public meetings in our culture. The altar or pulpit in a church, like the stage in an auditorium, places certain people at the focus of attention and turns the others present into an audience, who can watch and respond but not take part as equals. Fairly often this distinction takes shape in the design of the meeting room as a division into two separate spaces with a physical barrier—a rail, a wall, a major change in floor level—separating the two.

In lodge architecture, by contrast, no one occupies the sole center of attention, and no one is shut off from participation on an equal basis. Everyone from the chief officer to the newest initiate sits around the edges of the lodge space, facing inward to the space itself. On the one hand, this reflects and reinforces the idea, central to the traditional lodge system, that lodge members meet as equals. On the other hand, it stresses the fact that the most important thing about the lodge is the work that is done there.

The Lodge as a Pattern in Time

The activities of a lodge take place in time as well as space, and the arrangements of space that are part of the lodge system are paralleled by specific arrangements of time.

The central factor shaping the lodge's relationship to time is this simple point—what takes place in lodges is different, in important ways, from most of the other things that go on in our culture. This is true even in wholly non-magical lodges. The lodge system has its own values and goals, its own ways of making decisions and handling interactions between people, its own language of symbols, and its own ways of working with them: in effect, its own culture and its own consciousness.

The same thing is true of any group of people, of course, and especially true of any group that uses the powerfully defining methods of ritual work. In a full-time ritual community like a monastery, the transition into and out of this special culture and consciousness can be handled by fairly simple means, since people go through these transitions only by joining or leaving, and the community as a whole remains in its own consciousness and culture from the time it is founded to the time it ceases to exist. The part-time nature of lodge membership, though, makes this a much more demanding process. Members of a lodge have to be able to enter the lodge's culture and consciousness quickly and effectively every week or two, leave it again a few hours later, and then be ready to return to it at the next lodge meeting. Furthermore, the lodge itself exists in a physical sense only during those lodge meetings, and in many ways its culture and consciousness has to be rebuilt (or at least reawakened) each time.

The method evolved to deal with this situation is one of the crucial elements of the “standard kit” of lodge technique. Like so much else in the lodge system, it depends on ritual actions. A ritual of opening is used to start the lodge meeting, and handle the transition into the lodge consciousness. A ritual of closing is used to end the meeting and handle the transition in the other direction. These rituals have a specific form, which—with some minor variations—is common to the whole spectrum of lodge organizations.

The *opening ritual* typically has four phases. In the first phase, the doors of the lodge are closed, and those present demonstrate that they are members of the lodge (or the order to which it belongs). This is done by having a lodge officer go around the room, receiving a password and the lodge’s secret grip from each person present. We can call this, for convenience, the phase of *sealing the lodge*.

In the second phase, the lodge officers describe their duties in the lodge and the symbolism of their office. This is the exact equivalent in ritual terms of the defined places for officers mentioned above, and has a similar role to play in the lodge system’s method of handling leadership issues. This phase of the opening process is sometimes shortened or omitted in fraternal lodge rituals, but it has a definite place and, as we’ll see, a definite value. We can call it the phase of *defining the lodge*.

In the third phase, the powers governing the lodge symbolism are invoked. The methods used for this invocation vary depending on the type of lodge. In fraternal lodges, the invocation typically consists of an ode sung by the members and a prayer, while magical lodges use considerably more robust methods. In both cases, though, this phase concludes with a symbolic gesture—a sign, in lodge parlance—made by all the members, and answered by one of the major officers. We can call this the phase of *focusing the lodge*.

In the fourth and final phase of the opening, the lodge is declared open by an officer who has the duty of making formal announcements. The members are then seated, and the business of the lodge can begin. We can call this the phase of *opening the lodge*.

The *closing ritual* generally has two phases. First, a different invocation is used to close off the energies summoned by the

opening, and to shift the focus of consciousness from the lodge to the ordinary world. Again, this invocation may be anything from a song and a prayer to a full-force magical ritual. This can be called the phase of *defocusing the lodge*. Finally, the lodge is declared closed by the appropriate officer, and the doors are opened. This completes the phase of *closing the lodge*.

Most of the elements of these ritual processes are simple enough, but taken together they define the lodge in time as completely as the walls of the lodge building define it in space. In the course of the opening ritual, the lodge reaffirms its symbolism, ideals and identity; each of the members sets aside the roles and masks he or she wears outside the lodge and takes on an identity defined by the lodge's symbols and rituals. The closing ritual, in turn, reverses the process, and allows the members to resume their ordinary roles in the world without rupturing their connection with the lodge.

These ritual methods have another important use in the patterning of time in a lodge. The same ritual formulae used to open and close the lodge also come into play when, as in most lodge systems, there are several different levels of initiation—"grades" or "degrees," in lodge jargon. Each of these levels has its own specific states of consciousness, and each needs to be entered and left through the same sort of ritual process used to open and close the lodge as a whole.

The different levels of initiation are almost universally arranged in a ladder going from "lower" to "higher" degrees, and a new member starts at the bottom of the ladder and works his or her way up. Whenever a lodge makes the transition from a lower to a higher degree, then, there may be members present who have not yet received the higher degree; when it moves from a higher to a lower degree, on the other hand, this should not be the case, since no lodge member will normally be present when a lodge is open in a degree higher than he or she has attained, except during the process of being initiated into the higher degree.

The ritual of *raising a lodge* to a higher degree is a small-scale version of the ritual used to open the lodge. Only the phase of defining the lodge is left out, as the officers typically keep the same functions from one degree to another. In the phase of sealing the

lodge, an officer receives the grip and password from each person present; in the phase of focusing the lodge, some form of invocation—in fraternal lodges, this may be only the sign of the degree—is used to focus the awareness of the members on the new degree; in the phase of opening the lodge, the lodge is declared open in the higher degree.

The ritual of *lowering the lodge* to a lower degree makes use of the same formula as the closing ritual. In the phase of defocusing the lodge, another invocation—again, in fraternal settings, this may be no more than the sign of the lower degree—is used to refocus the consciousness of those present, while in the phase of closing the lodge the lodge is declared open in the lower degree.

As we'll see in Chapter Four, all these methods can be understood and put to work in the context of full-scale inner work within a magical lodge. It's important to realize, though, that even in their simplest form they can be effective methods for shaping and directing consciousness, and for both using and reinforcing the effects of initiation. Like many of the tools in the "standard kit" of lodge technique, they have depths that don't necessarily appear at a first glance.

The Problem of Magical Elitism

In turning from the structures of space and time to those of leadership and organization, the next topic that has to be covered, we enter into problematic territory. As we saw in Chapter One, the first proto-lodge organizations started out as associations of traveling workers who joined together for mutual support and fellowship. These proto-lodges developed a democratic approach to doing business and a fiercely independent way of thinking that rejected rigid authority structures. These were passed down, along with the specific arrangements they inspired, to many of the lodge organizations of later times.

These things remained standard in most branches of the lodge tradition because they work: they prevent certain common kinds of abuses, and help foster the spirit of fellowship that is one of the most important forces binding a lodge together. At the same time, these elements of the lodge tradition have far too often come into

conflict with a habit of thinking that has burdened the Western magical tradition since ancient times.

We can call that habit of thinking “magical elitism.” This is the idea that the attainment of certain levels of magical or spiritual development brings with it the ability, the right, or even the responsibility to rule over those who haven’t reached the same degree of advancement. It’s a notion with very deep roots in Western esoteric thought, reaching back at least as far as Pythagoras, and it can still be found all through the modern magical community, even among people who ought to know better.

This idea that knowledge justifies domination, taken to its logical extreme, has produced a full-blown authoritarian streak in Western esoteric thought, advocating the absolute rule of the self-defined “wise” over everyone else. This notion took its classic form in the grim police state of Plato’s *Republic*: despite this century’s experiences with totalitarian rule, such ideas still have their advocates today. On a less universal level, the same equation has had a central part in the rise of an elitist approach to magical lodge work. This approach led many magical lodges to discard the democratic processes central to traditional lodge practice, and replace them with some sort of authoritarian scheme in which a single leader or a few high-grade initiates have complete control over the organization.

There are two main arguments that have been used to justify schemes of this sort. The equation described above, in which simple possession of knowledge is transmuted into a justification of personal control of an organization, is the most common of them. The second is based on the idea that authority should belong to people who pass through certain grades of initiation, receive a certain transmission of power, or undergo certain kinds of spiritual development. Both of these claims are standard parts of the way the magical lodge has been defined over the last couple of centuries. Both of them are hard to justify, though, once we leave the realm of images and myths and touch down on the actual realities of lodge governance.

The blunt identification of knowledge with power is the easiest to dismiss. What is this privileged knowledge, after all? The secrets of dozens of esoteric lodge organizations have seen print over the years, to the point that it’s reasonable to talk about a representative

sample. Behind all the pretentious rhetoric about “secrets for which the world is not prepared”—a rhetoric that, as we’ll see, completely misses the point of traditional lodge secrecy—what these lodges have been preserving, in every case, is some collection of magical, alchemical, and philosophical material that doesn’t greatly differ from the lore available in published sources since the Renaissance. Such knowledge is indeed powerful, and well worth having. But—and this is the critical point—it does not necessarily make the one who learns it more able to lead an organization, handle finances and paperwork, settle quarrels between members, or cope with the temptations of power.

The same point can be made at least as forcefully about the claim that authority should be a function of a grade of initiation, a transmission of power, or a level of spiritual development. All these things can be valid and powerful parts of the work of a magical lodge, and they can play roles in the way magical lodges operate on all levels. Still, their effects have been blown all out of proportion by the obscurantism and deliberate myth-mongering that shapes so much writing on the subject, and none of them—however powerful—can be relied on to provide their possessors with the practical skills that are needed to manage a lodge.

On a broader scale, this point is the critical flaw in the whole theory of magical elitism. Spiritual insight and magical power don’t guarantee competence in the craft of governing any more than they guarantee competence in the craft of plumbing. The wisest sage or the most powerful magician in the world may still be at a loss to deal with a leaky toilet unless he or she has also learned something about plumbing; in the same way, an accomplished magician with profound knowledge of esoteric teachings and the highest grades of initiation can still be a poor leader, make bad decisions, and have trouble balancing the lodge checkbook. Knowledge of the hidden powers of the self is not the same thing as knowledge of the art of governing—or of fixing leaky toilets, for that matter.

It’s illuminating, in this context, to look at the actual results of authoritarian rule in magical lodges. If special knowledge, high grades of initiation, or any of the other excuses for elitism actually do make people more fit to rule, it would follow logically that

organizations that choose their leadership on these principles would be better managed and would have longer lifespans than those governed by the supposedly more fallible wisdom of the less exalted.

In point of historical fact, exactly the opposite is true. Time after time, authoritarian leadership in a magical lodge has wrecked the lodge within a fairly short time frame. The Golden Dawn is the classic example; the political crisis that wrecked it came about because all real power ended up in the hands of one person, Samuel Mathers, who proceeded to abuse it. Because the checks and balances that are part of the traditional lodge system were never part of the Golden Dawn's structure, the other senior members had no way to control Mathers' excesses, short of a full-scale revolt that shattered the Order beyond repair. This experience is far from unique; dozens of other magical lodge organizations have gone under for essentially the same reasons.

It should not have to be pointed out that a system that routinely causes organizational self-destruction may not be the best available choice! For all their limitations, more democratically run fraternal orders such as the Freemasons and Odd Fellows have remained active in the Western world for several centuries now; it might be worth pondering what kind of influence the Golden Dawn might have had in the world, if its internal troubles had allowed it to reach the same lifespan.

The Question of the "Secret Chiefs"

One other issue plays a part in the rhetoric of magical elitism, and it needs to be dealt with from a different angle. This is the whole cluster of claims and counterclaims surrounding the idea of the so-called "Secret Chiefs." There has been an enormous amount of dispute over this subject during the last three hundred years, most of it generating far more heat than light, but a glance back over the history of the idea may offer some useful illumination.

By the time the lodge system became the standard form for magical groups in the Western world, it included at least one feature that proved to be a difficulty to many would-be magical lodge founders. This was the idea that a lodge, in order to be valid, had to receive a charter from a higher body of some kind. In established

lodge organizations, this is not much of a problem; a group of Freemasons or Knights of Pythias wishing to found a new lodge, for instance, can simply petition the appropriate Grand Lodge for a new charter, and will normally get one if the usual procedures have been followed.

For the various magical lodges that sprang up on the fringes of Freemasonry and elsewhere, though, matters were not so easy. Few Grand Lodges of any fraternal order were (or are) willing to sanction the more magical types of lodge work, and wholly independent magical lodge organizations such as the Golden Dawn were completely out of luck. The obvious solution was to come up with a “Grand Lodge” of one’s own, preferably one whose existence could not be checked.

Legendary orders such as the Rosicrucians and the Knights Templar offered a convenient model and, often, a familiar label. By the middle of the eighteenth century, as a result, magical lodges all over Europe were equipped with charters, properly signed and sealed, from a vast array of secret “Grand Lodges” of every conceivable description. The vast majority of these were blatant forgeries. Still, they served a useful purpose, by giving magical lodges enough of an appearance of legitimacy to attract members and accomplish the work that needed to be done.

The most interesting thing about these forgeries is that a fraudulent charter did not necessarily produce a worthless lodge. Martinez de Pasqually, one of the most important magicians of the eighteenth century and a crucial figure in the development of the magical tradition of Martinism, founded his *Ordre des Elus Coens* (Order of Elect Priests) on the basis of a blatantly forged charter—allegedly signed by Bonnie Prince Charlie, of all people, as “head of all Scottish Masonry!” In the same way, the Golden Dawn’s own claim to legitimacy—the “Anna Sprengel” letters—have been shown beyond reasonable doubt to be a forgery concocted by William Wynn Westcott. Both Martinez’ system and that of the Golden Dawn, however, are highly effective magical traditions with powerful initiations to offer. In terms of the traditional idea of the “Secret Chiefs,” this makes no sense at all; a fake charter should equal a fake lodge, and that is that. As we’ll see, though, there’s

another way to look at the inner side of lodge work that does make sense of this phenomenon.

Some of the further developments of the tradition brought in even more complications, though. The “Secret Chiefs” of the earlier magical lodges were almost always seen as living human beings, however secluded or powerful. By the late nineteenth century, on the other hand, some magical lodges had begun to think of their “Secret Chiefs” as disembodied beings contacted by way of magical or mediumistic techniques. This transformation, linking the idea of the Secret Chiefs to older magical traditions of what nowadays are called inner plane contacts, offered some useful possibilities to the magical lodges—possibilities that will be discussed later on in this book. On the other hand, it also offered a nearly perfect shelter for scoundrels and lunatics, who could call on the invisible authority of the Hidden Adepts to justify their own abusive or bizarre behavior.

Nowadays the ideology of the “Secret Chiefs” still plays a central part in many magical lodge organizations. As a method of lodge governance, though, it suffers from the same defects as any other autocratic system, and has to face most of the same criticisms. Again, it’s vital to remember that spiritual status does not necessarily make someone a competent leader—even when the status in question is that of Ascended Master. It’s also an important teaching of the magical traditions of the West that the mere lack of a physical body is no guarantee of wisdom, or even of good intentions.

Four Principles of Lodge Governance

The theory of magical elitism has been part of the magical lodge system for so long that the act of removing it involves changes at a very deep level, and makes it necessary to redefine some of the most basic ideas of what a magical lodge is or should be. Still, those changes can and should be made. At their core, the magical teachings of the West are founded solidly on an ethic of personal freedom and personal responsibility, not one of blind obedience, and from this perspective the theory of magical elitism is out of step with magical tradition itself.

When we turn to the methods of lodge organization and governance that are part of the “standard kit,” we pass into territory

that has rarely been put to use for magical purposes. These are the aspects of the lodge system that most strongly run counter to the doctrine of magical elitism, and—with a few exceptions—have generally been shelved by the founders of magical lodges, in favor of the kinds of authoritarian arrangements we've just discussed. One of these neglected aspects is the way the lodge system assigns responsibilities to its members. Four principles govern this process.

First of all, responsibility in a lodge is *divided*. The work involved in running a lodge can easily be separated into distinct groups of tasks, and in the traditional lodge system each of these is done by a different person. Thus one lodge member presides over the meetings, another handles correspondence and recordkeeping, a third receives dues and keeps the checkbook balanced, a fourth takes care of the regalia and ritual equipment, and so on.

The second principle, which follows directly from the first, is that responsibility in a lodge is *defined*. Each of the tasks that needs to be done is assigned to a specific office, and the lodge member who holds that office is personally responsible for seeing to it that the task gets done. As a result, there's never any doubt about who is supposed to do what, and there's always somewhere for the buck to stop.

The third principle is that responsibility in a lodge is *rotating*. The members of a lodge move from position to position, holding each office for a specific time—one year is the most common term, six months almost as common—and then passing to another. In a few lodge systems, the offices are arranged in a fixed order, and each lodge member moves through them in turn. In most others, things are handled less formally, but each member still takes on different responsibilities at different times. One of the strengths of having rotating officers is this: a lodge that has been in existence for any length of time will have several different members who have experience at any given task, making it easy to replace absent members or provide guidance to new officers. Another advantage is that no one person ends up with a stranglehold over any part of the lodge's activities or becomes loaded down with so many responsibilities that burnout results. A more subtle but equally important effect is that the basic lodge ideal of equality among members is powerfully reinforced.

The fourth principle, and the one that marks the most significant break with the traditions of magical elitism, is that responsibility in a lodge is *elective*. The principal lodge officers are not appointed by the Secret Chiefs, or for that matter by themselves, but are elected by a majority vote of the members of the lodge. Some lodge systems fill every office by ballot, from the presiding officer to the guard who sits in the anteroom. Others elect the most important officers—those who preside over meetings, and those who handle records or money—and have one or more of the elected officers appoint members to fill the less critical positions. In either case, the tasks that are the most vital to the functioning of the lodge—and are also the most vulnerable to abuse—are put in the hands of members chosen by the lodge.

There are certain disadvantages to this system, of course. History shows that elections can easily turn into popularity contests, and the best candidate is not necessarily the one who wins. Still, the “standard kit” also contains several elements that help to limit the potential for these problems.

First of all, candidates for the most important offices are usually required to have served in several other offices beforehand. One common provision of this sort requires candidates for presiding officer to have served a term as second officer, and candidates for second officer to have held at least two other offices in the lodge beforehand. This means that members of a lodge will have the chance to see how a potential candidate handles lesser responsibilities before he or she is entrusted with greater ones. Also, most lodge systems allow members to be removed from office by a vote of the lodge for certain causes. More importantly, though, the division of responsibilities and the rotation of members through the different offices helps limit the potential damage of a bad choice. If an officer proves to be incompetent or simply a poor fit for the office, he or she only has responsibility for one part of the lodge’s work, and someone else will be taking over that part at the beginning of the next term. Sooner or later, most lodges have to learn to work around an officer’s deficiencies for six months or a year, and most do so without much trouble.

Lodge Governance: The Role of Leadership

Central to all four of these principles, and to the whole process of lodge governance, is an approach to the idea of leadership that is at odds not only with the rhetoric of magical elitism but with many trends in our present culture as well. In a lodge, leadership is a function of office, not of personality. The presiding officer in a lodge is not necessarily, or even usually, the most charismatic person in the lodge, or, for that matter, the loudest talker or the worst bully. He or she may not even be the person best qualified to lead the lodge. Still, he or she presides over the meetings of the lodge and has the final say over certain aspects of lodge business. In the same way, the other officers in the lodge are given powers and responsibilities based on the office they hold, and not on their own personal abilities or talents.

This way of handling leadership issues often seems bizarre to people raised on the language of modern political thinking. The image of the gifted leader who can solve problems no one else can—the staple of political advertising for more than a century—has pushed aside nearly all other ideas of leadership in our culture. Like the theory of magical elitism, though, this image of leadership hasn't worked out very well in practice. It could be argued that it's precisely because we so often expect a leader to solve our problems for us that those problems have become so large and so difficult.

The image of the gifted leader has its roots in the idea that leadership is primarily a matter of crisis management; that we are constantly presented with problems so tough only a strong leader can solve them. While this may be true on a national scale—certainly it seems to be a fair description of our present predicament—it's simply not true for a small group of magicians who wish to form a lodge. The actual difficulties that have to be solved in order to start a lodge and keep it going are fairly minor ones, and a lodge that can't meet these without going through a crisis is in bad shape.

In fact, most of the work that needs to be done to keep a lodge in good order is simple and well within the abilities of most people. This is especially true when the tasks involved have been divided

up among the members of a group, and when everyone knows exactly what he or she needs to do. In this context, making leadership a function of personal talents is silly. It also tends to create the situation (familiar in far too many groups) in which one member is permanently saddled with some burdensome task because he or she knows how to do it and no one else is willing to learn.

But when leadership positions are turned into offices through which different members rotate, a range of important (and usually unrecognized) possibilities opens up. In particular, the experience of handling different tasks and playing different roles in a lodge is a remarkable tool for learning and personal growth. This is especially true for magicians, who can make use of the different offices to explore their strengths and weaknesses, to challenge themselves with unfamiliar tasks, and to learn some of the lessons of power. A magical lodge that assigns different initiatory tasks to different officers can also use the rotation of members through the offices as an important part of its magical training program.

Lodge Governance: Making Decisions

Not all of the responsibilities handled in a lodge are routine enough to be assigned to a single officer. Of course, the selection of the most important officers is one of these. The disposition of lodge money and the definition of lodge policies are others. So, in the traditional system, is the admission of new members to the lodge. All these are typically handled by some form of voting.

The first three are normally decided by a majority vote of the members present at a lodge meeting. (The fourth has a process of its own, which we'll discuss shortly.) Again, there are some disadvantages to this form of decision-making. It opens the door to various kinds of political agendas, and leaves very few options to those who don't support the majority opinion on some issue. Badly handled, it can produce a tyranny of the majority that can split a lodge apart.

Many people, reacting to these problems, tend to prefer the idea of making decisions by consensus—that is, by working out a

decision that every member will agree to support. On the other hand, this system has problems of its own. It tends to take up a very large amount of time; it leaves the group process open to being hijacked by a small minority with a specific agenda; and if there's a radical divergence of opinions in the group the result is often not consensus but paralysis.

There is, as it happens, a middle ground between these two positions, and it's one that most healthy lodges discover in a fairly short time. When a question is brought before the lodge and discussed in a meeting, the first concerns of the members (and especially of the presiding officer) are to make sure that all sides have a hearing, and to find a solution everyone can accept. In the great majority of cases, this can be done without too much difficulty. If the quest for consensus fails, though, the majority rules.

On the other hand, the election of officers is typically handled with a minimum of discussion. Candidates are nominated and elected by written ballot without benefit of speeches or any of the usual political claptrap. The central idea here is that each member already knows the candidates, and should make up his or her own mind about which one should hold any given office.

The Role of Lodge Etiquette

One of the most important—yet least noticed—factors shaping all these issues of governance is a set of practices, habits and expectations that we can call “lodge etiquette.” Modern attitudes have tended to treat all forms of etiquette harshly, but such formal ways of shaping behavior can serve as a useful lubricant to smooth over the rough places in human interaction.

There are some variations in the details of lodge etiquette between different lodge organizations, but the following guidelines reflect general practice.

First of all, it's important to keep in mind that everything that takes place in an open lodge is, in a real sense, a ritual action. This includes discussing and voting on lodge business just as much as it the opening and closing ceremonies and other obviously ritual work. Most lodges have specific signs, patterns of movement, etc.

that are used in conducting lodge business, and these should be followed as closely as their equivalents in an initiation.

Traditionally, members who wish to speak will stand, address the presiding officer, and be recognized before speaking. If a member wishes to speak directly to another member, he or she still addresses the presiding officer first and receives permission. This may seem excessively formal, but it allows the presiding officer to limit talk in the lodge to one member at a time, allowing the rest of the members to hear what's being said. For the same reason, cross-talking (that is, talk between members who have not been recognized) and interrupting a member who is speaking are not appropriate in lodge.

Under most circumstances, only the announcing officer moves in an open lodge. If a member wishes, for instance, to pass out a document in lodge, he or she addresses the presiding officer, who has the announcing officer take the document and carry it around to each member.

To minimize disruption of the process of ritual work, no one enters or leaves a lodge during the opening ceremony, the closing ceremony, or while voting of any sort is taking place. During initiations and other major rituals, members enter or leave only as the script of the ritual directs.

In carrying out ordinary business, lodges use a simple form of parliamentary procedure. A member who wants the lodge to act on some matter makes a motion, which he or she should be able to phrase in a single sentence. The motion must be seconded by another member before it can be discussed by the lodge. Once seconded, the presiding officer will call for discussion. When the discussion is finished, the members of the lodge vote, and the question is decided.

There are two ways to limit a discussion that has gone on too long and, in the opinion of the majority of members, is wasting time. The first is a Call for the Question, which calls for the vote to take place immediately. When two-thirds of the members present have called for the question, the presiding officer cuts off further discussion and the vote is taken at once. The second is a Motion to Table, which calls for the discussion to stop and be resumed at the

next meeting. Once a Motion to Table is made and seconded, it must be voted on at once, without discussion, and if it passes the motion is tabled and may not be brought up again at that meeting. Both of these are ways to keep an unproductive argument from going on indefinitely.

A motion that is being discussed can be amended by a Motion to Amend, which must be made and seconded like any other motion. If this happens, the presiding officer asks the member who made the original motion if he or she accepts the amendment. If it is accepted, it becomes a “friendly amendment” and is added to the motion under discussion. If the member who originally moved does not accept the amendment, the motion to amend must be discussed and voted on. If it passes, the motion as amended is considered to have passed, and the original motion is not brought up again. If the amendment fails, the original motion returns to the floor.

In all lodge work, courtesy should be an unailing rule between members. Public displays of anger and the like are out of place when a lodge is meeting, as are less blatant violations of the civility that is a cornerstone of all lodge work. If two members have a problem between themselves, they must be prepared to leave it outside the lodge door and behave in a civil fashion during the meeting.

Finally, conversations about politics, religion, or other subjects that tend to breed controversy should be kept outside the lodge.

Many of these principles, again, are likely to seem rigid and excessively formal to modern tastes, but they work well in practice and prevent a range of minor and not-so-minor problems from getting in the way of lodge business. It’s worth stressing that a magical lodge is not a therapy group, or, for that matter, a substitute family. It’s a group of people pursuing a common goal by way of a particular set of methods, and it seems reasonable to suggest that behaviors which get in the way of the goal or interfere with the methods should be set aside during the few hours a month that are actually spent in lodge meetings.

The Membership Process

One other part of the “standard kit” of lodge techniques has often given rise to certain kinds of misunderstanding. It’s important,

therefore, to understand why it exists and what role it plays in keeping a lodge running smoothly. I am referring to the procedure for bringing new members into the lodge.

There are four steps to this process. First, the candidate for membership fills out a written application which is read to the lodge. There may be qualifications for membership that have to be met in order to get an application in the first place. In many lodge organizations, it's also required that the candidate be sponsored by someone who is already a member.

Second, the presiding officer appoints a committee (usually consisting of three lodge members) to interview the candidate. The committee members meet with the candidate, discuss the lodge and its work, and find out as much as possible about the candidate's background and interests. They also make sure that the qualifications for membership have been met. They report back to the lodge at the next meeting and recommend that the application either be accepted or rejected by the lodge.

Next, the members of the lodge discuss the application. After the discussion concludes, they vote to accept or reject the candidate's application for membership. In the traditional lodge system, balloting for members is done by ball ballot, in which each lodge member drops a black or white ball from a tray into a ballot box. A certain number of black balls—three is the most common number, but in some lodge organizations it can be as few as one—is enough to reject a candidate for membership. (It's from this practice that we get the term "blackballed.") If the vote goes in the candidate's favor, he or she is initiated as soon as circumstances permit. If not, he or she usually cannot apply again to the same lodge for six months or a year.

The final step is not universal, but it has an important place in many lodge systems. At this stage, the new initiate must qualify for and receive one or more additional grades of initiation before becoming a fully active lodge member. Each grade has its own requirements, which will vary depending on the purpose of the lodge. A fraternal lodge may require candidates to memorize a certain amount of grade symbolism and teachings; a magical one will usually expect them to master some elements of occult theory and practice. Until the work has been done and the grades received, the

new member belongs to the lodge on paper but faces some restrictions. For example, he or she may not be able to hold elective office, to vote in lodge, or even to attend meetings at all.

This process may seem more like an obstacle course than a way of inviting new members into a group, but it has evolved as a result of hard experience. The lodge system has a great deal of strength, but that strength has to be rooted in a common purpose and mutually accepted standards of behavior. Those who don't share the same purpose or who aren't willing to abide by the same standards are probably not going to make good members of the lodge. Similarly, it takes a certain degree of work on everyone's part to make a lodge function, and those who aren't willing to put out the effort to reach higher degrees are unlikely to put out the effort to keep the lodge going.

This shouldn't be seen as a moral judgement on those who are not accepted for membership. Two individuals can both be perfectly decent human beings and still have radically different ideas about the proper goals for lodge work, the appropriate ways to behave in a group, or the amount of effort that ought to be put into the lodge. On the other hand, two people with views this divergent probably won't be able to work well together in the same magical lodge, and there's rarely much point in trying to make them do so. Furthermore, there are cases—too many of them—where someone who seeks to join a lodge does so with some ulterior motive in mind, and would be better left outside for the sake of the lodge and its other members.

It's for these reasons that the lodge system includes an array of methods for screening potential members. Some disputes over goals and standards can be worked out in the lodge, but this takes time away from the work the lodge was founded to do. It's often a more useful approach to keep such disputes outside the lodge in the first place, and to allow people with radically different ideas to found or join different lodges.

A magical lodge, again, is a group of people who work together to accomplish a common magical purpose using traditional lodge methods. It is not, and does not need to be, open to everyone who wants to join it.

Fundamentals of Lodge Symbolism

Just as the traditional lodge system has evolved an array of methods for handling the practical and organizational needs of a working lodge, it has developed a specific set of tools for handling the subtler but equally important needs of the inner side of lodge work—the side that deals with individual and group consciousness. Here again, history has played a crucial part in shaping the traditions that are now part of the system. The form taken by the structural side of the lodge can be traced straight back to methods of organization and governance worked out by the medieval guilds. In much the same way, the inner side of the lodge draws most of its form and many of its methods from ways of understanding the world of our experience that were common during the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

This particular legacy from the past, though, presents a difficulty to many modern people—one of the most serious difficulties to be faced in making sense and use of the traditional lodge system. While the methods of organization used in earlier times are relatively easy to understand in present-day terms, older methods of working with the inner side of human experience are much harder to grasp from a modern perspective. They depend on habits of thought and ways of approaching the world that began to drop out of common use some three hundred years ago, and survive only in quite limited circles nowadays—primarily in the handful of surviving lodge organizations in the Western world.

To put the inner side of the lodge system to work, therefore, it's necessary to enter into some forgotten ways of thinking, and to learn how to look at the world the way our ancestors once did. As we'll see, this has certain advantages over and above helping us to make sense of the lodge system. The modern way of approaching the universe has its strengths, but it also has some serious blind spots, and being able to move to a different model of reality in certain situations is perhaps the most effective way there is of getting around those.

The World as Symbol

One of the things that seems strangest to modern people who read books from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is the way that many of these texts ignore our present habit of drawing a sharp line between matters of fact and issues of interpretation and meaning. What medieval and Renaissance herbals have to say about the practical uses of plants, for example, often closely duplicates the knowledge that can be found in modern books on herbalism. Surrounding this information and interwoven with it, though, is a kind of lore that—again, from a modern standpoint—is rarely short of bizarre. The “doctrine of signatures,” a common feature of the old herbals, held that the proper medicinal use of a plant could be found marked somehow in the plant's physical form: an herb that treats jaundice, for example, might have yellow flowers or leaves shaped like the human liver. Even more common was the habit of identifying each plant, on the basis of similar reasoning, with one of the seven traditional planets, and using these same classifications to make sense of the diseases any given herb could cure.

It's easy enough to dismiss this sort of thing as simple superstition, and of course this has been done endlessly by the sort of historian-cheerleaders who are more interested in justifying current habits of thought than in understanding older ones. The people of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, however, were by no means fools, and they were quite capable of exact practical observation of the natural world when they saw a need for it. The medieval culture that used the doctrine of signatures to understand herbs and stones

was the same culture that invented handguns and perfected the magnetic compass. It's clear that something besides sheer ignorance was going on.

What was going on, in fact, was a wholly different way of approaching the world. Modern thought, as suggested above, habitually divides the world of our experience into two separate realms, one of which is a product of the other. The first of these is made of matter, exists outside human consciousness, and can be understood by the (supposedly) objective methods of scientific research. The other is made up of various odd events that take place inside certain material objects called human brains, and are experienced by us as thoughts, meanings, interpretations, and the like.

Medieval and Renaissance thought, by contrast, saw the world as a unity, not a duality, and understood that unity by way of three interpenetrating facets, not two. One of these facets was the world of matter, the second was the world of thoughts and perceptions we normally call "mind," and the third was a world of meaning, of underlying patterns that gave structure to both of the other worlds. None of these three realms could be reduced to any of the others, and none could be fully understood by way of any of the others. Just as the realm of thoughts and perceptions was not seen as a by-product of matter, or as limited to human brains, the patterns of the world of meaning could be suggested by their reflections in the other two realms, but could never be completely defined by them.

Central to this way of seeing the world was the idea that everything was connected to everything else by subtle connections of meaning that were part of the world of experience itself, not merely the products of human thinking. These patterns could be traced in every part of the world of experience, and they formed a framework of meaning by which any experience whatsoever could be interpreted and understood. Thus the entire world became a book—the Book of Nature, as it was called—which could be read by those who learned to understand the language in which it was written.

That language was the language of symbolism, and it was for this reason that the doctrine of signatures, the correspondences of the planets, and similar symbolic schemes came to fill such an important role in the science and scholarship of the Middle Ages

and the Renaissance. As a system for working with what we would now call scientific questions, of course, the symbolic approach had certain drawbacks, and it was because of these that the makers of the scientific revolution discarded it as that basis of their investigations of the natural world. The practical successes of the scientific worldview, though, led Western culture to throw out the baby with the bathwater, and to lose touch with the far from minor point that a system that works well with one portion of human experience will not necessarily work as well with every other portion.

Symbol and Sign

The older vision of the world, which we've examined above, was founded on a specific idea of what symbols are and what they do. It's important to grasp that idea as clearly as possible; it underlies the whole symbolic method central to the lodge system, as well as much of the theory and practice of Western magic.

To the thinkers of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, a symbol was an object of perception that was naturally linked to an innate meaning—a meaning that was not simply a product of individual or collective human thought, but a presence and a power in a realm of its own. Sun and Moon, tree and stone, number and form, the figures of myth and the images of dream meant certain things, not because people had agreed to impose these meanings on them, but because the object of experience, the perception of that object, and the inner meaning of the object were all linked at the deepest of levels.

It was precisely this idea which came under increasing attack in the late Renaissance among small circles of scientists and philosophers and later in Western society as a whole. To the new way of thinking, the meanings of symbols were completely arbitrary, they existed solely in the human mind. They were not even “meanings” at all in the medieval sense—that is, patterns of relationship in a realm beyond mind and matter alike—but simply thoughts and perceptions that had been arbitrarily assigned to the symbols by human beings. To borrow a useful distinction from philosophy, they were arguing that the “symbols” that had structured the medieval image of the world were not symbols at all, but signs.

The difference between these two categories will be of critical importance in this chapter, so a few words of definition may not be out of place here. A symbol, just as in the medieval sense, is an object of perception that is innately linked to a pattern of meaning. A sign, on the other hand, is an object of perception that has an arbitrary set of concepts assigned to it. The meaning of a symbol comes from the symbol's participation in the world of meaning and cannot be changed in any real way without changing the symbol itself at the deepest of levels. The meaning of a sign, by contrast, comes from nothing more than an agreement among those who make use of it. Equally, the meanings of a sign can normally be defined exactly, however complex the definition may turn out to be. The meanings of a symbol, on the other hand, cannot be defined in so precise a way. They can be suggested and outlined, but there is always more to a symbol than any definition can contain, because the symbol participates in a realm—the realm of meaning—that is not simply a product of human thinking and thus cannot be defined by human thought.

An example or two may help make this clearer. A stop sign, just as the term implies, is a sign, not a symbol. Its meaning is entirely arbitrary; there's no particular reason why a red octagon with the word STOP written on it should mean that it's time to step on the brakes. Congress could pass a law ordering all stop signs to be changed to blue squares with the word HALT on them, and once people got used to the change there would be no difference at all. The meaning of a stop sign can also be defined. In fact, it is spelled out precisely in the traffic laws, and even if it were not—if, for example, Congress passed another law to remove all references to stop signs from the lawbooks—it could be. There's no logical reason why an exact definition of the stop sign's meaning would be impossible.

The Sun, on the other hand, is one of the greatest of all symbols: a medium-sized yellow-white star, 93 million miles away from us, which has a great deal of meaning connected to it. That meaning has some components which can be precisely defined, and some which are more or less arbitrary. At the same time, these do not begin to exhaust the Sun's meaning. There are other links

of meaning that reach out from the Sun, and these head in directions that are impossible to define in the same way a stop sign's meaning is defined.

The existence of these other links is not a minor issue. It's not the arbitrary and definable meanings of the Sun, for the most part, that have inspired poetry, art, myth and worship in people around the world and throughout history. Nor are the "other meanings" particularly hidden from human perception; they arise from the place of the Sun as a primary factor in the world of human experience. Anyone who has watched a sunrise or felt the warmth of sunlight on bare skin knows something about these deeper meanings of the Sun, something that cannot be defined but is nonetheless very real.

This kind of indefinable meaning isn't restricted to natural phenomena like the Sun, although most natural phenomena possess it. Most of the important events of human life share in the same type of meaning. So do those strange and seemingly useless expenditures of human effort we call the arts. The meaning that is communicated through a statue, a sonnet, or a symphony is as impossible to define as the meaning of a sunrise, and all the efforts of governments to define "good art" in political terms—that is, to impose arbitrary conceptual meaning on the symbolic experience of art—have fallen flat in practice, for the same reasons that neither Congress nor anyone else could pass a law requiring the Sun and the Moon to trade their symbolic meanings or to stop meaning anything at all.

The fact that the Sun does have certain meanings that are arbitrary, and thus can be defined, brings out an important point: any one thing can function as both a symbol and a sign at the same time. As a sign, the Sun can mean certain things in a more or less arbitrary way—for example, clear skies in a weather report, or the antinuclear movement in European politics. As a symbol, the Sun means something else in a different way, something that can be experienced but never completely defined. The difference between these two kinds of meaning is much like that between reading a description of sexual intercourse and actually making love for the first time.

At the same time, these two very different kinds of knowing *do* relate to the same event, and this provides a link between them.

This duality, and the link of common reference that resolves it, is at the heart of the power of symbolism in magical and mystical practice. A Cabalistic magician, for example, will take a particular symbol as a subject for meditation and focus on it as a sign, thinking about its traditional interpretations as defined in various texts, turning it over and over in his or her mind, linking it with other symbols related to it, until the realm of meaning behind it comes through. The same kind of thinking underlies the rich symbolism of so many pre-modern and non-Western religions, in which names, images, and myths were woven into intricate nets of sign and symbol in which the highest aspects of transcendent meaning could be caught.

The Pitfalls of Interpretation

This same duality, though, can become a potent source of confusion if the role of one of these kinds of meaning is forgotten or denied. Once the medieval idea of symbolism was rejected, it became increasingly common for scholars to simply assume that all symbols could be read as signs, using some system of interpretation to translate their meaning into terms that made sense within the framework of the modern view of reality. In effect, by discarding the medieval world of meaning, this approach treated symbolism as a kind of code made by human beings, which simply needed to be deciphered.

It's difficult not to admire the amount of effort and energy that has been poured into this sort of research over the last three centuries or so. The results, alas, have not been so admirable. In practice, for all its apparent promise, this approach has produced nothing but nonsense—and nonsense of a very high degree at that.

There are any number of examples, but it should be enough to explore one of them in detail. A solid and quite recent instance—although a controversial one, as the viewpoint in question still has its supporters in and out of the magical community—is the way that magic, alchemy, and similar topics have been manhandled and misinterpreted to fit the theories of the psychologist Carl Jung.

In fairness to Jung, it should be noted that this confusion was not entirely his fault. He simply noticed, in his work as a therapist,

that symbols found in Western alchemy and occult tradition often came up spontaneously in his patients' dreams and fantasies. He reached the sensible conclusion that these symbols had potent psychological effects, and created an approach to psychology based largely on this idea.

So far, so good. Unfortunately, in some of his later writings, Jung leapt to the much less sensible conclusion that the psychological effects he discovered were actually what alchemy and other occult teachings had really been about all along—in other words, that these traditions were simply a primitive version of psychotherapy, and the occultists and mystics of old were simply naïve psychologists who had somehow never quite realized what they were actually doing. Even more unfortunately, this side of his theories caught on very strongly in academic circles as well as in popular culture because it allowed otherwise troubling things like magic and alchemy to be stuffed into a pigeonhole—"psychology"—that made them look less threatening.

As a result, there are now shelves full of books interpreting traditional systems of mythology and symbolism by way of Jung's theories. Enthusiastic researchers and writers have found ways to fit nearly every imaginable kind of myth, symbol, and spiritual practice into Jungian terms, even if this requires spectacular distortions of the traditions involved—as it often does. At the same time, anything that can't be shoehorned into the rather narrow limits of the Jungian model is far too often simply swept under the rug.

All this activity has not been without its positive side, particularly in the field of psychotherapy, where a certain amount of material from mythology and folklore has been put to work in productive ways. On the downside, though, the Jungian phenomenon has created a great deal of confusion between psychology on the one hand and the realms of myth, magic, and alchemy on the other. The fact that many people don't realize that there are differences between these things is a good measure of just how deep the confusion has become. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the issues involved, but it takes very little study of the traditional lore to realize that myth is about much more than personal psychology, magic has many other uses besides psychotherapy, and

alchemy—the ancient science of nature—has at least as much to do with furnaces, chemicals, and glassware as it does with the archetypes of the collective unconscious.

The fallacy behind the Jungian interpretation is a simple one, but it's not limited to Jung's overenthusiastic disciples. In plain terms, the simple fact that something can be interpreted in a given way doesn't prove that the interpretation is valid, useful, or relevant. Given enough ingenuity, it's possible to make anything stand for anything at all. It's quite possible, for example, to show that Lewis Carroll's nonsense-poem *The Hunting Of The Snark* can be read as an allegory of economic cycles—some years ago, a minor economist published a book doing exactly that—but this in itself doesn't prove that the poem ought to be interpreted that way, much less that Lewis Carroll had economic theory in mind when he wrote it!

This same principle has to be kept in mind when dealing with any of the long list of schemes for interpreting traditional symbolism floated over the last few centuries. Well before Jung's time, the philologist Max Muller proclaimed that all mythologies were "really" about the Sun's movements in the sky, until someone pointed out that his system of interpretation was so broad it could be used to prove that Muller himself was nothing more than a solar myth. People have worked out interpretations of traditional symbolism to bolster every imaginable pet theory from Marxist economics to a belief in ancient astronauts. Some of these interpretive schemes have worthwhile lessons to teach, while others offer insight into nothing more than the depths of human gullibility—but all of them lead straight into the trap of thinking that some interpretation or other is what symbols are "really" about.

This is precisely the idea that needs to be set aside in order to make sense of the deeper uses of symbolism, in and out of the lodge system. Those uses are central to the inner side of lodge work. They shape and define most of what goes on in a lodge setting; but they cannot be understood properly on the basis of our culture's habit of treating symbols purely as signs. In a lodge, symbols are the primary way of communicating meaning, but the symbols as symbols are not there to be defined, decoded, or interpreted. Rather, they are there to be *experienced*.

This concept—that lodge symbolism is meant above all as an object of direct experience—is a key that will unlock many doors. The entire method of initiation used in lodges can be seen as a way of bringing the candidate into a receptive state that will allow him or her to experience a specific set of symbols in an unusually intense way. Similarly, the traditional secrecy of the lodge is most usefully understood not as a practical way of guarding information—although it can be that, for good or bad reasons—but most essentially as a frame for symbolism, a way of making certain specific symbols stand apart from other kinds of experience.

The role of symbols as objects of experience in the lodge system gives symbolic approaches to meaning a primary importance, but both sides of the division traced earlier come into play here. The core images of effective lodge systems are signs as well as symbols. They always have at least one clear, defined meaning within the specific lodge system, and may well have more than one (it's a common tactic of ritual design to give the same image or event different interpretations at different points in the sequence of initiation). At the same time, they also have deeper, symbolic meanings that give them most of their impact on the lodge's initiates. Like the methods of Cabalistic magic described earlier, the lodge system works at the interface between sign and symbol, using those meanings that can be defined as springboards to the deeper, transformative meanings that reach beyond definition.

Forms of Lodge Symbolism

Anything that can be perceived by a human being can be used as an expression of symbolic meaning, and the dazzling array of human spiritual and magical traditions includes an equally astonishing collection of different things that have somewhere or other been used as symbols. Every one of the five senses has been put to work as a way of perceiving symbols, every art and craft has been kept busy expressing them, and every natural phenomenon from the songs of birds and the constellations of the night sky to the number of petals on flowers and the shapes of the entrails of sheep has been used as a bearer of symbolic meaning.

Most systems only make use of a small part of this richness of potential symbols. Systems that use ritual as a major tool for shaping awareness tend to be particularly choosy about the kinds of symbolism they use. This is a function of the practical needs of ritual work. The process of ritual, as we'll see, depends on being able to construct effective symbolic patterns of experience within ritual space and time, and a good many potential symbols are simply too unpredictable or unwieldy to produce on demand.

The traditional lodge system has ritual at its center, and so it's not surprising that the symbolism used in a lodge setting falls into a few classes, all of them easily handled in the context of ritual work.

Emblems are symbolic visual images, pictures made to symbolize rather than to decorate. In the Renaissance, emblems were routinely used as a means of communication. Emblem books—collections of images, each with an explanatory title and poem—were international bestsellers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Much of this heritage was put to use in lodge organizations from a very early period. In many lodges, each degree or grade of initiation has its specific emblems, and each lodge officer has a particular emblem on his or her regalia of office.

Words are used symbolically throughout lodge work, and particular words—often in ancient or foreign languages, or in no known language at all—serve important symbolic roles in nearly every lodge. Passwords, which normally have a symbolic meaning along with their practical use, are a relatively obvious example. The names of the order and the lodge, and the titles of the officers, also convey symbolic meaning. Often, too, there will be a set of terms for places, events and actions within a working lodge, and these terms are also means of symbolic communication.

Colors are another common form of symbolism in the lodge system. Different degrees of initiation and different lodge officers may have symbolic colors, or the lodge as a whole may use one or more symbolically meaningful colors in its decoration. In most cases, clear solid hues make up the palette of lodge color symbolism. This comes from the fact that the lodge system evolved in a time when candles provided the only effective indoor lighting, and subtle or complicated uses of color rarely show up well by candlelight.

Floor Work is a symbolic form that is, to a large degree, unique to the traditional lodge system, although it has equivalents in a few other odd corners of Western culture. The term “floor work” is used in lodge settings for formal patterns of movement within the lodge room. At certain points in the work of a lodge—during the opening and closing, while balloting for new members, and during initiatory ritual—a member, a group of members, or the entire lodge will move around the room according to a set pattern, and these patterns are often used to express symbolic meaning.

Knocks make up another of the distinctive symbolic forms of the lodge tradition. Originally these, like passwords and grips, were simply means of identification. For instance, members knocked on the inner door of the lodge in a particular way to signal the guard inside to admit them. As the lodge system developed, though, the number and rhythm of knocks became vehicles for symbolic meaning, and it became common to use similar knocks—made with a gavel or some similar instrument—to signal certain actions or events within the lodge.

Gestures and *Grips* also started out as methods of identification, and passed through the same process of developing symbolic significance. The gestures used in some lodge systems have grown to a high degree of complexity, amounting to a silent language capable of communicating a great deal of information: other systems use only a few gestures. Both gestures and grips are usually connected to the symbolism of the various degree rituals.

Implements and *Regalia of Office* make up another important class of lodge symbols. Implements are typically objects with an important role in the degree symbolism or in the rituals themselves. They tend, therefore, to vary widely between different orders (although the gavel is very common as the implement of the presiding officer). The regalia of office in most lodge organizations, by contrast, consists of collars or sashes bearing emblems of the office and, often, of the order as well. Some common patterns are shown in Diagram 3-1.

Rituals, finally, are the most important of the ways in which symbolic meaning is communicated in a lodge. Ritual is symbolic action. The types of ritual work used in the traditional lodge system

include the initiation ceremonies of the degrees, of course, but also the ceremonies that open, close, raise and lower the lodge, and the rites that create new lodges and empower lodge officers. Furthermore, much of what goes on in an open lodge—voting on candidates for membership, commemorating dead members, even calling the roll—is usually done by means of ritual. Ritual, in many ways, provides the framework in which the other symbols we've discussed have their meaning. At the same time, the rituals themselves exist in a broader symbolic context, one that defines not only the rituals but the entire symbolic and magical structure of any given lodge.

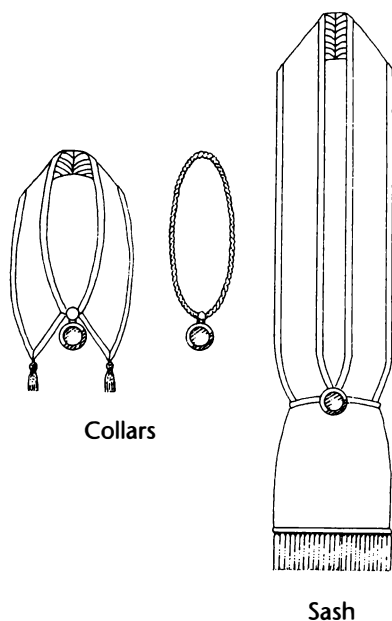


Diagram 3-1

Myth and the Symbolic Process

This broader context is provided by the essential symbolic idea that underlies each lodge and which forms the keystone of the symbolic identity lodge members receive at initiation and take on when the gavel comes down and the lodge opens. In many cases, this idea is expressed directly or indirectly as a story, and so it's not inappropriate to speak of it as the *central myth* of the lodge.

Myth is one of those difficult words with modern meanings that contradict their older and deeper senses. Once the word meant the great symbolic narratives that communicated the most important meanings of the universe of human experience. Nowadays, it's used, as often as not, to mean nothing more than an inaccurate belief or a lie. This shift in meanings has a good deal to do with the same blindness to symbolic meaning discussed earlier in this chapter, and—as

our glance at the Jungian phenomenon may suggest—the same difficulties that have beset attempts to understand symbolism in the modern world have also entangled efforts to make sense of the myths of the past. As a result, the transformative potential of traditional myth has gone all but unrecognized. Meanwhile, the mythic constructs of our own culture—the myth of progress, the myths of science, the myths of the various political ideologies and so on—are too often treated as matters of simple fact rather than the deeply symbolic and metaphoric mythic narratives they actually are.

“Myths,” in the words of one of the ancient philosopher Synesius, “are things that never happened but always are.” The language of myth can speak of many things, and traditional myths often contain substantial elements of history, philosophy, ethics, practical lore, and knowledge of the sort we would nowadays call science, threaded like bright beads along the connecting thread of symbolic narrative. Still, the essence of myth is to be found in the realm of symbol, not that of sign. To encounter a myth is to pass through an experience, and to come out the other side at least slightly changed.

It’s in this deeper sense that we can most usefully define the core symbolism of lodge systems as mythical. In nearly all lodges, there is an implicit story underlying every aspect of symbolism and ritual, a story that tells what the lodge is and who its members are. Sometimes this story is unspoken, expressed only in various indirect ways, while sometimes it is presented in the form of a more or less “mythologized” history. Sometimes it takes on the form of an explicitly mythic account, held up to lodge members as an ideal and, as often as not, reenacted in the course of the lodge’s initiation rituals.

These myths can come from many sources, and during the golden age of lodge organizations nearly every imaginable resource was drawn on. The historical accidents that made Freemasonry the first lodge system in the modern sense of the word gave rise to an array of lodges that put the activities of some more or less idealized trade at the center of their myth. Examples include the Foresters, the various orders of Woodmen, and the Grange, which uses the symbolism of agriculture as the basis for its rituals. The prestige of various ancient religious or mystical traditions inspired the creation of Druid orders, Templar orders, Rosicrucian orders, and the Knights

of Pythias, which derived some of their symbolism and much of their myth from accounts of the ancient Pythagorean Brotherhood. Narratives from the Bible—often used in decidedly unorthodox ways—provided the Freemasons, the Odd Fellows, and many other lodges with mythic patterns. History also made its contribution. After the Civil War, for example, many American orders created uniformed, quasi-military degrees that used the troubling but powerful symbolism of war as the basis for their myths. Nor were these the only sources. The demand for lodge myths in the late nineteenth century was so great that when Lew Wallace's novel *Ben-Hur* became a bestseller, a group of promoters—their eyes on a share of the large fraternal life-insurance market—paid him a substantial sum for the fraternal-order rights to the book. Within months, an order called the Tribe of Ben-Hur came into being, complete with a set of degree rituals that followed the plot of the book in detail. Candidates in one degree even took part in a mock chariot race!

On a more subtle level, there is another mythic framework that came to be used by nearly all of the traditional lodge organizations, and which plays a crucial part in the symbolic work of magical lodges in the present. This is the myth that has grown up around the lodge system itself. Whatever other images the members of different orders may have used in constructing their symbolic identity as lodge members—the stonemason plying his trade, the druid in his oak grove, the knight riding forth to do battle in a just cause, or for that matter the Rosicrucian magician learning the occult secrets of the universe—one image that they all had in common was that of being members of a lodge, participating in the secret life of ritual and fellowship framed and shaped by the traditional lodge system. While many of the older mythic patterns have lost much of their power to shape meaning with cultural changes—this is, after all, what happens to all but the greatest myths over time—the mythic image of the lodge remains surprisingly potent, and provides modern magical lodges with one of their primary sources of strength.

The Nature of Initiation

Ritual serves as the primary means by which the mythic pattern underlying a given lodge is built up and expressed. There are, as

mentioned above, a number of different kinds of ritual used in lodge organizations, but far and away the most important of them—symbolically, and in nearly every other important sense as well—are the rituals of initiation.

“Initiation” is a concept that has been buried in an obscurity it doesn’t deserve. In esoteric circles, at least until recently, people tended to speak of it in the same tones of hushed melodrama given to solemn gibberish about Atlantis and the Secret Masters. In most of the fraternal orders, on the other hand, initiation rites have been treated in recent years as though they were nothing more than an overly pompous sort of hazing. In both settings, too much laziness and not enough thought have kept the process of initiation from being understood with any kind of clarity at all.

Yet this clarity can be managed quite easily without violating the obligations of secrecy which, for reasons we’ll examine later on, are standard in nearly all lodge systems. The material that will be covered in this book does not include any of the things that are considered secret by magical or fraternal lodges. Instead, what we’ll be exploring is the framework in which these secrets are placed—a framework which, in the lodge system, gives the secrets their importance and effect.

That framework forms the foundation of the initiatory process. As suggested earlier in this chapter, initiation can be understood as a way of helping the initiate to experience a particular set of symbols in a more intense way than ordinary states of consciousness permit. There are any number of ways to do this. Among the most common are ritual, psychoactive drugs, and extreme physical states brought on by fasting, exhaustion, and so on. Many of the world’s initiatory systems use some combination of these three factors.

In the lodge systems of the Western world, by contrast, it’s only the first that plays a role in the standard initiatory process. If this needs any excuse, it’s partly because drugs and other extreme methods tend to produce a high rate of mental and physical damage, and partly because the part-time nature of the lodge system puts a premium on methods of transformation that can be started and stopped more or less at will. Another factor involved in this choice of methods, though, relates to the tendency of lodge organizations—and, for

all its faults, Western culture in general—to place a high value on individual choices and effort. The methods of lodge initiation are intended to set a process of inner change in motion, and that is all. The word initiation, it's worth remembering, literally means "beginning." To go beyond this beginning, it's necessary to put one's own energy into the equation, by participating in the lodge's rituals and meetings, internalizing the lodge's symbolism, and (in the case of many magical lodges) learning and practicing the lodge's particular system of magical training.

This requirement may seem like a weakness in the system. It is not. A process of transformation that is carried out freely and deliberately over a period of time is far more likely to have lasting effects than one that depends on a single event, however powerful that event may have been. Furthermore, the experience of willed change is a source of personal power. It's the individual, not the lodge and its rituals, that does most of the work of inner transformation, and therefore it's the individual who learns how transformation happens and how it can be used. Ultimately, in this sense, the lodge's function is that of a context and a crucible in which lodge members find their way to their own sources of inner strength.

It's important to keep in mind, also, that "subtle" is not the same thing as "weak." The ritual methods that form the essential toolkit of lodge initiation can catalyze major transformations in the awareness of the initiate at least as effectively as more brute force methods. The lodge methods do so more slowly, and in a more controlled manner, but they accomplish the same results. This is particularly true—as the founders of the Golden Dawn discovered—when these methods are combined with the potent transformative practices that have been developed in the various Western magical traditions.

Techniques of Lodge Initiation

The psychological methods used in traditional lodge work take a number of forms, but they all work through the induction of a certain kind of receptive state, essentially a shallow hypnotic trance, in the person receiving the initiation. That state is not particularly hard

to achieve. Everyone who's lost a couple of hours staring at the TV has experienced a form of it (which is a major reason why TV advertising is as effective as it is). In a lodge setting, the specific methods used to bring about this state are sensory deprivation, disorientation, sonorous and hypnotic language, the deliberate use of mild and carefully controlled shock and fear, and—a subject we'll discuss in much more detail a little further on—the psychological effects of secrecy.

The production of the receptive state forms the first phase of the initiatory process. Once it has been achieved, the process of lodge initiation moves to a second phase, in which a set of carefully chosen symbols are experienced by the initiate. These experiences and their explanations are heightened by the receptive state, and are intended to communicate some part of the special consciousness and culture of the lodge. In essence, the symbols offer a new way of looking at some part of the universe of human experience. They provide a pattern, a mental map, that reinterprets the world in some way. If the initiate accepts this new pattern (which does not always happen), the initiation has "taken."

At this point, the process enters its third phase. The new initiate is given the "secrets of the degree," a set of verbal and somatic triggers for the new pattern of awareness. These are the password, grip, and sign of the degree. They represent some of the most important keys to the functioning of the lodge system, and provide a look into its underlying psychology.

The human memory is a complex thing, and one of the more complex things about it is the way that emotions and states of consciousness can become tangled up with the simplest physical triggers. Most people have had the experience of coming across some memento of a past time—a letter from an old love affair, perhaps, or a trinket bought during a long-forgotten vacation—and all at once remembering a whole complex of ideas, events, feelings, and states of mind that were once associated with it. This same phenomenon is used systematically in lodge work, with the password, sign and grip as verbal and somatic triggers to recollection. These triggers are given to each member of the lodge during the heightened state of initiation, when the culture and consciousness of the lodge are being communicated in their most intense form. Thereafter, every

time the triggers are used in lodge they help to recall the same culture and consciousness, and their effect is reinforced by each further experience with lodge work. Given time and regular lodge attendance, the triggering methods become extremely effective ways of shaping awareness, and—as the Golden Dawn’s approach demonstrates—can be used in magical work outside the lodge as well.

The three-phase process of initiation can be handled in various ways, and has been handled with various levels of effectiveness in the initiations used by different magical and fraternal orders. The design of lodge ritual is an art, and like any other art it has its failures as well as its masterpieces. The best rituals evidence an extraordinary grasp of the process, and result in ceremonies that retain their effectiveness to this day. Conversely, there are many instances in which we see that the technical methods used in initiation were not always clearly understood by those who designed lodge ritual.

Making the situation more complex is the fact that the “standard kit” includes two different approaches to presenting symbolism to the candidate during initiation. The first, or emblematic approach, uses a set of visual images or emblems which the candidate encounters during his or her initiation. This is the older of the two forms, dating back to the dawn of the lodge system. The second approach uses some of the tools of theater, presenting the symbols in the form of a dramatic narrative that is acted out by members of the lodge. Either or both of these approaches may be used in any given initiation ritual. Furthermore, most orders, magical and fraternal, use a series of different degrees to carry out an extended program of transformation. Each of these rituals builds on the foundation laid by the earlier ones, and is built on by the later ones. In the fraternal orders, the goal of this program is typically nothing more profound (or more sinister) than basic personal maturity. In magical orders, by contrast, the possibilities for change are far broader, for good or ill.

An Initiation in Outline

Later on in this book, we’ll be examining a basic set of lodge rituals in detail, and until this is done there is a good deal of the system of

initiation that can't be effectively understood. It's possible at this point, though, to sketch out an example of the way in which the initiation process works in order to show how the techniques described above are put to work in the actual practice of initiation. In broad outline, the following shows how the standard pattern of lodge initiation is put into practice.

The performance of a ritual on this pattern (and nearly any other kind of lodge ritual as well) begins with the formal opening of the lodge space, following the method outlined in Chapter Two. Props and other materials needed for the initiation are already in place at the opening, or are brought in as soon as possible thereafter. Meanwhile, the candidate for initiation is outside the lodge room in the antechamber, separated from the outside world but unable to see or hear what is going on inside the lodge. Some systems place certain symbolic objects or texts in the antechamber for the candidate to ponder, while others simply take advantage of the mild sensory deprivation of sitting in silence in a small, poorly-lit room for a half hour or so. Both of these approaches seem to work well in practice.

After the lodge is opened, one or two of the officers leave the lodge room and enter the antechamber. Their job is to prepare the candidate for the ceremony. This typically involves blindfolding, and may involve binding the arms or hands as well. In some lodges, the candidate will be given a preliminary oath of secrecy at this point. Meanwhile, inside the lodge room, the lodge officers put on their robes and take their places, the props are set up, and the lights are turned down.

The candidate is then brought through the door, and enters into a wholly unfamiliar space. Darkness and silence, broken only by the specific sights and sounds defined by the ritual, intensify the experience. Unable to get his or her bearings, the candidate quickly becomes disoriented. The lodge officers recite the sonorous words of the ritual. At intervals, the blindfold will be raised to show some brightly illuminated scene or symbol, and then lowered again. At various points, the candidate may be threatened or challenged, startled or frightened. This element is kept under tight control, though—simple surprise and uncertainty induce the required state far more effectively than more extreme levels of fear and shock.

At some time during this part of the ritual—different initiations place it at different points—the candidate is given the principal oath or obligation of secrecy and fellowship, and the core experiences of the ritual are enacted. In an emblematic ritual, the candidate is shown the core symbols of the degree. In a dramatic ritual, he or she sees (or takes part in) the central story of the degree. Afterward, the blindfold and bonds are removed, and the “secrets of the degree”—the password, sign, grip and other triggering devices—are given to the candidate.

The candidate is now an initiate, and is welcomed by the members of the lodge and seated among them. He or she may be lectured, sometimes at great length, about the meaning of the symbols and scenes shown in the initiation. Finally, the lodge is ritually closed, and by this process the new initiate and the other lodge members return to a more ordinary state of consciousness.

A Play of Symbols

In an important sense, a lodge initiation—emblematic or dramatic—can be seen as a kind of dramatic presentation, a play of symbolic imagery with an audience of one. Like a play, an initiation is a performance that uses words and actions to awaken particular reactions in its audience. It has a script with a beginning, a dramatic climax, and a resolution, not to mention costumes and props. It also requires a certain amount of basic acting ability from the more important participants if it is to be performed effectively.

This last factor can be overstated, but it does have a real importance. Israel Regardie wrote with some feeling about his own initiation into the Golden Dawn’s Adeptus Minor grade, in which some of the most evocative passages were read as though they were grocery lists, spoiling much of the effect of the ceremony. Most people who have been through lodge rituals have had experiences of this sort. Later on, we’ll be discussing ways to avoid these problems, but the recognition that a ritual performance is a kind of drama—and requires an eye toward dramatic values—is a good place to start.

At the same time, there are at least three other factors that make the task of effectively performing a initiation somewhat easier

than that of successfully putting on a play. First of all, the officers of a lodge have far more control over what their “audience” sees and notices than the conventions of ordinary drama allow. If a necessary prop isn’t in place at the right time, the candidate can be left blindfolded for a moment or even taken around the lodge room one more time while someone brings it. Similarly, lodge members can put up and take down scenes while the candidate is being moved from place to place, or even while his or her attention is being held by events going on in another part of the room.

Second, the conventions of lodge ritual allow the images and experiences of the ritual performance to have a personal quality few plays can manage. There is a physical and psychological separation between the actors and the audience, the people on the stage and the people in the auditorium, that is built into the structure of ordinary drama and which only the best playwrights have been able to overcome. In a lodge ritual, by contrast, the candidate for initiation is in the middle of the performance, a character in the story who is personally affected by the way the plot turns out. This effect is intensified by the third factor, which is the presence of the consciousness-shaping methods used in lodge ritual. By producing what amounts to a hypnotic state, these methods keep the candidate’s awareness tightly focused on the images and events of the ritual.

All three of these factors interact with the performance of lodge ritual in a number of ways, which will be explored in more detail in Chapters Eight, Eleven, and Twelve, where we will cover the actual performance of ceremonial work in the lodge. They also interact, in several different ways, with the element of secrecy—an element we’ll be covering in detail in Chapter Five.

Other Lodge Rituals

Rituals of initiation, central though they are to the working of the traditional lodge system, do not operate in a vacuum. One part of the context that gives them their meaning is provided by ritual methods of opening and closing the lodge, as outlined earlier and to be examined more closely in Chapter Seven. Another part,

though, is provided by a different set of rituals—generally called “rituals of installation”—that serve to transfer power to the officers of the lodge.

These ceremonies have received very little attention in writings on the lodge system, but they have a critical part to play in each of the system’s various levels. From the perspective of lodge structure, rituals of installation serve as the framework by which lodge members chosen to hold office are given their tasks and their authority within the lodge. From the perspective of symbolism, they assign symbolic identities to the officers and enact these identities in ritual. From the perspective of magic, they establish a link between the officers and the egregor of the lodge, empowering the officers to draw on the lodge’s collective energies in order to carry out the tasks assigned to them.

The relationship of rituals of installation to the fourth perspective, the perspective of secrecy, is both more complex and more subtle. In fraternal lodges, the rituals of installation are often public events, open to people who do not even belong to the order in question. During the golden age of the lodge system, in fact, installations of officers in the larger lodges were among the major social events of the year in many small and not-so-small American towns. Local dignitaries and the general public were invited to the ceremony itself, and to dinner and dancing thereafter. Even at present, many fraternal lodges still keep their installations open to the public, although it’s a rare occasion when anyone but lodge members and their families show up.

This sort of public presence may seem to fly in the face of the central role of secrecy in the lodge system, but it has its roots in one of the major differences between fraternal and magical lodges. Fraternal lodges, however much they participate in the culture and esthetic of secrecy, are still semi-public organizations with an active and visible role in the community. Their officers must deal not only with other lodge members but with the general public as well in the course of carrying out the practical and charitable business of the lodge. By contrast, the officers of magical lodges have usually had little or no presence outside a lodge context—in fact, it’s common for magical lodge organizations to use various security measures to

conceal the identity, and even the existence, of their officers from anyone on the outside.

A ritual of installation is a process by which the members of a community acknowledge those who have been chosen to hold positions of responsibility among them. Most communities have such rituals—consider the inauguration of American presidents—and one of the themes common to most such rituals is that, in one way or another, the entire community participates in the ceremony and the act of acknowledgement at its heart. The difference between fraternal and magical installation rituals, then, is primarily a difference between ways of defining the community. A lodge that interacts extensively with the wider public needs to include members of that public in its installation rituals, while a lodge that works in the more intensive secrecy of most magical lodges can limit its definition of community, at least in this context, to its own members.

The basic form taken by installation rituals is one of the more unvarying elements of the “standard kit,” although that foundation can be elaborated in any number of ways. The core process of these rituals is a shift of levels in which the lodge is raised up in some sense, and then returns to its own level.

In fraternal installations, the levels in question are simply those of the order’s internal structure. Officers of the next higher level of the order—the state or provincial Grand Lodge officers or their local deputies—formally take charge of the lodge, and the lodge’s own officers surrender their places. In effect, since the lodge’s charter comes from this higher level, the lodge is absorbed into its source. At the higher level, the installing officers administer an obligation of office to the lodge’s incoming officers, present them with their regalia of office, seat them in their places, and withdraw.

This same pattern can be seen in the installation rituals of magical lodges such as the Golden Dawn. Here, though, the shift is not simply one between organizational levels—although it is that—but also between levels of consciousness. The lodge is opened at one level of ritually defined awareness, and then shifts to another. It is at this higher level that a new current of power is received and transmitted to the incoming officers. In the case of the Golden Dawn, this process was linked to shifts in the Earth’s energy body

brought about by the relationship of Sun and Earth at the spring and fall equinoxes, adding another layer of magical meaning to the ceremony. This sort of seasonal connection, drawing on energies of planetary scale to empower the work of the lodge, is well worth keeping in mind.

Another form of the same process is used to establish—"institute," in lodge jargon—a new lodge. Here, typically, the same officers responsible for installation will open in the usual way, administer an obligation to the members of the new lodge, read the charter aloud, proclaim the new lodge founded, and then move directly to the installation of its officers. Here the movement between levels is in one direction, from above to below, since there is no lower level in existence yet when the process begins. The same differences between fraternal and magical lodge systems apply here as well—what is a purely formal process of handing over the legal right to run a lodge, in the former case, can become a communication of living power to the new lodge in the latter.

In many magical lodges, rituals of several other kinds may be performed. Seasonal rituals meant to link the lodge's energies to the cycles of nature are one example. Rituals directed to some specific magical purpose are another common type, while some lodges simply provide space for their members to design and carry out group rituals for whatever purpose the lodge may find appropriate. All these are possibilities of the system, and all can be developed out of the "standard kit" of lodge methods given a willingness to experiment and to use traditional methods in new ways.

Chapter Four

Fundamentals of Lodge Magic

The traditional lodge system as it's used in fraternal lodges, and in many magical lodges outside the Golden Dawn tradition, bases itself on the patterns of lodge structure and symbolism we've covered in the last two chapters. Like Janus, the enigmatic Roman god of doorways and beginnings, these patterns have two faces: one toward the realm of practical issues of lodge organization and governance, the other toward the subtler realm of symbolism and its effects on human consciousness. When the teachings and techniques of the Western magical tradition were brought into a lodge setting—as they often were, and not only in openly magical lodge organizations—lodge processes rarely took on explicitly magical functions themselves, and the techniques of lodge work stayed separate from those of individual magical practice.

As we've seen, it was one of the Golden Dawn's greatest achievements that it broke once and for all with this highly limiting approach, bringing the methods of practical magic directly into the realm of lodge work and using materials from the lodge tradition in magical practice. In metaphoric terms, the Golden Dawn's adepts added a third face to the two that already existed, and transformed the lodge system's Janus into Hecate, the three-faced goddess of crossroads and sorcery. In the process, they opened up a wide range of possibilities that enormously expanded the potential of the traditional lodge system. These possibilities, however, have rarely been

used—or even recognized—in the years since the Golden Dawn’s rise and collapse.

The magical side of the lodge system represents a challenge of a different kind from the issues of lodge structure and symbolism we’ve covered in the last two chapters. Where these aspects of the lodge system have been tested, proven, and developed in detail over several centuries, the magical aspects are far less thoroughly explored and far more experimental. Where the structural and symbolic sides of lodge work simply need to be learned and intelligently applied to modern magical lodges, the magical side has to be developed and used on the basis of a few general principles and a good deal of trial and error. The truly magical potentials of the magical lodge, in a very real sense, are still in their infancy.

The Magical Model of the Universe

One factor has added a great deal of confusion to this side of the lodge system, and needs to be dealt with before we can turn to the specifics of lodge magic. This is the troublesome point that neither modern Western culture, nor the magical subculture that has grown up within it, has managed to evolve a common, agreed-upon understanding of just what magic *is*. In large part, this problem has come about because the accounts of magic the modern West has to offer are rooted primarily in ignorance of magic, and hostility to it, rather than any useful attitude. To religious fundamentalists, on the one hand, magic is by definition the deliberate worship of the powers of evil. To the defenders of modern scientific ideology (many of whom are equally fundamentalist in their approach), magic is by definition irrational superstition, delusion, or outright fraud. Those who have their doubts about such rigidly dogmatic claims, but have never encountered authentic magical traditions, are left groping for ways to express their own perceptions and experience. For that matter, even those who actually practice magic are often at a loss to explain just what they are doing and how and why it works.

Fortunately, there are other resources available. Long ago, magicians in the Western world developed a model of the universe that accounts for the role of magic in human experience, and this

model offers a more useful way to make sense of magic, in and out of the lodge setting. It's not necessary to enter into a thorough discussion of the traditional philosophy of Western high magic here; much of it isn't necessary to an understanding of the magical lodge, and sheer limits of space are an issue as well. Some of the basic insights of the magical philosophy, though, will provide us with a framework for understanding the magical side of lodge work.

In its simplest terms, this magical model of the universe starts out by drawing the same distinction between three kinds of human experience that is basic to the medieval idea of symbolism, as discussed in Chapter Three. The first of these is the kind of experience that comes through the five ordinary senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. This is the experience of what we can call (borrowing the common, if unprovable, assumptions of our culture) the realm of matter.

The other two types of experience come through a much more complicated set of processes in awareness. One, which we may as well call the realm of mind, is made up of the thoughts, feelings, images, and internal monologues that go on in our awareness nearly all the time. The other consists of deep patterns of meaning and relationship that structure both of the other kinds of experience—what we can call the realm of meaning.

Now these distinctions, as we've already seen, are not far from those used by the scientifically based, materialist model of reality most of us are taught from childhood on. The more familiar model, of course, goes on to claim that only the first kind of experience deals with a real world that exists outside our heads, while the other two are nothing more than reflections of events going on inside certain rather odd lumps of matter called human brains. This claim seems like common sense to most modern people, but it is actually based on some highly arbitrary beliefs about the universe, and it falls into serious trouble when it has to deal with certain quite common elements of human experience.

This is true of any way of understanding the world, of course. The human mind, vast though its potentials are, is simply no match for the complexity and strangeness of an infinite universe. The theories and models we can construct are like maps, providing

enough information to allow us to go about our affairs. All maps have to simplify in order to communicate at all—a map that had all imaginable information about a given area would be impossible to use even if it were possible to make—and to the extent that a map simplifies, it distorts. The fact that the modern scientific model of reality doesn't explain all human experience does not invalidate it, any more than the fact that a highway map doesn't give information about topography or mineral deposits makes it useless for driving from one town to another. It's only when map-users forget the difference between the map and the territory that difficulties spring up.

Since the magical theory of the universe seeks to explain different aspects of human experience than the scientific one, it puts different information on its "map." It suggests that both of the types of human experience we are taught to see as "subjective"—both the experience of thoughts and feelings, on the one hand, and the underlying patterns of meaning, on the other—are not limited to the inside of our skulls. Rather, they represent our perceptions of realms of existence that are as real as the realm we experience with our senses. A daydream or a perception of underlying truth, in the magical model, is as real as a rock. Just as we perceive a rock through the filters of our senses, we perceive the phenomena of these inner realms of experience through the filters of our minds. All are thus equally subjective—and equally objective.

Different versions of the magical model of the universe interpret and subdivide these realms of experience in a dizzying number of ways—setting out physical, etheric, astral, mental, and spiritual levels, for example, or making use of traditional symbolic patterns such as the Cabalistic Tree of Life. For our present purposes, these narrower distinctions are better left unexplored. There are some basic principles, though, that are central to the magical model, and that explain how the relationships among the realms of sense, mind, and meaning form the foundation for magical action.

First of all, these three realms relate to each other in a specific way. The realms of matter and meaning, according to the model, are like two banks of a river. The realm of mind is the river dividing them—and the bridge connecting them. Only through mind

(which, remember, is not limited to human minds) do matter and meaning come into contact.

Second, the realms relate to time and space in different ways. The realm of matter is governed by the ordinary limits of space and time; the realm of meaning is outside of both. (The fact that $1+1=2$ doesn't change from day to day, century to century, or for that matter from country to country.) The realm of mind, between them, is neither quite in time and space nor quite out of them. It occupies a time and space of its own, and these are flexible and multiple in ways the more familiar times and spaces of the realm of matter are not. This is best observed in dreams, when mind is free to experience its own reality without relating it to either of the other two realms.

Third, things in each realm are related to things in each of the others, and a specific kind of relationship is involved. The realm of meaning provides the essential, underlying pattern. This is reflected in the realm of mind, and from there it passes into the realm of matter, where it takes shape in forms we perceive with our senses. The process of creation—for this is what we are talking about—always moves in this direction, from meaning to mind to matter, from essence to perception to manifestation.

Fourth, human beings exist and function in all three realms. We can perceive them all, and although we cannot shape the realm of meaning—existing beyond time and space, it is equally beyond change—we can influence the way it manifests in the realms of mind and matter alike. Some of the ways we can do this are direct. For example, we can use our muscles to reshape something in the material realm, or our minds to rethink some pattern in the realm of mind.

On the other hand, we can also draw on a deeper understanding of the way things work and use the relationships between the realms to affect the ways things happen in a more subtle way. For example, we can build up mental forms to link up with the creative force of particular patterns in the realm of meaning, and bring that creative force through the mental forms into manifestation in the realm of matter. When we act in any of these latter ways, we are doing magic.

But Does It Work?

All of this, of course, assumes that the practices of magic actually have effects of some kind—and it's exactly this idea that has been rejected most forcefully by the modern materialist view of the world. Before we can make any kind of sense of the magical possibilities of the lodge system, then, this hard question needs to be faced: does magic actually work?

The answer depends on just what that apparently simple question is taken to mean. If it means, for instance, "does magic really produce the kind of effects that it does in fantasy fiction, Hollywood movies, and role-playing games?" the answer is plainly and simply no. No amount of magical study or practice here in the world of our waking experience will give a magician the power to shoot lightning bolts from his or her fingertips, cause people's heads to explode, fly through the air like a comic-book superhero, or physically vanish in a puff of smoke—which is probably just as well.

Similarly, if it means "can magic provide everything one wants out of life without effort?" as promised (for example) by lucky-trinket ads in the back pages of tabloids, the answer is again no. In magic, as in the rest of life, there is no such thing as a free lunch. The would-be magician who takes up the study of magic in the hopes of getting something for nothing will quickly find that what one gets out of magic is exactly equal to what one puts into it. Even then, it is never foolproof. One of the essential lessons every magician must learn is that magic sometimes fails.

These caricatures of magic need to be faced and dealt with, because they underlie a good deal of modern thinking about magic, even in the magical community itself. Like the religious and scientific condemnations of magic, they arise from the tendency of the modern mind to think that anything real has to be material in the most obvious sense. As we'll see, magic does have certain material aspects and effects, but these are typically indirect, subtle, and in accordance with natural patterns.

There are several other things the question we've posed can mean, though, and to some of these the answer is a qualified yes from any standpoint—even that of modern materialist thought.

First of all, it's certainly true that magical methods can change the realm of mind as the magician himself or herself experiences it—or, to put things in more familiar terms, it can change the magician's own thoughts, feelings, and ways of facing the world. This is clear from the model of magic we've discussed above, and it is equally valid even if magic is understood from the standpoint of materialist thinking. In this sense, magic functions as a highly effective form of what our present culture calls psychotherapy, although its goals and potentials go far beyond anything that current psychological theorists are willing to consider.

The traditional lore also claims that magical methods can influence the inner realm of meaning in ways that affect the perceptions of people other than the magician. This is a little harder to fit within the materialist model, but not impossible. Some of this kind of magic is done through material methods of communication, including words, gestures, symbolic objects, and the like. This, again, makes sense even from the standpoint of materialist thinking. When a TV advertisement makes you think that you'll be happier if you buy some product or other, for example, the advertisers are using a simple and debased form of magic to shape your consciousness, and your buying behavior. On the other hand, much of this kind of magic seems to take place through the mental realm directly, without any physical connection at all. This is one of the places where the magical model of the universe differs from the materialist one, although it's not unthinkable that scientific thought may be able to find ways to understand subtle connections between minds.

It's when we turn from the inner realm of consciousness to the outer realm of matter, though, that the distance between the two world views opens up. To say that magical methods can influence the outer realm of sensory, material experience is to run up against one of the most rigorously-held doctrines of modern science—that material effects must always come from material causes. This rule has been central to science since the dawn of the modern age. It served as the primary philosophical battle-flag of the thinkers who brought about the Scientific Revolution, and it's still possible to reduce distinguished scientists to spluttering indignation by coming

too close to the idea that material events could have non-material causes. (A few years ago, Rupert Sheldrake's book *A New Science of Life*—which made exactly that claim, on the basis of solid experimental evidence—was labeled the decade's "best candidate for burning" by the editors of the usually sober British journal *Nature*.)

All this dogmatism, though, misses the point. Ultimately, the question of whether magic works is something to be settled by experience, not argument. Magic, after all, exists here and now, not only in faraway places or distant times. It can be practiced and put to the test by anyone willing to expend the modest amounts of time and effort involved. Those who do so will learn in the most direct way possible whether magic works or not, and how far it effects the universe we perceive with our ordinary senses. "Try it and see for yourself" is the one sure answer to the question we've been considering, for—to borrow a turn of phrase from theology—magic is justified by works, not by faith.

Theurgy and Thaumaturgy

The magical model of the universe outlined above has certain implications that play important roles in the work of the magical lodge. One of these implications is that magical practice can be usefully divided into two branches or areas of focus. The first of these, called practical magic or *thaumaturgy* (from the Greek words for "wondrous work"), is magic as it's usually understood; directed toward shaping the universe of human experience in any desired way in accordance with will. The second, called high magic or *theurgy* (from the Greek words for "divine work"), is magic that is directed not outward but inward, with the purpose of transforming the magician and bringing his or her awareness into interaction with the primal powers of being. The first of these is a craft, an art, and (in a certain sense) a science. The second is a spiritual practice, a way of mysticism, and (in a certain sense) a religion.

According to modern habits of thought, these two branches of magical practice might seem to be wholly distinct, and there have been some modern magicians and magical theorists who have attempted to split them apart and hold up one or the other as what

magic is “really” about. Here again, though, modern habits of thought are a poor guide to magical reality. Theurgy and thaumaturgy, magic directed inward and magic directed outward, are two sides of a single whole, and neither one functions effectively without the other. Magic takes place when a human being interacts in all three realms with all three realms of the universe—in the traditional language of Western magical philosophy, when the microcosm or “little universe” meets the macrocosm or “great universe”—and both sides of the interaction are necessarily affected by it.

For example, one of the primary tools of any kind of magical work is concentration. To be able to focus awareness on one thing and hold it there, clearly and without wavering, is a basic requirement of many kinds of magical work. Even on its own, sheer concentration can be a fairly effective method of practical thaumaturgy. It takes only a very little experience, though, for the novice magician to learn that attaining this kind of focus at will is far from easy and that the chief obstacles in the way come from within the self. Even if she is interested only in thaumaturgy, then, our novice will have to go to work on these inner obstacles—and in the process she will be carrying out one of the elementary steps of theurgy.

Similarly, someone who sets out on the path of theurgy will soon start noticing that even the most rarefied of theurgic disciplines have definite practical effects. For instance, a theurgic magician might find that his character is lacking in one of the four elemental qualities—the receptive and emotional element of Water, let’s say—and might decide to systematically invoke the powers governing that element to help establish balance within himself. To bring these energies down into the self, though, is to change the elemental balance of the entire universe in at least a small way, and the effects of even a small change radiate outward to cause corresponding changes in the world. When our magician calls upon the spirits and energies of Water, the energies he summons are going to affect the events of his daily life and the people he encounters as well as the structures of his own personality. If he invokes Water strongly enough, in fact, the elemental forces he has called up may reach a pitch of energy intense enough to bring rain. Intentionally or not, he will have carried out a work of thaumaturgy as well as

one of theurgy, and if he has any sense at all he will learn to take this into account when planning his magical workings.

Theurgy and thaumaturgy, then, cannot be effectively separated, and in most Western magical traditions no attempt is made to do so. Rather, the two are combined and used to strengthen each other so that the transformation of the self and the capacity to shape the world develop together in balance. Both these branches of magical work play an active role in the traditions that gave rise to the magical lodge system, and both are put to work in that system. Above all, both are crucial factors in the primary function of a magical lodge: the work of initiation.

Magical Initiation

As we've seen already, the subject of initiation is one that has gathered far too much nonsense over the last few centuries. Nowhere is this more true than in the context of the magical side of lodge work. At the same time, though, in the Golden Dawn and in certain other magical orders, a great deal of careful deliberation went into just what goes on in the process of magical initiation. A good deal of this thought is framed in terms of the particular philosophy and terminology of late nineteenth-century Western high magic, which is by no means transparent even to many modern magicians. Much of it, though, can be translated into other, simpler terms, following the lines of the simplified magical model of the universe we've been considering.

We can begin exploring the magical side of initiation, then, by returning to the processes of lodge initiation examined in the last chapter—but doing so with the magical model of the universe in mind. In terms of that model, the traditional lodge system's methods of initiation work by using symbolic powers from the realm of meaning, as reflected in the realm of matter, to awaken reflections of the same symbolic powers in the candidate's perceptions of the realm of mind. By presenting specific patterns of symbolism to the senses, the initiation process leads the candidate to look at the world, and at himself or herself, in a different way. It also provides a set of symbolic triggers to allow the new initiate to return to this different way of seeing whenever the lodge is opened in the same degree.

The possibilities set in motion when magic is added to this process can be divided, loosely speaking, into two aspects. One of these has to do with the influence of magic on initiation. The other concerns the influence of initiation on magic. On the one hand, it's possible to help the process of initiation along by charging the symbols with corresponding mental energies and linking them more closely with their corresponding meanings, using any appropriate set of magical techniques. On the other hand, it's just as possible to use the process of initiation itself primarily as a way to further the initiate's magical development by choosing patterns of symbolism and meaning that foster the process of magical training and help awaken the higher magical potentials of the self.

In terms of the first of these aspects, for instance, an officer who represents some particular aspect of the universe in an initiation and who wears robes and speaks words appropriate to that role can also invoke the same force in the ritual through visualization, vibration of words of power, symbolic gestures, or any other suitable method of magical practice. This allows the officer to express that aspect of the universe in the mental realm as well as the material, and carry out his or her function in the ritual with far greater power and effect. Similarly, props used in the initiation can be magically charged with appropriate energies, and areas of the lodge room that have symbolic value can be energized magically so that they affect the candidate's consciousness directly, not merely through the medium of a symbol perceived by the senses.

In terms of the second aspect, an initiation ritual worked in a magical lodge can be designed to help open the awareness of the initiate to the inner realms of experience, or to bring about any other desired change that will help him or her along the path of magical training. Symbols and energies that have a significant place in the lodge's system of magical practice—for example, the images and powers of the Tree of Life in a Cabalistic lodge—can be made equally important in the lodge's initiations so that the lodge members can draw on the added force of their initiatory experiences in using the same factors magically. Furthermore, as we've seen, gestures and other actions used in a lodge setting, including the core triggering devices communicated in the initiatory process, can be incorporated

in magical work directly so that the effects of initiation become part of the toolkit of the practicing magician.

In a properly designed magical lodge initiation, these two aspects form two sides of a single whole. Still, there's a point to drawing a distinction between them. The first aspect is principally a matter of thaumaturgy, in that it centers on effects produced by the initiating officers on the candidate, rather than on themselves (although the ability to perform this side of the work depends at least in part on theurgic work done by the initiating officers, either individually or collectively). The second aspect is principally a matter of theurgy, in that it centers on the candidate's own inner development and the roles magical initiation can play in fostering and accelerating it (although effective thaumaturgic technique is crucial if the initiation is to have these effects). In order to accomplish the first task, what's required is a set of workable and effective magical methods that can be used by the lodge officers in the initiation. In order to accomplish the second, what's required is a coherent symbolism of spiritual development that is expressed in a well-designed initiation ritual. We will deal with these two factors one at a time—remembering that is when the two are combined that the potentials of magical initiation become a reality.

Techniques of Lodge Magic

The magical traditions of the world contain an immense array of practical methods, and a great many of these can be put to use in the context of lodge initiations. As with symbolism, though—and for much the same reasons—only a small proportion of this richness has actually been used in the magical lodges of the Western world. Some magical techniques are simply too difficult to handle, others work too unpredictably, and others have side effects or special requirements that limit their usefulness in a lodge setting. Furthermore, in magic as in most other human activities, a few techniques that are thoroughly mastered will produce better results than a large number that are only partly learned. So there's a good case to be made for doing as the majority of lodges have done—using a small number of effective and flexible techniques as the core of a their magical system.

The Golden Dawn, it must be admitted, started out by heading in exactly the opposite direction. The founders and early adepts of that order attempted to bring together the entire *corpus* of surviving Western magical teachings into a single comprehensive system, and came as close to succeeding as anyone ever has. The resulting body of lore, predictably enough, had some serious problems with coherence and consistency. As time went on and the order developed, though, the worst of the problems were removed, often by discarding elements of the system (such as the Order's "initiated" version of astrology) that simply didn't work in practice. Those techniques that proved broadly useful came to play an ever-larger role in the order's training system and lodge work, while those of more restricted value were given less attention or dropped out of use entirely. By the time the Golden Dawn's major successor orders emerged in the early part of this century, this process of evolution had winnowed down the original confusion to a large but still workable body of magical methods. The product of this work has become the core set of techniques of the modern magical revival in the English-speaking world—with or without the awareness or acknowledgement of the modern practitioner.

Parts of this same set of methods will appear in the examples of magical lodge work given in this book. This is partly because they are common to so many modern magical groups and teachings, and partly because they have been central to my own training and experience in magic, in and out of lodge settings, and thus belong to the set of techniques I am qualified to teach. I have not, however, provided detailed instructions in Golden Dawn methods of magical work here. Aside from sheer limits of space—the Golden Dawn system of ritual magic makes use of so large a body of technical methods and approaches that it's difficult to present it usefully in anything shorter than a full-length book—not all magical lodges use, or should use, the Golden Dawn system. A long discussion of what is, after all, one system of magical practice among many would be of little use to readers who are trained in other traditions or feel drawn to different approaches to the magical arts. I have outlined the magical side of lodge work from a broader perspective, so that those who follow different magical traditions will have little difficulty finding

equivalent ways of doing all the things we'll be covering here and elsewhere in this book. It should always be remembered that nearly any system of magical practice can be effectively put to use in lodge work, and the differences between systems can't be brushed aside by claiming that one is right and all the others are wrong. Different human beings have different talents and abilities and can benefit from different approaches to the hidden realms of existence.

Applying Magical Techniques

We can begin considering these matters with the first aspect of lodge magic discussed above—the influence of magic on the process of initiation. The core requirement here is the ability to summon specific magical energies that correspond to the symbols used in the initiatory ritual. If the initiation uses the symbolism of the traditional element of Earth, for example, the lodge officers have to be able to summon the magical forces of Earth and keep them present and focused all through the initiation. If the initiation draws on the image and myth of the Greek goddess Aphrodite, the officers need to be able to invoke the deity, welcome her presence, and make themselves vehicles for her energies. If the initiation draws instead on some other symbolism—whatever it may be—the corresponding energies need to be summoned and directed.

In the Golden Dawn system, the methods that are used for doing this combine concentration and visualization with the use of an array of symbolic forms. These forms include ceremonial postures and gestures; names and words of power; colors and images; numerical and geometrical patterns; and physical props such as incense, holy water, and a variety of magically consecrated working tools. To summon the forces of Earth for the Zelator Grade initiation, for instance, the officers of a lodge working in the Golden Dawn tradition face north (the symbolic direction of Earth) while visualizing images and tracing symbolic patterns in the air with a set of magical implements as the chief officer intones words of power and Names of God attributed to Earth. The concentrated will and imagination of the officers and lodge members, affirming and energizing these symbols of Earth, combine to bring the power

behind those symbols into focus in the lodge room so that the candidate will encounter the power of Earth at maximum intensity. At the end of the ceremony, a similar process is used to banish the forces of Earth and return them to their proper place.

However it is accomplished—and the Golden Dawn approach, it bears repeating, is far from the only way to do it—this process of summoning the energy governing the initiation to empower the inner side of the ceremony is the foundation of the truly magical side of lodge work. It's entirely possible to do this alone, with no other magical work at all, and produce an effective and potent magical initiation. Once this level of the work is mastered, though, it's possible to go on to more complex ways of working with magical energies in initiation. These can add a great deal of strength and subtlety to the ritual.

There are at least two of these approaches that can be easily worked into magical lodge practice. First of all, it's possible for the different officers of a lodge to bring through different aspects of the primary energy of an initiation, or even different energies altogether, and focus each of these on the candidate at different points in the course of the initiation. This builds on the symbolic roles of the different officers, and symbolic polarities between different lodge officers can thus be transformed into vehicles for magical polarities between different energies in the lodge.

Second, it's possible for different parts of the lodge room used in the ceremony to be charged with different energies, so that the candidate will encounter those energies directly when he or she passes through the areas in question. Again, this can build on the symbolic structure of the ritual, turning it into an effective vehicle for power. Symbolic patterns (such as the four elemental quarters, the Cabalistic Tree of Life, and the like) can quite literally be mapped onto the lodge hall as a structure of magical forces in space so that movement in the hall becomes movement from one realm of energy to another. Here again, magical polarities play an important organizing role.

Either of these processes can be done at whatever level of complexity and intensity the ritual requires and the skill of the lodge members can handle. At one end of the spectrum, two lodge officers

(or two groups of officers) or the two sides of the room may be used to express some basic symbolic polarity such as female and male, light and darkness, or the like. At the other end of the spectrum, each of a dozen or more officers may invoke a different energy and bring it to bear on the candidate in a variety of different ways and combinations, while the lodge room itself may be transformed into an intricate patchwork of forces corresponding to the most complicated symbolic maps of the universe known to magical tradition.

It's worth noting, too, that both of these extremes—or any of the points in between—can become the basis for an effective magical initiation. Complexity as such is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage, and the same is true of simplicity. The critical point is that the magical work of the ritual reflects the ritual's own symbolic structure as exactly as possible and does so in a way that the lodge can handle in practical terms.

Both of these more developed approaches—the focusing of energies through different officers and the patterning of space by different forces—can be carried out in lodge ritual in several ways. The work of awakening the energies can be done collectively, by having all the members of the lodge focus on each officer or place in turn, one at a time, in order to invoke the various forces needed in the rite. It can also be done individually, by having each officer invoke a different energy or summon forces into a different place. It can be done instead by the chief officer, or by some other officer specifically assigned to the task, who awakens each of the energies of the initiation and links them to the officers who will direct them or the places where they will be focused. Any of these methods will accomplish the work that needs to be done. The choice between them is largely a matter of the relative training of the lodge members at any given point. A lodge made up entirely of inexperienced magicians will find the first more effective, a lodge where most of the officers have a solid background in magical practice will find the second more convenient, while a lodge that has one or two very skilled members and a large number of novices may find that the third produces the best results. As the level of magical education among lodge members changes, the way the magical work is handled can (and usually should) change accordingly.

There is more advanced kind of magical work appropriate to initiation that deserves to be mentioned here, although it will not be covered in detail. This is the art of manipulating the energy body of the candidate through magical means. In the Golden Dawn system of magic, and in certain other traditional systems, the structures of subtle energy that surround and underlie the physical body and link it to the still subtler “bodies” of consciousness were mapped out in great detail. In the course of initiation, these structures were deliberately charged with magical energies and, in some rituals, actually reshaped by way of certain advanced methods of magical work.

To some extent, this sort of reshaping takes place during any magical initiation worth the name, since the subtle energy body of the candidate receives and is affected by the force of the magical energies invoked in the ritual work. The more complex the ceremony, and the more intricately patterned the energies that are summoned in it, the more important this kind of effect is likely to be.

There is a significant difference, though, between simply exposing the subtle body to the impact of magical energies and intentionally setting out to reorganize its internal structure. This latter is a fully functional approach to magical initiation, and it provides possibilities for theurgic transformation that few other magical methods can offer. Still, it requires a great deal of training and skill. It is difficult, though not impossible, to learn how to do it from written descriptions; and if it is handled clumsily it can cause significant mental and physical damage to the candidate. Because of these limitations, the practical methods involved in this kind of work will not be discussed here. Those who wish to experiment with this approach on their own will find basic materials, mostly in fragmentary form, in the various published collections of Golden Dawn papers.

Symbols of Transformation

These technical methods of magic form the most important elements of the “standard kit” available to magical lodges for their initiatory work. The magical techniques that play a role in initiation,

though, can be used to invoke anything that can be effectively symbolized by the magical system being used—which is to say, given a tolerably complete system, anything at all in the universe of human experience. Because of this, and because of the sheer flexibility of the processes of lodge initiation, it's possible to create an initiatory ritual to foster quite literally any imaginable change in the initiates who pass through it.

This is a major source of the lodge system's potential, but it also represents a very real source of danger, one which needs to be clearly understood if problems are to be avoided. The methods of lodge initiation are simply ways of bringing about change, and it has to be remembered that not all changes are constructive ones. Magical initiation can open the way to the heights of human experience, to the extraordinary potentials for wisdom, power, and love contained in each of us. But it can open the way into the depths as well—to realms of confusion and incoherence, or of brutality, selfishness, and arrogance, where those potentials are wasted or lost.

It can also lead nowhere at all. This last outcome is more common than is often realized. In fact, it may be more common in the history of magical lodge systems than either of the other two. It is certainly more common than the "dark initiations" and "lodges of the Left Hand Path"—the deliberate use of the techniques of magical lodge work for selfish or destructive purposes—that were discussed in hushed tones in the occult community during the lifetime of the Golden Dawn and its successor orders. Corrupt lodges of this sort did and do exist, of course, and they sometimes cause a great deal of human suffering, although the magical backlash that always accompanies this kind of stupidity tends to give such groups a fairly short lifespan before they implode. Much more common, and much more likely to remain in existence over the long term, are groups that use the magical lodge system to no particular effect at all.

This is sometimes a matter of the magical ability (or lack of it) possessed by these groups' leaders or officers, and sometimes a matter of sheer incompetence in handling the mechanics of ritual. Just as often, though, it happens because the initiatory rituals of these groups are based on symbolic structures that are either seriously

unbalanced or simply incoherent, and are thus incapable of producing any useful effect even in the hands of competent magicians and ritualists. Effective techniques of lodge initiation function as a method of offering the candidate a new way of understanding some part of the world of human experience. If that new way is even less useful than the old one, or simply a repetition of it in different terms, the candidate will gain nothing by the experience.

This is where the second of the two aspects of lodge magic mentioned above plays its most important role. Just as the first aspect depends on effective magical techniques, the second depends on an effective symbolic structure that provides the framework for those techniques and for the changes in awareness that are communicated to initiates. Just as there are several proven approaches to making the first aspect work out in practice, there are several approaches to the second aspect that can help minimize the risk of producing an irrelevant or unbalanced initiation ritual.

Far and away the most important of these is simply the realization that initiatory ritual—magical or not—is intended to produce specific changes and point in specific directions. Any given ritual has a purpose, and everything in that ritual should be related to that purpose and play some role in furthering it. In order to make an effective ritual, therefore, it's necessary to start off with a specific purpose, a goal toward which those who pass through the initiation will be moving.

This purpose is expressed most clearly in what we called, in Chapter Three, the central myth. The mythic narrative that is at the heart of each lodge system largely defines the meaning and purpose of its rituals by defining the symbolic identity given to the initiate and the experiences and symbols through which he or she passes. The rituals of the Tribe of Ben-Hur, to return to an earlier example, reenacted the sufferings and triumphs of the main character of Lew Wallace's novel, and the way of looking at the universe which was communicated by those rituals was largely the way belonging to that fictional character. As a result, the rituals had the effect of making initiates become, for better or worse, more like Judah Ben-Hur. Similarly, the rituals of the various past and present Templar lodges have the effect of making their initiates more like the medieval

Knights Templar (or, more precisely, like whatever the medieval Knights Templar were imagined to be by the rituals' creators). The rituals of the Golden Dawn, which drew a significant amount of their imagery from the popular occult literature of the time, had the effect of making the Order's members more like the Rosicrucian magicians of Victorian magical mythology and fiction. The same is true of any lodge initiation: identify the myth that structures the ritual and you identify, to a very great extent, the effect of that system on its initiates.

Myths and Magical Training

This approach takes on deeper implications when it is applied to the theurgic work of magical initiation. All lodge initiations foster specific qualities, as defined by the lodge's central myth and the specific symbolism and structure used in its rituals. To help accomplish the work of theurgy, though, the myth, symbolism and structure of a magical lodge need to develop exactly those qualities needed for the spiritual and magical development of the candidate. To some extent, these are quite ordinary qualities—courage, compassion, and sheer dogged persistence will meet most of the requirements of the path of magical training—but there are subtler processes of inner balancing and reorientation that can also be worked into rituals of magical initiation and set in motion when those rituals are experienced.

Different magical and spiritual systems describe these processes in different ways. This is partly because such systems use a variety of models and terminologies to understand the course of inner development, but also partly because the processes themselves vary from system to system. The work that must be done is much the same—the aspirant has to wake up out of the obsession with purely material experience that blocks awareness of the inner life, resolve the inner conflicts and imbalances that split the self into fragments, and come into contact with the root of the self in the transcendent realms of being. But all this can be done in many different ways, through many different processes, and with many different tools and techniques. Each of these different approaches implies a specific

sequence of inner events, which, seen from another viewpoint, is also a specific myth.

In some cases, this last point can be taken quite literally, because the processes of spiritual development used in a good many systems have been deliberately modeled on ancient myths. To some extent, this comes out of the same sort of overenthusiastic interpretation we examined earlier, in which enough cleverness can make anything mean anything. During the Renaissance, in particular, books interpreting myths in occult terms were nearly as common as books interpreting them in Jungian terms are now. Still, just as Jungian interpretations of myth have given rise to some useful psychological techniques, magical interpretations of myth have given rise to some useful ways of thinking about magical development.

The Golden Dawn system, under its surface layer of Victorian occult claptrap, is one of these myth-based systems, although the governing myth that structures its initiation rituals—the myth of the Dying God, as described in detail by Sir James Frazer in his famous study *The Golden Bough*—has rarely been recognized or traced out in print. Several unorthodox Christian magical groups have done much the same thing with the structure of Christian mythology, using the New Testament legends of the life of Jesus to provide a framework for their particular system of inner development. The legends of the Holy Grail are another set of myths that have provided a valid and powerful framework for magical lodge work and for magical development in general.

Whether a magical lodge system uses a traditional myth as the basis for its approach to inner development or builds up its approach on some other foundation, the way it understands the process of magical training and attainment provides the essential context and meaning for its initiation rituals. Whether one is studying an existing system or creating a new one, this point needs to be kept in mind. It provides a key that will open many doors.

At the same time, this way of thinking can be taken too far. Too many magical lodge groups have treated their particular systems of grades or degrees not merely as a path of spiritual development but as *the* path. The Golden Dawn fell headlong into this particular pitfall, and there is still a great deal of confusion in modern

Golden Dawn groups and texts between the grades of initiation, the stations of the specific path of development outlined in the Golden Dawn system, and the broader realities of the spiritual quest.

To some extent, this sort of confusion is hard to avoid, since people need to have some way of talking about their experiences and the framework of a well-designed grade system allows this to be handled in useful ways. Still, there is a case to be made for an entirely different way of relating the grades of initiation to the stages of the spiritual path—a way more common in many Eastern traditions. In this view, different initiations and empowerments are seen less as competing definitions of the path of spiritual development than as different ways of understanding and traveling that path, a path that is ultimately beyond all definition. Seen from this perspective, the grades or degrees of a magical lodge system are simply stages in a particular approach to the Higher, and need not—in fact, should not—define the path of theurgic development taken by anyone outside it.

This view was adopted long ago among the majority of fraternal lodges. Today, most present themselves not as the only valid system of initiation but as one among many; with certain advantages but no stranglehold on the truth.

By contrast, many—probably most—magical lodges of the past have seen their particular set of grades, symbols, and energies as the one true path of spiritual or magical development, and have spoken of other systems in much the same terms that soap salesmen use to describe Brand X. Abandoning this spiritual chauvinism is a step long overdue on the magical side of the lodge movement, and it requires nearly as great a revision of the magical lodge system as the one involved in scrapping the traditional concepts of magical elitism. Once taken, though, it will open up a great many possibilities closed to a more doctrinaire approach.

The Lodge Egregor

So far, we have discussed the magical work of the lodge from a perspective that focuses on the individual. The two primary aspects we've covered—the use of magical methods to empower initiatory ritual, and the mythic framework that makes the initiatory process

meaningful in the context of magical training and development—make up the most important ingredients of the magical side of the “standard kit” of lodge technique. Their implications, however, reach out far beyond the limits of the work of initiation, and affect far more than any particular candidate. To intentionally waken magical energies in a lodge setting, and to do so in the context of a governing myth, is to charge several quite ordinary features of group activity with extraordinary power and, at least potentially, to make them capable of bringing about extraordinary effects.

It's common to human experience that groups of every kind tend to develop personalities of their own—personalities that have their roots in the individual personalities of the group members, but grow and evolve into something that is much more than the sum of its parts. In magical jargon, these collective personalities are called *egregors*. Even outside magical settings, egregors are often powerful positive or negative forces in human life, influencing the behavior of individual members of groups in a host of subtle and not-so-subtle ways. In the realm of magic, they become a crucial vehicle for many kinds of group work.

Consider, as a good example of the egregor phenomenon, the genesis of mob violence. Under normal circumstances, people in a crowd behave more or less as they would in any other situation. However, if a certain fraction of the members of a crowd start feeling angry about the same thing—by listening to the words of an inflammatory speaker, for example, or by suddenly being confronted with a symbol or event that touches some common resentment—the anger can take on a life of its own. It may then intensify and spread, drawing in more people as it does so. Ordinary standards of behavior can sometimes hold this spiral of anger in check, but if these are thrown off by any member of the crowd, they will often give way for all. Once one window is broken or one punch is thrown, others follow, and what started out with mutterings and angry looks can end in horrifying acts of mindless collective violence—acts that none of the people involved would have done under any other conditions.

Under the sway of a single strong emotion, the crowd gives birth to a rudimentary form of egregor. That collective personality,

made up of emotional energy and very little else, has little intelligence but a great deal of strength, and it increases that strength by a simple feedback loop. It reflects the emotional energy that gave it birth back into the consciousness of the people in the crowd—the individuals who are at once its creators, its component parts, and, in extreme cases, its victims. This feedback effect is central to the whole phenomenon, and plays a critical role in the way egregors are used in magical lodge work.

Essentially the same thing happens, although different emotional energies are involved, when two people suddenly fall in love with each other. On a broader scale, the same process—usually (but not always) at a lower level of intensity—takes place whenever two or more people come into more than casual contact. Most human relationships, and all those that have strong emotions linked to them, are at least partly rooted in the workings of the egregor phenomenon, and the more people or the stronger the emotions involved in the relationship, the more likely this phenomenon is to have a significant effect.

In fraternal lodges, as in most other kinds of organized groups, these collective personalities play a crucial role at nearly every point. The egregors of the largest and oldest orders—built up over hundreds of years and energized through the emotional effects of ritual initiations repeated literally millions of times—possess spectacular reserves of energy. They have a stronger influence on these orders, lodges, and members than any individual human being, living or dead. To a very real extent, these egregors act as unseen initiators during the grades of initiation, focusing energies on the candidate in much the same way that a magical lodge officer would.

Magical lodges develop even more potent egregors, and they tend to do so much more quickly. The powers awakened and wielded in effectively done magical initiations flood the lodge egregor as well as the candidate with energies of high intensity. The patterning effect of a balanced and well-designed symbolic structure, focused on a coherent myth of inner transformation, builds these energies into a lattice of harmonized forces that can have powers reaching far beyond the possibilities open to the simpler types of egregor. In addition, magical lodges in a number of traditions have

devised ritual methods of deliberately charging such egregors with additional energy—the Golden Dawn Equinox ritual is an example of this—and of directing the energies of their egregors to a wide range of practical and spiritual ends.

It is through the skillful use of the egregor and its energies that the magical lodge system achieves its highest potentials as a tool for esoteric training, personal transformation, and practical magic. Charged by the lodge members through regular ritual and meditative work, an egregor of this kind becomes a reservoir of power that can be used by any member of the lodge at need, and can be directed at full force by the lodge officers into the collective work of the lodge.

Over and above these uses, the magical lodge egregor has certain innate effects of its own. It amplifies the effect of initiations, mirroring back higher modes of awareness to the candidate in the same way that a mob egregor mirrors back rage to the members of an angry crowd. Similarly, it guides the consciousness of lodge members along whatever process of spiritual growth is built into the lodge symbolism, making the sometimes rocky path of magical development go more smoothly and, often, more quickly. On another, more practical level, it also serves the lodge and its individual members as a protective shield against hostile magic.

These possibilities are measured, however, by the amount of work necessary to bring them into reality. (In magic as in the rest of life, again, there is no such thing as a free lunch.) To build up an egregor capable of these effects takes time, patience, and the sustained effort of all the members of a magical lodge. Part of this effort takes place during lodge rituals, as the members work at the often difficult task of performing magical ritual effectively in both the outer and inner realms. Another part of it takes place in ordinary lodge meetings, as the members strive to carry out their responsibilities to the lodge, to meet potential problems in a fair and cooperative manner, and to build a spirit of fellowship and friendship among themselves. Still another part, in many magical lodges, takes place outside the lodge altogether, as the members perform various individual practices designed to charge the lodge egregor and develop it in specific directions. In many ways, building the

lodge egregor represents the single largest task in putting together a magical lodge, and nearly every aspect of lodge work needs to be carried out with this purpose in mind.

Egregors and Ethics

There is another kind of work that is needed to build a balanced and useful magical lodge egregor, though, and in some ways this is the most difficult of all. A group egregor, as mentioned above, is formed from the emotions and the awareness of the people who make up the group, and it takes its nature and tone, its strengths and its weaknesses, from that source more than any other. How the lodge members think, speak and act in lodge will have a powerful impact on the character of the egregor. If the members strive to express ideals such as courage, patience, fairness, and common sense in their actions, the egregor that forms around the lodge will reflect and reinforce those ideals. If the members' thoughts and actions are governed by less constructive attitudes, the egregor will take shape accordingly, and it will reflect and reinforce those attitudes with equal efficiency.

All this may sound like Sunday-school moralizing of the sort common to most of the established religious traditions of the West. It is not. Two thousand years of political religion, most of it devoted to no higher end than maintaining the status quo, have caused far too many people to forget that the word virtue—as it is used, for example, in phrases like the virtues of herbs and stones—is another term for power. Justice, courage, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and the rest of the classical virtues are not pie-in-the-sky ideals. As the pagan thinkers of the ancient world knew well, they are the most effective and powerful ways to face the world of human experience, even if they are not always the easiest. This is true even in the most material levels of that universe, and it is far more true of the inner realms where the secrets of magic have to be sought and mastered.

There are aspects of lodge ethics that have their effect on a wholly common sense level, and these are far from unimportant. Ask yourself; if you intend to do intensive and potentially risky

magical work in a lodge setting, would you rather do it with a group of people who tell the truth, keep the agreements they make and care about what happens to other group members, or with a group of people who cheat, steal, refuse to take responsibility for their actions, and put their own wishes ahead of other people's needs and rights? Most people would choose the first group on a purely practical basis, and for very good reasons.

When the egregor phenomenon is brought into the picture, though, the same choice takes on deeper implications. The same kind of feedback loop that drives mob violence and amplifies the effects of magical initiations also, in a subtler but equally powerful way, reflects the character of the lodge egregor back into the minds of the lodge members. Members of the lodge become more like the mythic image at the center of the lodge system, but they also become more like the egregor, and, to some extent, more like one another.

It's for these reasons, among others, that traditional magical lodges have so often insisted on high standards of ethical behavior among lodge members. It is also why the rules of lodge etiquette discussed in Chapter Two tend to be adhered to in magical and fraternal lodges alike. The potential for damage if an egregor becomes corrupted is real and substantial. An egregor that becomes tainted with some particular ethical failing can wreck a lodge by reflecting the attitudes that give rise to that failing into the consciousness of the members, over and over again, until what was once an occasional issue becomes a constant source of trouble. In extreme cases—which are by no means rare—a tainted egregor can push a group farther and farther in an unbalanced direction until the egregor itself becomes a source of collective psychosis and the group acts out its inner distortions in some nightmare of violence or self-induced disaster. The recent mass suicides of several religious groups offer good examples of the phenomenon at work, and the history of Nazi Germany is, in large part, the same thing on a larger scale.

There are ways to prevent this sort of folly. Universal among traditional fraternal and magical orders is the practice of requiring members and leaders alike to pledge themselves to some kind of ethical standard, and providing means for expelling those who don't live up to the terms of the pledge. The symbols and initiation

rituals can also have an effect, in that the modes of consciousness they transmit typically have an ethical side. The standard lodge method of screening potential members also has a role to play in this context. A good deal of the work, though, has to be done by the individual members of the lodge. To the extent that they live up to the lodge's ideals when dealing with other lodge members and carrying out lodge work, the lodge egregor will develop as it should and provide a source of strength to the lodge in all its activities.

Inner Plane Contacts

The magical effects of the lodge egregor have another side, which leads in some strange but valuable directions. As a presence in the realm of mind, the egregor of a magical lodge can become an interface between the lodge members and certain other presences of the realms of mind and meaning. These presences are often called inner plane contacts, and they serve as an additional source of power and guidance to lodges that know how to work with them in productive ways.

There are several different phenomena that can function as an inner plane contact for a lodge. The most straightforward of these takes shape when a lodge egregor is built up around an existing set of symbols and rituals in use by other lodges. The established egregor and contacts of the existing order overshadows the new lodge, providing a template for the lodge's own egregor and a source of additional energy for its workings. This is one of the strengths of established lodge systems, whether fraternal or magical. Newly founded lodges begin to link up with the broader egregor of the system as soon as they begin working with the system's rituals and symbols, and can draw on the benefits of a solidly established egregor without having to build one from the beginning. The same thing can happen, although usually with somewhat lessened intensity, even when the egregor being contacted has been unused for many years.

Inner plane contacts are not limited to lodge egregors, however, and some of the most powerful come from other sources. Any symbolic pattern that has served as a focus for human emotion and

energy will build up an egregor of its own over time, and the more energy that is put into such a pattern, the more potent the egregor that will form around it. The gods and goddesses of every religion, past and present, are at the centers of vast egregors charged with specific kinds of power. This power is defined by, and contacted through, the traditional symbolism of the deity in question. Once this symbolism is understood, it can serve as a means to contact the deity in ritual work, and once this is done and the corresponding responsibilities accepted—dealing with the powers of the inner realms is always a two-way street—the power of the deity can be brought through into lodge workings. The same thing is true, at a lower but still highly useful level of intensity, of the spirits, intelligences, and powers dealt with in traditional magical lore.

There are also patterns of energy that seem to come out of nowhere, with no known history but with the force of a fully-developed egregor. Some lodges find, often more or less by chance, that certain symbols serve as unexpected sources of power, and function as though they have a living egregor behind them. Explored by magical means, such symbols can open up into full-blown inner plane contacts, although (since this is the magical equivalent of buying a pig in a poke) such work should be done carefully and with appropriate protections in place. It's possible to account for these unexpected patterns of force by various explanations, depending on your choice of magical theories, but this is a question for the philosophers of magic. For practical purposes, the point to keep in mind is that they exist, can be brought into action by magical methods, and can be drawn on as a source of energy for magical lodge work.

Whatever the source of an inner plane contact, it can be taken up by a magical lodge in a number of ways. Obviously, the best way to link up with the egregor of an existing order is to receive a charter from the appropriate Grand Lodge. This is an approach that is both valid and honorable, and, in many cases, the only functional way to do so. Since many lodge organizations keep important parts of their symbolism secret, and since the egregors of such organizations can easily tell the difference between initiates and outsiders, it's normally impossible to gain access to their egregors in any other way. This is as it should be. An egregor is to magical power roughly

what a bank account is to money. Since the members of existing lodge organizations have helped build the egregor in question, they alone have a right to use it, just as the one who deposits money in a bank account is normally the only one who has the right to make withdrawals from it.

Outside of the realm of existing lodge organizations, of course, the possibilities are considerably greater. It is entirely possible to set out to make contact with the egregor of some magical organization of the past, using whatever of its teachings and symbolism have survived as the basis for exploratory magical work. This has been done many times, and most of the presently active Golden Dawn lodges (to name only one example) have come into being through this mode of working. It's also possible to do the same thing in a slightly less direct way, by concentrating on a single symbol, deity, or myth, using this as a focus for various kinds of magical and visionary work, and drawing the material for a lodge system out of the results of this work. Again, plenty of effective lodge systems have resulted from this process.

In a significant number of cases, though, interaction between a lodge and a set of inner plane contacts is begun from the other side: instead of the lodge seeking out the contacts, the contacts seek out the lodge. This can happen when a lodge begins working (knowingly or not) with one part of a more complex symbolism, and then builds up enough power that other parts of the symbolism start receiving energy through forgotten linkages. It can happen when different traditions have come into contact and been used together at some other time, and the connection between the two becomes reactivated by lodge work. It can happen for other reasons, or for no known reason at all. In any of these cases, the lodge will find that a certain symbolism has come to carry an unexpected energy in ritual and other contexts, and the same symbolism often starts appearing at the same time in lodge members' dreams or visionary work. (This is one of the reasons why lodge members should keep detailed records of their own magical work, and especially of any experiences that seem to bear on the lodge or its symbolism.)

A lodge that has a new contact come through in this fashion needs to determine if that contact is compatible with the work it

intends to do. If so, the contact can be strengthened by ritual and other magical work that focuses on it. If not, the contact will have to be closed down, usually by changing the lodge symbolism and formally banishing the unwanted contact.

This raises a critical issue in dealing with inner plane contacts. In the past, especially during the last hundred years or so, it has been common to confuse these contacts with the Secret Chiefs of magical lodge mythology—a problem made more common by the fact that they are often experienced as individualized beings—and to treat messages coming from inner plane sources as though they were edicts handed down from the throne of God. Like most of the excesses of magical elitism (the ultimate source of these attitudes), this sort of behavior rarely has productive results. It needs to be remembered that inner plane contacts, like the spirits summoned in certain kinds of magical work, are powers to be encountered and learned from, not masters to be obeyed. Work with inner plane contacts may well require the lodge to make and keep commitments to its contacts—again, this kind of magic is a two-way street—but those commitments must be freely chosen by the lodge and its members, not imposed unilaterally from the other side. If an inner plane contact is out of harmony with a lodge's purpose, or behaves in ways detrimental to the lodge or its members, it should be swiftly and decisively banished by the lodge by the appropriate magical means.

At the same time, this branch of lodge work can also have substantial rewards if it is done carefully and intelligently. Inner plane contacts can pass on knowledge as well as energy. The egregors behind them carry the accumulated lore of the traditions that created them, and it is sometimes possible to bring through a great deal of useful material from these contacts in a very short time. If the statements of Golden Dawn adepts are to be believed, much of the material that makes up the Golden Dawn system of magic came by this very process.

There are also, at least potentially, deeper issues involved. In many systems of magic, it's held that egregors capable of carrying the highest levels of power can only be built up on the basis of the living patterns of the realm of meaning, outside space and time.

These patterns are what some religions call gods, and what others call aspects of God. They have a reality and a power that have nothing to do with the egregors built up around them, but they use the egregors the way people use clothing or actors in many traditional societies use masks. Skillful, intelligent, ethical, and dedicated work with these egregors, according to tradition, can bring lodge members into a state of participation with the primal living powers of existence itself—a state that is the goal of most religions, as well as the highest summit of the art of magic.

Fundamentals of Lodge Secrecy

Shaping all three of the realms of lodge activity we've explored so far, and pervading the whole structure of the traditional lodge system, is the factor of secrecy. The central importance of this factor to every part of lodge work is hard to overstate. It's no exaggeration to say that the requirements of secrecy have had a stronger influence on the traditional lodge system than any other single factor.

There are good reasons for this. In the earliest years of the lodge system, as we've seen, secrecy was a desperate necessity. The proto-lodges of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, like the early trade unions they so greatly resembled, were often illegal. They had to maintain secrecy as a matter of sheer survival. Similarly, the Hermetic and magical traditions that fused with these proto-lodges had been forced underground by religious persecution centuries before, and survived only because their practitioners had learned to be very competent at staying out of sight.

To some extent, then, lodge secrecy was simply a habit bred into the system from its birth. To some extent—especially among magical lodges—it persisted because it proved useful in backing up exactly the sort of authoritarian claims we've examined earlier in this book. Here and there (although much less often than some people have claimed) it also provided a convenient cover for political intrigues or criminal activities. Another factor in its endurance

was the fact that the cloak-and-dagger apparatus of passwords, secret signs, and bloodcurdling oaths of secrecy made a pleasant contrast to the unromantic tedium of everyday life.

Practical Uses of Secrecy

There were, however, solid, practical reasons for the survival of this apparatus in fraternal and magical lodges. On the fraternal side, many lodge organizations offered financial and social benefits well worth having, and there were always people who wanted to draw on these benefits without taking the trouble to join and support the organization that provided them. The traditional security devices formed one of several methods of weeding out such freeloaders, just as the membership process described above helped keep out would-be members who wanted to take from the lodge without offering anything in return.

On the magical side, other reasons played a larger role. The Inquisition may have been replaced by less brutal means of repression, but in a society that had no tolerance at all for magical traditions, even the rumor that someone was involved in a magical lodge could be enough to wreck that person's career—an event that very nearly happened to Golden Dawn founder William Wynn Westcott. Thus, it was critically important that the real names of magical lodge members, the location of lodge meetings, and the nature of the teachings be kept utterly secret. Again, the traditional security devices and the careful screening of potential members helped to provide the safety that lodge members needed to pursue their double lives as ordinary citizens and as magicians.

For modern magical lodges, neither of these reasons is a major factor in issues of secrecy. Few lodges of any kind can afford to offer significant financial benefits these days, and the climate of opinion about magic in most Western countries has relaxed to a degree that the Golden Dawn's founders could scarcely have imagined. Still, a certain level of caution can be wise. It's not a good idea to be too public about where a magical lodge meets, if only to keep clear of the kind of religious fanatics who like to imagine Satanic cultists under every bush and tree. It's sensible to screen potential members

to be sure that they can work with those who already belong, and it's polite (at least) not to allow lodge membership lists to become public property. Still, as we'll see, the issues that have become central to the question of lodge secrecy deal with the inner side of the lodge system, not its outer manifestations. It is in the realms of symbolism and magic that secrecy has its primary function in a lodge setting nowadays.

Here again, though, there are practical aspects. To a very real extent, the traditional secrecy that shrouds lodge rituals can be seen as a way of helping to reinforce the effect of those rituals by preserving the element of surprise. When we read a novel or watch a movie, the workings of the plot hold our attention precisely because we don't know how the story is going to turn out. In the same way, the events of a lodge initiation hold the candidate's attention more effectively if he or she doesn't know what is going to happen next. Equally, the sheer uncertainty faced by a candidate who knows nothing about the ritual can be a valuable help in creating the sense of apprehension and disorientation that plays such an important part in the workings of lodge ritual. In these ways, secrecy serves as another help to the ritual dramatist, another way in which the initiatory play of symbols can be made more effective.

From a magical perspective, secrecy has uses that are equally practical. As mentioned in the last chapter, most magical lodges conceal key elements of their symbolism as a way of keeping the energies of their egregors out of the hands of other lodges and magicians. Similarly, technical methods of magic that would be dangerous in the hands of the inadequately trained—and there are such techniques, although not as many as some systems have claimed—can be kept safe by means of the methods of lodge secrecy.

But the uses of secrecy do not end with these purely practical applications. There is a sense in which secrecy serves not merely as a help to the drama of symbol, or as a protection for magical energies and methods, but as a (or even *the*) central factor in the lodge system as a whole. To understand how this works, we'll need to take a much closer look at secrecy, and at certain functions of communication that very few people notice.

Breaking the Web of Communication

These functions come out of the role that communication has in constructing and maintaining the way we experience the world. A remarkable amount of the communication that goes on around us every day has this as its central point. The small talk that fills up time at social gatherings is an obvious example. There might seem to be little point in chatting about the weather, say, or the less controversial aspects of politics, business, and daily life, but this sort of talk communicates something crucial. It says, in essence, "I live in the same world you do," and the world in question is one defined by a particular map of reality, a particular way of looking at the universe of human experience.

The same process of defining the world takes place in other ways, some of which are far less visible to the inattentive mind. For instance, we rarely think about the multiple messages passed on by clothing, the information content of posture and facial expression, or the things communicated by the design of manufactured products that range from safety pins to cities. Still, these and many other forms of communication can have a potent influence on the way people understand themselves and their world. Like all other human creations, each has its roots in the world view of those who create it, and reflects that world view with a high degree of precision. This is even more true of forms of communication that are deliberately designed to promote a particular view of things—the way that modern advertising, for instance, supports a reality map in which manufactured material objects are seen as the natural source of inner states such as happiness and love.

We thus live in the midst of an extraordinarily complex web of communication, one that expresses and reinforces specific ways of thinking about the world. This is not necessarily a problem, but it can easily become one whenever the presence and effects of the web are unnoticed. To absorb the web's promptings without noticing them, after all, is also to absorb the web's implied world view without being aware of the process—and what we do not notice we usually cannot counteract.

The very common habit of passivity toward our own inner lives, a habit that is responsible for a very large proportion of

human misery, shows itself clearly here. It's one thing to accept a map of the world as a useful convenience, one that can be replaced when it's no longer useful, and quite another to accept it unthinkingly as the only map there is—or, worse, to mistake the map for the world itself.

This last attitude is the most common human reaction to mental maps, and the pressure of the web of communication is one of the primary forces involved in bringing this about. (The effects of powerful cultural egregors and the dogmatic habits of education common to most cultures account for most of the remainder.) The stronger and more consistent the messages of the web, the more difficult it is to step out of the map and understand that the world can be seen in a different way. In small towns, committees, and other closed settings where it is at its strongest, this effect routinely creates a deadening (and at times deadly) uniformity of thought.

One obvious approach to dealing with this difficulty is to find ways to break out of the web of communication, at least temporarily. Methods of doing this play a role in nearly all systems of spiritual work. Perhaps the simplest of these, and certainly one of the most common, is solitude. If you isolate yourself from all human communication, you remove yourself from its reality-defining effects. This is one of the reasons why mystics and magicians routinely spend a great deal of time alone, and—in cultures that haven't cut down and paved over most of their natural environment—why they often seek out wild areas, where the presence and the implicit messages of human culture are effectively absent.

Solitude, though, has its drawbacks, and very few people are cut out for a hermit's lifestyle. To go beyond this and achieve independence from the reality-defining effects of the web while still spending time with one's fellow human beings is considerably more difficult. Human beings are social animals, and the subtle processes of verbal and nonverbal communication bind human societies together at levels we share with our animal ancestors, levels that are rarely open to reason or even to consciousness. Breaking completely with the web while staying in society tends, therefore, to have drastic consequences.

Mental illness is probably the most common example of this. Many kinds of madness cause (or are caused by) breaches in the web of communication. Those who suffer from major mental illness cannot take part in the web effectively, either because they perceive the world in a radically different way than others or because the subtle channels of communication linking them to the web are clogged by various kinds of "static." Most observers notice this and react to it below the surface of consciousness, at the level of herd instinct. This gives rise to the discomfort, hostility, and open fear most people have toward the mentally ill. It also causes the terrifying sense of isolation that is one of the most destructive features of madness.

There are subtler ways to breach the web, though, and one of them is the way of secrecy. To have a secret is to keep some item of information outside the web, so that it does not become a part of the map of the world shared by the rest of society. A gap is opened in the web, defined by the secret, and as long as the secret is kept the gap remains. If the secret in question is something painful or destructive, and if secrecy is imposed by force rather than freely chosen, this kind of breach in the web can be just as damaging as the kind opened by madness. If secrecy is freely chosen and freely kept, on the other hand, it becomes a tool for reshaping awareness, one with remarkable powers and a range of constructive uses.

As long as the secret is kept, the one who keeps it stands at the edge of the web of communication, neither wholly in it nor wholly out of it. He or she can participate in the web, but never completely or unthinkingly, lest the secret be revealed. At the same time, the map defined by the web does not contain the secret, and its incompleteness stands exposed. It thus becomes harder to confuse the map with the world it claims to represent, and easier to think one's own thoughts despite the pressure of collective consciousness. By the simple fact of its secrecy, a secret forms a link between its keeper and the realities that the web does not include; a bridge to a space between worlds.

It also serves as a powerful method for developing a special kind of conscious awareness, one that is among the major tools of magical training. Keeping a secret requires keeping a continual watch over what one is saying and how one is saying it, but the

process of keeping such a watch has effects that reach far beyond that of simply keeping something secret. Through this kind of constant background attention certain kinds of self-knowledge become not only possible, but, in many situations, inevitable. Furthermore, this same kind of attention can be directed to other areas of one's life, extending the reach of conscious awareness into fields that are too often left to the more automatic levels of our minds.

Finally, the discipline of secrecy is an important tool for developing the will, which is one of the prime factors in all magical work. The effort necessary to keep watch over what one says, to choose not to communicate something and then stick by that choice, builds strength of will in much the same way that regular exercise builds muscles. As the will develops, magical work becomes easier and more effective, and a host of more ordinary matters become far less problematic. There are very few things in the world that will stand up to the force of a steady, determined, focused will. Secrecy is only one of the ways in which the will can be developed and trained, but it is an important one, and one that is worth exploring by anyone interested in systematic magical training.

The Art of Secrecy

Used in this way, secrecy is a method of reshaping the self, a discipline that transforms the relationship between the individual and the world of experience. In certain senses, it focuses attention on what it conceals, and so—paradoxically—it reveals what it hides, and hides what it reveals. It's for this reason that many fraternal lodges have made quite an issue of the fact that they have and keep secrets, while pointedly saying nothing about the secrets themselves. The presence of the secret, like a hole in the fabric of social reality, draws attention in a way no ordinary approach to publicity could possibly do.

This inner side of secrecy, far more than its practical side, is what has made it such an important factor in the traditional lodge system. This perspective also provides the foundation for the broader symbolic use of secrecy in magical lodge work, a subject we'll be discussing in detail a little further on.

The use of secrecy as a method for transforming awareness also casts a useful light on a feature of the traditional lodge system that has often puzzled nonmembers in modern times—the sheer unimportance of the things that are kept secret in most lodge organizations. We tend to assume, under the sway of our somewhat simple-minded modern attitudes toward knowledge, that the only reason to keep something secret is if the secret thing itself is of great importance. In most lodges, by contrast, the things that initiates bind themselves to keep secret are rarely of any great significance outside the lodge setting. Typically, they are nothing more than the passwords, signs, symbols, and grips of the various degrees, along with the details of the ritual work, the private business of the lodge, and, in magical lodges, a certain amount of occult theory and practice (which, as often as not, comes from published sources). It's rare that any of these things are of interest or importance to anyone but lodge members. Why, then, the immense stress on keeping them secret?

This sort of question has led some to see the traditional lodge system as a matter of sheer make-believe, in which lodge members pretend to have and guard precious secrets the way children pretend to be pirates or spies. Others, more suspicious or less skeptical, have assumed that there had to be fire underneath so much smoke, and have claimed that the true inner secrets of various lodges had to do with political conspiracy, criminal activities, or out-and-out devil worship. There was an entire literature on the nineteenth-century political fringe devoted to such claims, and substantial traces of the same thing can be found in some extremist circles today. More cynical observers have interpreted the entire lodge phenomenon as a fraud in which members are lured in by the promise of profound mysteries and kept in through unwillingness to admit to themselves that they were duped.

All of these points of view, understandable as they are, have the same mistake as their starting point. It's natural, given modern attitudes toward knowledge, to think that things are or should be kept secret because they are important. It can be much harder for us to realize that the equation can be made to work in the other direction: that things can be made important—not simply made to look important, but actually made important—by being kept secret.

Yet this is precisely what is central to the lodge system's use of secrecy. Something that is secret—a symbol, a word, a gesture—possesses a context and a significance different in almost every way from the context and significance the same thing would have if it were not a secret. By being made secret, it leaves the realm of ordinary knowledge and communication and enters into a realm of shadow-knowledge and shadow-communication made up of what is unknown and unsaid. By having and keeping the secret, by knowing what not to say and how not to say it, the perceptive keeper of a secret can enter into this same realm, and stand on the border between knowledge and the unknown. He or she also can learn to communicate with other keepers of the same secret by way of a shadow-language of “unsaying;” a way of speaking in which shared secrets provide a common ground of reference that is never mentioned but which defines and redefines the meaning of everything that's said.

This aspect of lodge secrecy moves deep into the realm of magic (although few of the fraternal orders seem to have noticed or talked about the inner side of secrecy in any detail). In fraternal lodge practice, though, secrecy was put to work with an astonishing level of precision and subtlety. Each degree of the major orders had its own secrets, and the secrets of one degree often reinterpret the secrets of earlier degrees, layering secret meaning on secret meaning. In certain degrees, one or more of the symbols are public, but their interpretations are secret. In others, the same symbol is public when used in one way and secret when used in another. In these ways and more, lodge organizations wove different forms of secrecy through the various degrees like threads in a tapestry.

The paramount role of secrecy in the lodge system led to the emergence of an entire culture of secrecy in fraternal and magical orders alike. Secrecy became an art form and an esthetic stance in lodge organizations, and shaped the lodge system in a dizzying variety of ways. On a personal scale, nearly all the orders had secret signs of recognition by which one member could identify another without anyone else being the wiser (despite the fact that lodge members routinely wore items proclaiming their lodge affiliations, and rarely made any secret of their membership). On a much larger

scale, there are lodge halls dating from the turn of the last century where the outside structure of the building was deliberately designed to mislead the viewer about the arrangement of rooms and spaces inside, and where the corridors inside were arranged to lead the unwary visitor around in circles or right back out another door, unless he or she knew just what door to open or which turn to take.

There is, certainly, a substantial element of sheer play in these manifestations of lodge secrecy, but it is play with a serious purpose, and with profound magical potentials as well. On its own terms, it reinforced the culture of secrecy in lodge circles, and thus helped strengthen each of the effects of secrecy we've discussed in this chapter. On another level, though, it provides a place to begin to talk about the deeper symbolic implications of secrecy—a subject which will need to be carefully explored in order to open up the full possibilities of the lodge system as a tool for the practice of magic.

Secrecy, Fact, and Experience

As we've seen, the roles of secrecy in the lodge system have their roots in the historical context of the first proto-lodges, where secrecy was a necessity, as well as in the shadowy underworld of medieval Hermeticism and magic, where it was even more desperately needed. Even here, though, there were subtler factors involved.

The ideal of the free flow of information is so much a part of our modern culture that it can be hard to realize just how different attitudes toward knowledge once were. During the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the realization that knowledge is a source of power led most people to believe that any really important knowledge was naturally secret, and should be kept that way. Craft guilds treated the methods of their trade as secrets to be passed on only to qualified apprentices. Scholars concealed their most important discoveries by means of codes and anagrams. The use of Latin as the language of scholarship and learning was at least partly motivated by the fact that most people couldn't read it. In the same way that the medieval world was divided up politically into a patchwork of kingdoms and feudal domains, it was divided up intellectually into an equally fragmented assortment of secret or half-secret realms of knowledge.

It's true that this way of handling information was partly motivated by the same kind of thinking that leads modern soft-drink companies to keep their secret formulas in triple-locked safes. On the other hand, it was also motivated by a radically different way of thinking about knowledge; a way with roots in some of the same traditions of philosophy that gave rise to Western magical thought.

In modern times, we often think of knowledge as a matter of specific facts; bits of information to be learned and taught, written and read, assembled into structures of meaning and taken apart if the structures don't work out. Most of our systems of education (despite fifty years of rhetoric about "relevance" and the like) are designed on this principle. Children are taught disconnected snippets of information—dates and events in history, laws and examples in science, authors and summaries in literature, and so on—and regurgitate these one at a time onto multiple-choice test paper with a #2 pencil. The modern way of thinking about the world's non-physical aspects plays an important part in these habits of thought, as does the habit of seeing all symbols as arbitrary and definable signs (as discussed in Chapter Three). If meaning and interpretation are purely a matter of personal opinion, and if symbolic experiences can all be defined and understood in cut-and-dried terms, it makes sense to set all of these aside and concentrate on the objective reality of fact.

The problem with this view is that the idea of the "objectivity" of fact—of any fact—is an assumption that ducks a whole series of difficult questions. First of all, the only way we can know a fact is as an experience in human consciousness. In other words, what we perceive is not the thing "out there," but rather its reflection in consciousness, a reflection that passes through all the complex filters and processes of human awareness and is no more objective than a dream, a thought, or the experienced meaning of a symbol. We know nothing for certain about what may or may not exist "out there," in the objective reality imagined by modern thought. All we know is the world of our experience. We can compare our experiences of things to each other by way of memory, and to our experiences of communications from other people by way of various symbolic systems such as language, but the mental models we can build

out of these comparisons are as close as we can come to the essentially imaginary world of "objective fact."

Worse, the bits of information that make up knowledge in the usual modern sense of the world are not even matters of direct experience, but (in most cases) symbolic patterns of language that are used to stand for some highly complex collection of experiences. They inevitably contain—usually without saying so—the very realm of meanings and interpretations that attention to cold, hard facts is supposed to banish. Consider, for example, a statement such as "Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492." These few words serve as a kind of shorthand for vast constellations of human experience, past and present, and they do so from a very particular viewpoint—a viewpoint which is certainly neither that of Columbus (who would have been startled by this spelling of his name), nor his sailors, nor that of the native people of the islands he reached. "America" itself is a concept that didn't even exist until many years after Columbus' time, and its current meanings are as much a matter of myth and propaganda as of history or geography. The idea that Columbus discovered this complicated thing in 1492 also depends on a highly problematic sense of the word "discover," since the continents in question had actually been discovered thousands of years earlier by Siberian tribes crossing what are now the Bering Straits, and had already been reached from Europe by Leif Ericsson in the eleventh century (and possibly by others earlier still).

Examples of this sort could be multiplied almost endlessly, but the point has been made. "Facts" of this sort are not without their uses. As a shorthand for talking about certain common aspects of our experience of the world, they have a definite value. This is especially true in the sciences, which deal with those aspects of sensory experience that can most easily be generalized in this way. To say "light travels at a speed of 186,282 miles per second" is to sum up an enormous number of human experiences in a very simple and useful form. To pretend that all of human experience can be communicated in this way, though, is jumping to a conclusion the evidence doesn't support—and to claim that these shorthand generalizations are in some way more real than the experiences they sum up, as too many modern people tend to do, is to stand the world on its head.

“Knowing About” and “Knowing”

In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, by contrast, the difference between fact and experience was much better understood. For those willing to look for it, there was plenty of knowledge to be had—knowledge of crafts and trades; knowledge of geography, history and legend; knowledge brought back by pilgrims and Crusaders from distant lands, scraps of classical knowledge that had survived the fall of Rome—but very little of it had been reduced to facts in the sense we’ve been discussing. The medieval mind, to a very great extent, understood that the only way to learn something was to experience it personally.

It was this central perception that lay behind the medieval habit of understanding knowledge as naturally secret. In a very real way, this reflected the realities of the situation. The way one learned about shoemaking in the Middle Ages, for example, was to enter directly into the experience of making shoes. One had to learn the feel and smell of leather, to slowly develop the skills of eye and hand that the craft demanded, to pay attention to the rules of thumb devised by more experienced shoemakers—the only “knowledge,” in our sense, involved—and then to adapt them to meet the constraints of one’s own skill, the wishes of one’s customers, and the fashions of the time. After an apprenticeship along these lines, a shoemaker might well know a very great deal about shoes and their making, but he or she would be able to communicate it to others only by way of the same slow process. In a deep and very real sense, that knowledge was a secret.

The shoemakers’ craft was typical of the secrets of the medieval guilds. Despite all the cultural changes that separate that time from this, the same distinction still holds true of many kinds of knowledge today. To return to an example used already, it’s possible to read any number of written descriptions of sex and still have only the dimmest idea of what making love is actually like. A gap remains between the event and the description, the experience and the “facts.”

These two kinds of knowledge—the kind that can be communicated in the form of “facts,” in the modern sense of the word, and

the kind that must be learned through experience—have a complex relationship to each other. They are both ways of knowing a thing, but they are not the same, and they can't necessarily be converted into each other. It's for this reason, among others, that a system of education designed to communicate facts has had a very difficult time meeting the needs of a society that typically requires not facts but skills.

There are various ways of talking about the distinction we need to make here, but it may be clearest to speak of these two kinds of knowledge as "knowing about," on the one hand, and "knowing," on the other. To "know about" something is to know the facts—the verbal summaries of experience—associated with it, while to "know" something is to actually encounter it thoroughly as an object of personal experience.

It's a curious fact—that is, a convenient verbal summary of experience—that in our culture, it's often the person who knows the most about some subject who has the most difficulty coming to know it in a deeper and more useful experiential sense. The "facts" can summarize experience, but they can also distort it or even hide it from sight, and so someone who knows nothing about a subject but has an open mind and open eyes will commonly catch on much more quickly than someone whose head is crammed with abstract information on the subject. The craftworker's traditional contempt for "book learning" has much of its source here. Much of the lodge system's use of secrecy, too, springs from this same source. Just as with anything else, it's possible to encounter the symbolism of a lodge or an initiation in either of these two ways: to know about it, or to know it; to learn verbal summaries of its meaning, or to experience its meaning personally; to treat it as a sign, in other words, or to treat it as a symbol.

It's no accident that we've found our way back to this distinction once again—nor that we've come to it by a different route. That route was quite probably the one taken by the proto-lodges of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as they developed their own ways of thinking about symbols and meanings, knowledge and secrecy, drawing on the craftsman's experience of practical knowledge that could be learned but not effectively passed on in words.

Their path led them to the most effective way to keep symbols from being turned into signs and “knowing about” from getting in the way of “knowing”—the way of secrecy. If the verbal formulations we call “facts” (which the guilds of the Middle Ages called, significantly, “secrets” or “mysteries”) were kept hidden from the ordinary web of communication, those who came to learn a craft or experience a symbolism did so without the interfering factor of “knowing about” the subject in advance.

Those formulations could be, and were, supplied to the apprentice or the initiate after he or she had encountered the relevant experiences on his or her own. This is another reason why most lodge initiations finish up with a set of lectures explaining what the ceremony and its symbolism are about. It’s important to recognize, though, that these explanations are meant to supplement the initiate’s own experiences, not to replace them. They provide a useful way of expressing and talking about the personal, experiential knowledge that comes from direct contact with symbolic ritual, and this has its uses in a lodge setting. Still, the secret, personal side of the equation is by far the more important.

The Place Between the Worlds

To a great extent, the web of communication, the use of secrecy to step outside it, and the difference between facts and experience provide the keys to the whole traditional lodge system, and make up the context in which the elements of that system work and make sense. By receiving lodge secrets in initiation rituals, lodge members participate in a web of communication all their own. They use a map of the universe different from the one common to the rest of their culture, and they learn to experience the world in ways that other people do not. All the various aspects of the lodge system—structural, symbolic, and magical—can be seen as ways to make this experience possible, and to keep it from being swallowed up in the web of facts and assumptions that defines our culture’s understanding of the world.

This is the deeper perspective that underlies the art and culture of lodge secrecy in all its applications. This perspective has had its

most intense development in magical lodges, but it has been recognized and used to some extent by fraternal lodge theorists and ritual designers, who have often stressed the role of the lodge as a realm in secret opposition to the society outside, a realm where the world is understood in a different way and where relationships between people follow different rules.

To see the lodge and the outside world as simple opposites, though, is to miss the core of what's going on, and to lose track of the wider applications of the system. It's more useful to think of the lodge as a middle ground between the realm of everyday life and another realm, one where ordinary maps don't work and ordinary rules don't apply. In fraternal lodges, this other realm defines a way of facing the universe that is more honest and more effective than the muddle of self-interest and unthinking reactions that so many people use as the basis for their lives. In effect, then, the fraternal lodge exists halfway between the ordinary world and Utopia. It allows lodge members to think about the role of ethical and social ideals in their own lives from outside the straitjacket of common cultural assumptions. This can have explosive results, and not only for the individual. It's no accident that all but two of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Freemasons.

Magical lodges apply this same principle to the inner life, and take it a good deal further. Here, the lodge holds a position between the realm of ordinary reality, as defined by the dominant culture, and those realms of human experience that have no place in the commonly accepted map of the world. In the cultures of the modern West, then, the magical lodge exists halfway between the world of matter—or, more accurately, the particular set of sensory experiences that we have been taught to interpret as a world of matter—and the world of immaterial patterns, powers, and intelligences that form the foundation for magical action. Set between these two, it mediates between them and helps the initiate learn to make the transition from one to the other and back again.

This last point is crucial, since it's not that much of a gain simply to replace one map with another. Every mental map is of limited value because it represents a finite attempt to comprehend an infinite universe. Furthermore, since the lodge system operates on a part-

time basis, lodge members who abandon the old web and its map for a new one would find themselves hard put to communicate with anyone except other lodge members. The value of the lodge experience is that it teaches the initiate to move from one web and map to the other and back again, using the lessons of secrecy and the processes of ritual as bridges that span the gap from world to world. In the process, the initiate has the opportunity to learn the limitations of both and to begin to grasp the extraordinary potentials of the human power to define and redefine the world.

In the construction of this space between the worlds, secrecy again plays the most important role, and not only because it provides the most important tool in the “standard kit” for breaching the web and stepping outside the limits of the accepted reality map. It also has a protective function on several different levels. To challenge core elements of the way a culture defines the world is to play with dynamite, after all. There’s almost always a risk that those who benefit from the status quo will respond to too forceful a challenge with ridicule, condemnation, or violence. Secrecy helps prevent this from becoming a problem, partly by making both the challenge and the challengers hard to locate, but also by making the threat look far smaller than it may actually be.

On another level, a challenge of this sort remains effective only as long as the wider culture has not yet evolved ways to neutralize it. Nearly any idea can be absorbed or redefined into harmlessness. For example, observe the way that the challenging insights of ecology have been watered down into a sales pitch for “green” consumer goods, or how the sacred ordeal of walking on hot coals has been utilized as a tool for corporate training seminars. Most insights have to face this fate eventually, but secrecy is one of the ways that a challenging approach to the universe can be kept challenging, and thus useful in the work of self-transformation.

Finally, secrecy is also a form of protective misdirection. Here, too, it helps guard the place between the worlds. As we saw earlier, the secrets of a lodge—fraternal or magical—are really nothing of importance. The experience of secrecy, and the effects of the experience, are what is important. This distinction itself, though, is obvious only to those who have passed through the experience and

learned from it. Thus, paradoxically, the secrets of a lodge can be stolen, circulated, or even published without breaching the real secret of the lodge. The real secret—the place between the worlds that is defined by the lodge's symbolism and egregor, and entered through its rituals and teachings—can be communicated only by the experience of initiation, the discipline of lodge work, and the practice of secrecy. The particular secrets of any given lodge, while they make this real secret possible, also help make it invisible by directing attention toward themselves and away from what is actually important.

Secrecy and the Transformative Path

This last way of looking at lodge secrecy opens up perspectives that go beyond the realms of practical magic into theurgy, and from there into mysticism and the high reaches of the spiritual quest that is at the heart of the Western magical tradition. If the secrets that are communicated in magical lodges are of different kinds, as we've seen, and if some of them are secrets not because someone decides to hide them but because, by their nature, they conceal themselves from the unprepared awareness, then the process of lodge secrecy also touches on some of the inner facets of human consciousness—and of the universe of human experience itself.

These facets range from the obvious up to the innermost mysteries of the world. A virgin, once again, is ignorant of certain central aspects of the human experience of sexuality, not because those things have been concealed by someone, but because understanding them is possible only through the experience of lovemaking. Similarly, a person who has never struggled to focus his or her thoughts in the first stages of magical meditation, or who has never felt the surge of intangible power that awakens life in the formal patterns of a magical ritual, is ignorant of Western high magic—and neither books nor whispered secrets can cure that ignorance. Similarly, the great unifying realizations that come further on in the process of magical training are realities to be experienced, not facts to be learned. Until they have been experienced, they remain as secret as anything can possibly be. It's for this reason that magicians

have said that the great secrets of magic could be shouted from the rooftops without anyone being the wiser for it.

Reflections such as these have given rise to an entire tradition of spiritual thought called *apophatic mysticism*. The word “apophasis” comes from Greek, and literally means “speaking away” or “denying.” Where the ordinary theologian, or even the ordinary mystic, might describe the transcendent by trying to say what it is, apophatic mystics recognize the limits of human language and human maps, and talk instead about what the divine is not. It’s as though, confronted with a barrel of apples and told to pick one, they point to one apple after another, saying “not that one,” until there’s only one left. Then, of course, they point to that last apple and say “not that one either”—because it’s precisely when everything you can point to and everything you can name is set aside that the deeper, more secret reality comes into sight.

There are many such secrets in ourselves, and in the universe we perceive. The more attention we pay to either of these two vast realms, the more what we think we know gives way to the unknown and the inexpressible. The universe within us and the universe around us, the microcosm and the macrocosm of Hermetic tradition, are always bringing forth things that do not and cannot fit into any map of reality, however clever or comprehensive that map may be. Each culture learns to give names to these secrets and fit them into culturally invented categories, or simply to ignore their presence altogether. But the secrets remain, and they have their effects whether or not we choose to pay attention to them.

In every culture, it is the business of the magician to pay attention to these secret things, so that he or she can learn to shape and direct them in accordance with will. In every culture, equally, it is the business of the mystic to pay attention to them, so that he or she can transcend the limitations of habitual thought and feeling and reach for a more direct contact with the limitless reality that gives them birth. In the high magical traditions of the Western world, these two paths are combined into a single broad approach to the hidden realms of human experience, and for hundreds of years that approach has been closely linked to the methods of the traditional lodge system.

This is the central and, in many ways, the most important reason the art and discipline of secrecy has a place in the modern magical lodge. By working with the formal secrets of a lodge, the initiate learns to understand secrets and secrecy and to recognize the deeper secrets he or she already knows. Joining others in secrecy to create a magical lodge as a space between worlds. From this, he or she learns to make use of another space; one far more powerful and far more secret—the space of human awareness itself, set between the world of ordinary sensory experience and the realm of transcendent meaning.

Chapter Six

The Order of the Athanor

The material covered in the first five chapters of this book provides the foundations for the use of the lodge system in a magical context. By itself, though, this material gives only a fairly abstract idea of how a magical lodge is put together and how it operates. In the next six chapters, we'll move from theory to practice, and explore the structure, rituals, and operation of a sample magical lodge system in detail.

This could be done using materials drawn from one or more lodges that actually exist, of course, but there are good reasons why such an approach is less useful than it may seem. For one thing, no single lodge organization uses the elements of the lodge system in a way that would be most useful at this point, and a hodgepodge of examples from different systems would be more likely to create confusion than clarity. Furthermore, many of the best examples of lodge ritual and structure are, sensibly enough, still in use, and it would be inappropriate to publish the secret materials of any existing order. Specifically, as an initiate of several lodges, my own obligations—which I consider fully binding—bar me from using the examples I know best.

There is another factor as well, and in some ways it is the most important of all. One of the major sources of confusion and mystification in the history of the lodge system has been the habit of claiming that a valid lodge system must descend from some ancient

and mysterious source. This is nonsense, and it should be kept in mind that the lodges that have made these claims most forcefully have often been the ones whose “ancient origins” turn out to be the most obviously fraudulent. (The Golden Dawn, again, is one of the classic examples.)

It’s perfectly possible to come up with an entirely new set of lodge rituals and symbols, and use these as the foundation of a valid and powerful magical lodge. In fact, this has generally been how magical lodges come into being, despite all claims of “ancient origins.” For this reason as well as the others just mentioned, the next six chapters will look over the shoulder of an imaginary lodge designer as she goes about the process of creating the sample lodge system we’ll be studying. We’ll examine how the elements of that system are pieced together out of a specific purpose and symbolism, combined with the “standard kit” of lodge techniques. This half-fictional process will serve two functions. First of all, it will provide a clearer view of the traditional lodge system at work, and allow some often-murky aspects of the system to be seen more readily. Second, it will offer a first look at how you can create a complete magical lodge system, of any kind, for any purpose, from the ground up (a subject we’ll discuss in more detail in Chapter Twelve).

One other point may be worth making. Since Israel Regardie published the Golden Dawn rituals, the magical community has had one extremely powerful and effective magical lodge system, in fairly complete form, for use as an example and a reference. In some ways, though, the Golden Dawn system is not the best possible example for the modern lodge designer. Its designers had an enormous background of experience in magical and fraternal lodges—William Wynn Westcott, in particular, had something to do with nearly every magical or quasi-magical order in Great Britain—and through their connections in the world of Victorian lodges they had access to information and material resources few modern magicians can muster. They created a lodge around a demanding system of high complexity. As such, it is well worth studying, but may not be practical for everyone to imitate.

It’s crucial to remember that not all lodges are, or should be, as complicated or as demanding as the Golden Dawn, and that many

of the most important innovations the Golden Dawn brought to the magical lodge system can be used equally well in a far less complex lodge organization. In fact, something simpler to design and easier to work will generally produce better results. Because of this, the lodge system we'll be exploring in this book will fall toward the other end of the spectrum of complexity, and show the workings of the magical lodge system in something close to its simplest form. Readers who are interested in designing a magical lodge can compare the one given here to the Golden Dawn system in all its intricate detail, and choose the point they want their own lodge to occupy in the space between.

Purpose as Foundation

Before we begin, it's worth recalling the basic definition of a magical lodge given in Chapter Two: a group of people who work together to accomplish a common magical purpose using traditional lodge methods. The three parts of this definition are the three ingredients that need to be combined to bring a magical lodge into being. The first, the group of people, can be brought together in any number of ways, and we'll be discussing some of those in a later chapter. The third, the methods of the traditional lodge system, can be learned by taking part in a working lodge or by reading this book (or, best of all, by doing both). It's the second—the common magical purpose—that is the most crucial, though. Creating a magical lodge is a magical process, and as every experienced magician knows, the first and most important step in any magical working is the act of deciding what exactly the working is intended to do.

What purpose, then, might our imaginary lodge designer have? There are many potential reasons to organize a magical lodge, some more specific or more complex than others, and we'll be discussing a number of them in detail later on. For the moment, though, it may be worth keeping in mind that such purposes need not be particularly mysterious or difficult. One entirely valid purpose, for instance, might be simply to explore the potentials of the magical lodge system. Another might be to provide a community and a support network for working magicians in some particular

area, since students and practitioners of magic often have few opportunities to work together, to learn from one another's successes and failures, and to "talk shop" with people who know the difference between a banishing pentagram and a toasted bagel.

Our lodge designer, let's say, has both of these goals in mind. As an experienced magician, she knows better than to rush through the process of defining the purpose of her order-to-be. For days or, if necessary, weeks, she turns the possibilities over and over again in her mind, noting her ideas in her magical journals, and using divination or visionary work where appropriate to further the process of reaching clarity. Finally, she writes: "The Order will exist for the purpose of creating a common ground in which magicians of many different paths will meet together in harmony and explore the possibilities of the lodge system."

If this is the central purpose of the Order, certain other things follow from it. A lodge that is intended to provide a community for magicians and a framework for exploration will probably need to have few degrees—or, better still, only one. To use an extended series of degrees would tend to create distinctions among the lodge members and hinder the growth of community. It would also be hard to create such a series without, in the process, defining some specific course of magical development—a potential source of difficulty if magicians of different traditions will be joining the lodge. Similarly, the system of magic used in the lodge's ritual work will need to be compatible with the various traditions of magical work practiced in the local area. The symbolism used in the lodge system could be either familiar to most of these traditions or largely foreign to them, but it should not have elements that have radically different meanings in different systems. Qualifications for membership should be kept simple to maximize possible membership. In general, all sources of potential conflict between traditions would need to be minimized where possible.

None of these things are impossible to arrange, and some of them are fairly easy. The crucial point, though, is that the purpose of a lodge system influences everything else that will be done in and through the lodge. It is through a clear purpose expressed through all the ramifications of structure, symbolism, and ritual

that a lodge system becomes coherent—and achieving coherence is the first and most critical step toward making an effective magical lodge.

Creating the Symbolism

Some purposes define the symbolism that will be used to express them, others do not. A lodge created for a relatively specific kind of magical work will need to use a symbolism compatible with that work, and the more closely defined the purpose is, the less room there will be for flexibility in the choice of symbols. A lodge founded for the purpose of working with the magical energies of the Holy Grail, for example, will need to draw its symbolism from the Grail legends and related traditional sources. Anything else that's brought in will have to be completely compatible with these. Similarly, a lodge organized to perform sea magic may draw on many sources for its symbols, but all of them will relate to the powers of the sea (or of its ruler, the Moon) in one way or another. On the other hand, a lodge with a purpose that is less precisely focused in magical terms may use a much wider range of resources in putting together its symbolism and imagery.

The purpose our lodge designer has defined for her Order puts it in this latter camp. There are certain limitations—an elitist symbolism like that of kingship, for example, would fit poorly with the Order's purpose—but within these, nearly any magical or mythical symbolism could be put to work as a framework for the Order's activities. In this context, simple personal preference is as valid a basis as any other. Therefore, our designer decides to base the symbolism of her Order on the traditional lore of alchemy.

In doing this, she is on firm and relatively well-traveled ground. The art, craft, and science of alchemy is one of the more neglected branches of the Western esoteric tradition just now, but its philosophical and symbolic riches have long been used in many contexts in the lodge tradition. This is not the place for a thorough discussion of alchemical symbolism and practice, but in the simplest of terms alchemy is the art of assisting Nature to achieve perfection. The quest to transform lesser metals into silver and gold

(nearly the only part of alchemy remembered in modern times) was only one of many aspects of the art. Another very important branch of alchemy was devoted to healing through herbal essences and mineral tinctures. Other branches sought to understand the material world through alchemical geology and meteorology, and devised alchemical approaches to agriculture that were ancestral to modern organic methods. Still others dealt with what we would now call psychology, or went on into the realms of spirituality and the deeper transmutations of the self.

The alchemists of the Middle Ages and Renaissance were, like other scholars of those periods, deeply committed to the tradition of secrecy. Their way of preserving their secrets was to encode them in symbolic terms, using the same ways of emblematic thinking that gave rise to much of the visual symbolism of the lodge system. Surviving alchemical texts, as a result, are full of strange and brilliant images—green lions devouring the Sun, kings and queens making love in pools of water, birds flying up and down in sealed glass vessels, and so on. These images formed the alphabet of one of the world's most complex systems of symbolic communication—one that has been used ever since by people in and out of the Western magical tradition.

Given alchemy as the basis of the Order's symbolism, then, how is this put to work in practice? Our designer pores over books on alchemy, making detailed notes, and then begins the actual process of design.

First comes the core myth of the lodge, the symbolic identity each initiate takes on as a lodge member. The obvious answer, and a good one, is to see the lodge as an alchemical laboratory where the members work together, each contributing his or her own special skills to the performance of the Great Work of transmutation. A subtler answer, and an equally good one, is to see the lodge as an alchemical vessel and the members as the *prima materia*, the ingredients or raw materials of the Work which are to be transmuted by the fires of initiation into the gold of a harmonious lodge. Our designer considers both of these for a time, trying to decide between them, and then realizes that there is no need to do so. Each can play a part in the mythic narrative of the lodge, and the

play of meanings between them will add depth and richness to the lodge symbolism. Coherence does not necessarily mean simple-mindedness, or rule out the use of meaningful paradox! At the same time, a dual myth like this requires careful handling. This is a point that will become a little more obvious when we come to the ritual work of the Order.

Another important decision is the name the Order will have. The special furnace used in traditional alchemy is called an *athanor*. After mulling over several other possibilities, our designer decides that the image of the transmuting fires of the furnace fits best with both the mythic images she has chosen, and so decides on a name: the Order of the Athanor.

Each of these choices defines others, opening up certain possibilities and closing off others. Once the basic decisions are made, much of the rest of the work of design is a matter of working out the implications of what has already been done. Our designer, hitting this phase, quickly fills up several pages with notes. The core symbols of the Order, she sees, will include the athanor itself; the alchemical vessel which is placed upon it; and the Philosopher's Stone, final product of the successful work, which turns lead into gold. The analogy between initiation and alchemical transmutation, which is central to the second, subtler mythic structure, suggests that the standard symbolic ways of talking about the Great Work might also be used as a framework for the initiation itself. She goes back to her alchemical books and finds the classical division of the Work into a black phase of dissolution, a white phase of purification, and a red phase of transformation. These three correspond to Earth, Moon, and Sun, and to the three alchemical principles in every substance, symbolically called Salt, Mercury and Sulfur. These provide her with more symbols, and also suggest that the ritual of initiation should have three phases and three primary officers.

At the end of a few days of work, our designer has a substantial collection of symbols, images, patterns and relationships ready for use. Now she turns to the next phase of the work of lodge design: combining this material with the elements of the traditional lodge system.

The Officers and the Lodge

One fundamental aspect of this task involves settling the number, names and duties of the lodge officers, and assigning them their places in the lodge room. As Chapter Two showed, the standard lodge structure and architecture form an important part of the traditional system, and this provides a template for this part of the design process. Still, the details of the template have to be filled in, and there are choices to be made which can have a significant impact on how the lodge will work out in practice.

Our imaginary lodge designer starts with the officers. The “standard kit” of lodge technique defines certain positions that have to be filled: a presiding officer, a second in command, an officer to make announcements, another to guard the door, one or more to take care of correspondence and money, and so on. Others can be added to fill the needs of ritual. Many lodge organizations derive the titles of their officers from their core mythologies, but there are also certain titles—Master, Warden or Warder, Guardian, Sentinel, Secretary, Treasurer—that are common to many different orders. As our designer considers the possibilities, titles and duties fill several pages of her notebook, and in the end the following offices are defined:

- The Magister, who is the presiding officer of the lodge.
- The Guardian, who is the second officer of the lodge, and who also has charge of the inner door.
- The Herald, whose functions will center on the ritual of initiation.
- The Warder, who makes announcements in lodge.
- The Sentinel, who guards the outer door.

Our designer pauses, considering the question of business officers. A lodge with fewer than fifteen or twenty members can usually get by with a single business officer, combining the functions of secretary and treasurer, while a larger lodge will often need to divide these duties. The largest lodges often have two secretaries, one for correspondence and one to keep track of dues, as well as a treasurer to handle the money directly. Very few magical lodges can expect to

reach this last scale, but our designer is still not sure what size of lodges her Order is likely to contain. Finally, she decides to have both a Scribe and a Treasurer, but to put a sentence in the bylaws allowing small lodges to give both of these jobs to the same person.

Next comes the arrangement of the lodge space, and our designer goes through several drafts before finally coming up with the arrangement shown in Diagram 6-1.

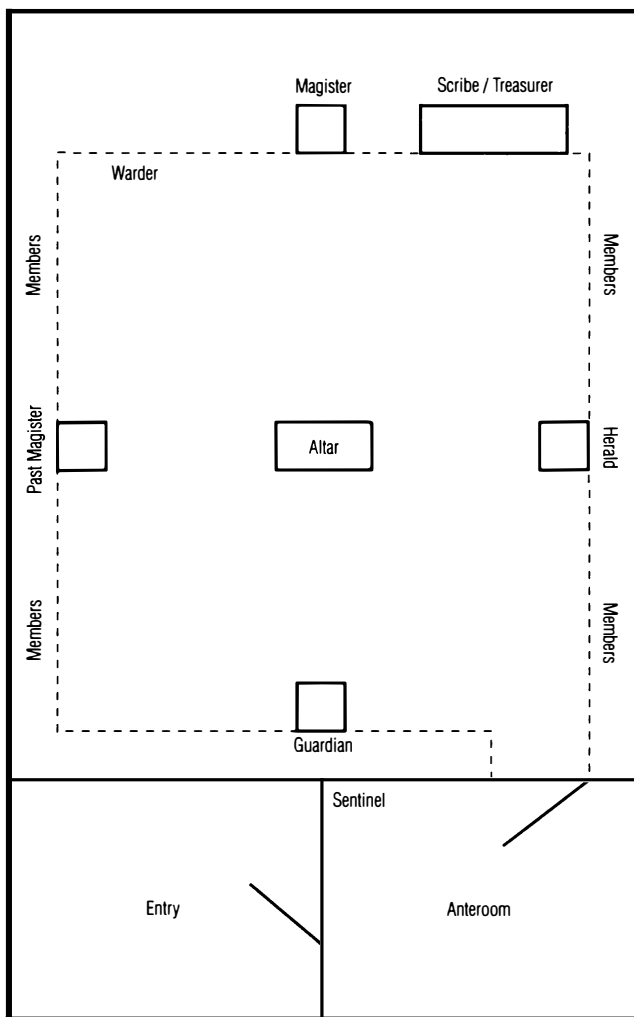


Diagram 6-1

The basic framework of this arrangement, of course, comes from the standard lodge architecture discussed in Chapter Two. This is used here both because it works and because our designer hopes to rent a local fraternal lodge hall for meetings of the new Order. As usual, the presiding officer (here, the Magister) sits at the center of one short side, and the second officer (the Guardian) sits in the facing seat at the center of the other. The Herald will sit at the center of one of the long sides.

That leaves one of the four directions empty, of course, and this brings up a significant issue in design. Of the possible variations of the basic lodge layout, two seem to work well within the symbolic context already set up—a fourfold pattern, in which each of the four directions has a corresponding officer, and a threefold pattern, in which one direction (almost always one of the long sides, and often specifically the one to the presiding officer's left) is left empty. There are certain advantages to either approach. Our designer considers using the threefold pattern, since it harmonizes well with the other threefold symbolism. After some thought, though, she decides that a fourfold pattern will fit better with the opening and closing rituals, which she is already beginning to think through. In order to fill the fourth seat, she borrows a common lodge practice and gives this station to the presiding officer of the previous term. A new title, Past Magister, goes into the list of officers, and the lodge proceeds to take shape. The Warder sits near the Magister, and so do the Treasurer and Scribe. The Sentinel has a seat by the door, and another one inside the anteroom, where he or she sits and keeps watch while ritual work is under way.

A few items of furniture need to be added to fill out the diagram in its basic form. The first and most important is an altar, which will occupy the center of the lodge space. The pattern of the initiation ritual, already taking shape in our designer's mind, requires something to hold up certain objects, and an altar is the most common way of doing this in lodge systems. Tall candlesticks to left and right of the altar will play a part in initiation as well as the lodge opening and closing. A desk for the Scribe and Treasurer and podiums for the officers at the room's four sides complete the design of the lodge.

Filling Out the Symbolism

The Order of the Athanor will require much more than this in terms of symbolism, however. Most of the forms of symbolic expression discussed in Chapter Three will need to be put into the emerging framework before the Order's system will be complete enough to take advantage of the full "standard kit" of lodge technique. Our imaginary designer goes through the list one category at a time, referring back to her books of alchemy at frequent intervals.

Emblems for the Order are easy enough to find, since the alchemical tradition was amazingly rich in visual images. In a lodge context, most emblems are used in initiation rituals, and we'll discuss this side of the Order's symbolism in Chapter Eight. Nearly every lodge organization has at least one public or semi-public emblem as well, and this also has to be chosen with some care. After pondering this for some time and trying out various possibilities, our designer chooses a triangle surrounding a stylized flame, as shown in Diagram 6-2. This hints at the threefold structure of the initiation ritual and its symbolism, while the image of a contained fire also suggests the alchemical athanor itself.

Each of the officers will also need an emblem, which will appear on his or her regalia of office. Here again the symbolism of alchemy plays a dominant role. The three main ritual officers—the Magister, the Guardian, and the Herald—are identified with the three alchemical principles Sulphur, Salt, and Mercury, and their emblems are the traditional

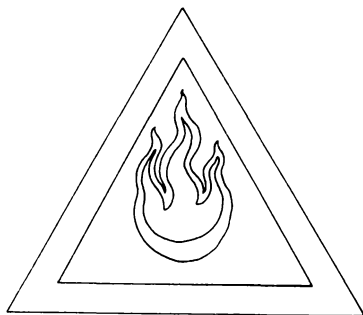


Diagram 6-2

signs for these principles. The Past Magister's emblem is the *Ouroboros*, the serpent biting its own tail, a emblem of circular movement and of eternity. The Warder's emblem is a staff, the Sentinel's a sword, the Scribe's an open book, and the Treasurer's a key—all straightforward references to their functions in the lodge, which is one entirely valid (and very common) source of emblems. These emblems are shown in Diagram 6-3.

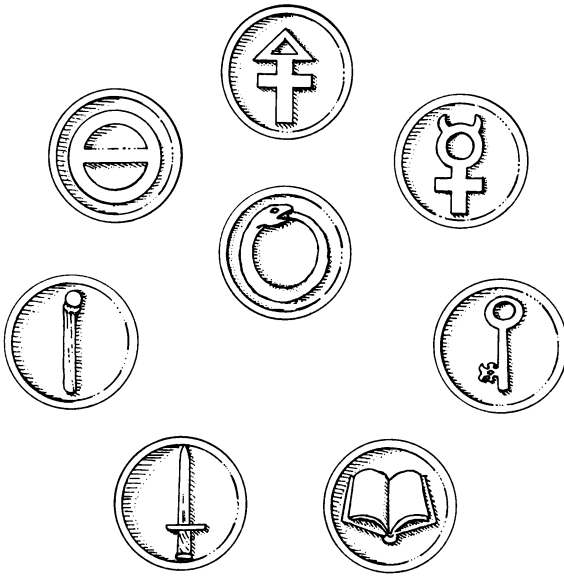


Diagram 6-3

Words, again, are largely an element of the Order's ritual work, but there are a few symbolic words that can be dealt with usefully on their own. The most important of these are the lodge passwords. In most lodge organizations, there are two classes of passwords—term passwords, which are changed at regular intervals, and permanent passwords, which have important symbolic roles and remain the same from one term to the next. Orders with more than one degree typically have a password for each. Since the Order of the Athanor will have only one degree, though, only one permanent password will be needed. Our designer considers several possibilities, and then chooses one: *Lapis*, the Latin word for stone, and the usual term for the Stone of the Wise in alchemical jargon.

Another verbal symbol she considers is the term used for the lodge itself. Lodges have been called an astonishing number of things over the history of the lodge system—Temples, Castles, Granges, Courts, Tribes, Grottoes, Unions, Cantons, Sanctorums, Assemblies, Camps, Councils, Fortresses, Sanctuaries, Valleys, Encampments, Chapters, and Consistories are only a few examples. Our designer toys with several ideas, and then decides that "Lodge" will do as well as any of them.

Colors are another thing the alchemical literature supplies in detail. The three principal colors—red, black, and white—are assigned respectively to the Magister, the Guardian, and the Herald. The symbolic color of the Past Magister, appropriately enough, is gold. The Warder, Scribe, and Treasurer, who sit at the Magister's end of the room, can also wear red, while the Sentinel can wear black for similar reasons.

The stations of the officers in the four quarters will be marked with the same color symbolism as well, by putting a cloth of the appropriate color on each of the four podiums. The altar will ordinarily be covered with a golden cloth. During ritual, though, black, white, and red altar cloths will be used as well.

Floor work exists almost entirely in the realm of ritual, and will be dealt with in detail in the next two chapters. As we'll see, the Order of the Athanor uses two different stages of opening ritual—one for ordinary business, the other for ritual workings—and there are two basic types of floor work corresponding to this division. The first, called "by the square," involves making all movements in lodge by straight lines and square corners. This is, by the way, the most common kind of floor work used in fraternal lodges. The second, called "by the circle," involves making all movements in lodge (with a few special exceptions) by way of clockwise circular movements around the altar.

Knocks are also primarily ritual forms, but they can be dealt with outside a purely ritual context. There are two basic classes of knocks. First, there are knocks made inside the lodge, to communicate certain instructions to members. The standard system is that one knock calls the lodge to order and instructs the members to sit down, two knocks instructs the lodge officers to rise, and three knocks instructs all members to rise. Some lodges use slightly different schemes, but our designer sees no reason to do so and keeps the usual set.

The second class of knocks are those used at the door by someone coming in, to signal those inside that he or she has the right to enter. Once again, the two phases to the opening ritual require a different knock for each. For ordinary business, the knock will be simple: one knock on the door from outside, answered by one

knock from within. For ritual, a more complex procedure is used, drawing on a cryptic saying from traditional alchemical lore:

*Out of the one comes the two;
Out of the two comes the three;
Out of the three comes the one as the fourth.*

Thus the member outside knocks once; the Sentinel inside knocks twice in answer; the member knocks three times; and the Sentinel knocks once. This system has the advantage that, without a word being spoken, the member outside the door knows whether the lodge is open in business or ritual mode.

Gestures for the Order are drawn entirely from the ritual symbolism. There are three main gestures, or "Signs" in lodge parlance, used in the Order's workings. The first, the Outer Sign, is made by bringing the right forearm diagonally across the chest, so that the fingertips touch the left shoulder; the right elbow remains at the side, or as close to it as the shape of the body will permit.

The second and third gestures are the Rising and Descending Signs. The Rising Sign is made by forming a V with the hands over the solar plexus, fingertips touching and elbows out to the sides. With a turning of the wrists, the point of the V moves from down to up. The Descending Sign is made in exactly the opposite way. All three of these Signs are shown in Diagram 6-4.

Grips are another matter that can be covered here. Again, since the Order of the Athanor has only one degree, it needs only one grip. This is made as in Diagram 6-5, by linking the first two fingers and thumb of one's own right hand with the first two fingers and thumb of the other's,

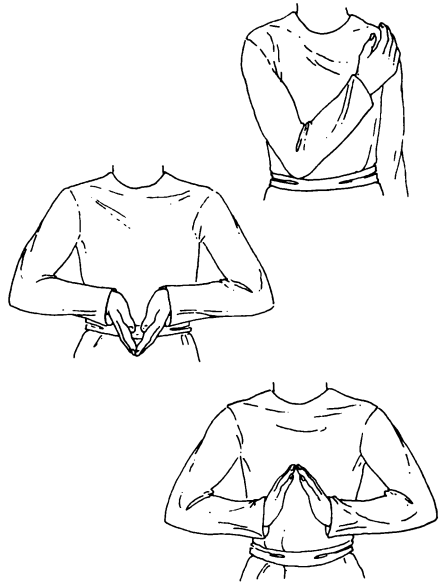


Diagram 6-4

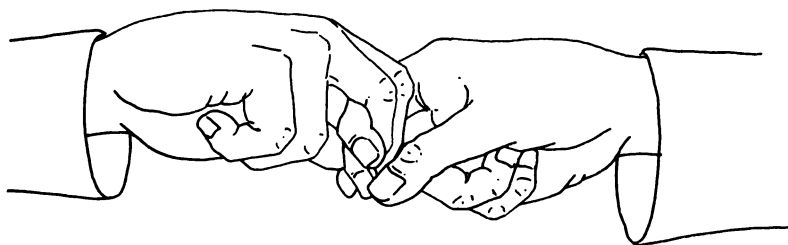


Diagram 6-5

as though forming links in a chain; the ring and little fingers of both hands are folded back against the palm. Another reference to the threefold nature of the Order's symbolism is implicit in the grip, of course.

Implements and regalia of office are partly defined by the ritual, partly by the symbolism already discussed. Our designer considers giving wands or staffs to the three primary ritual officers, but decides against it. The Herald will be better off having both hands free when guiding candidates through the ceremony of initiation. On the other hand, the Guardian will need a staff for the initiation, and it's very nearly universal for the announcing officer—or, in the Order of the Athanor, the Warder—to carry one. Our designer notes down her choices: the Magister will have a gavel for his or her implement, the Guardian and Warder will carry staffs, and the Sentinel will carry a sword. The regalia will follow the usual lodge pattern, with the Magister, Guardian, Herald, and Past Magister wearing collars and the other officers wearing sashes, all bearing the appropriate emblem of office and made of the appropriate color of cloth. Members who do not hold office will wear white collars bearing the emblem of the Order. For ritual work, when something more than a collar is needed, all members will wear plain white robes. The Magister, Guardian, Herald, and Past Magister will wear cloaks or tabards of their symbolic colors over their robes.

Structure of the Order

By this point, many of the structural and organizational elements of the Order of the Athanor are already implicit, either in the material that has already been developed or in the “standard kit” of lodge

methods. Our designer has one major choice to make, though. Is the Order ever likely to have more than one lodge?

The traditional lodge system assumed that there would be many lodges operating under a single governing Grand Lodge. Few magical lodge organizations, though, have ever had more than a handful of active lodges, and most have only one.

It's by no means certain that an order with only one lodge will need a Grand Lodge over it, although there are some situations where this can be useful. If the order is likely to end up with a significant amount of income and intends to file for tax-exempt status, it's necessary to have a Grand Lodge with at least one subordinate lodge to qualify for the special tax-exempt categories reserved for lodge organizations. If the order has been created to teach a particular system of magic, it may be a good idea to create a Grand Lodge, limit its membership to initiates with a great deal of experience in the system in question, and give it control over the curriculum. Handled clumsily, this latter might come close to the sort of elitist arrangements we examined back in Chapter Two. In general, though, it's a good idea to put the instructional program in the hands of those who know what they are supposed to teach. So long as the Grand Lodge has limited authority over the rest of the business of the subordinate lodge, this approach can work well.

On the other hand, a lodge that does not expect to make a great deal of money, doesn't exist to teach a particular system of magic, and doesn't plan on founding additional lodges will generally be better off without a Grand Lodge. All that is necessary in this case is that the lodge's constitution and bylaws empower it to handle all of its own business. The one major change is that the officers of the lodge will have to be formally installed by one or more lodge members—possibly by the outgoing presiding officer, or by all the outgoing officers—instead of by officers or their deputies from the Grand Lodge.

Our lodge designer, though, is feeling optimistic, and thinks or hopes that the Order of the Athanor will end up with several lodges in its ambit. There will need to be a Grand Lodge, then, although this will play a very minor role until more than one lodge has been chartered.

With this decided, the rest of the structure falls into place quickly. Our designer sets out to formalize that structure in a constitution for the Order, so that every member will know what the structure is and how rights and responsibilities are assigned. More notebook paper goes into drafting this than into anything else, except possibly the ritual of initiation itself. Finally, though, the constitution is complete:

CONSTITUTION OF THE ORDER OF THE ATHANOR

I. Purpose

The Order of the Athanor exists for the purpose of creating a common ground in which magicians of many different paths will meet together in harmony and explore the possibilities of the lodge system.

(This is simply the purpose worked out for the Order in the beginning, placed here to reaffirm the point of the entire exercise.)

II. Grand Lodge

The Grand Lodge of the Order shall consist of one qualified representative from each subordinate lodge, together with the current Grand Lodge officers and all Past Grand Magisters. The Grand Lodge shall have sole right to issue and withdraw charters for subordinate lodges of the Order, to issue and revise rituals, and to supervise and direct the Order as a whole.

(This defines the Grand Lodge, and the relationship between it and the ordinary ("subordinate") lodges of the Order. The officers mentioned are explained in the next paragraph.)

III. Grand Lodge Officers

The Grand Lodge shall elect at each regular meeting, by majority ballot, a Grand Magister, a Grand Guardian, and a Grand Scribe. The Grand Magister shall preside over meetings of the Grand Lodge, and shall issue such dispensations as this constitution and the Grand Lodge may instruct. The Grand Guardian shall take the Grand Magister's place should that officer be unable to perform his or her duties. The Grand Scribe shall manage all business affairs and record all meetings of the Grand Lodge.

The term of office shall run from one regular meeting of Grand Lodge to the next regular meeting. The Grand Lodge officers for each term shall be installed as the last item of business at the regular Grand Lodge meeting beginning that term, and shall serve until their successors have been installed.

All nominees for these Grand Lodge offices shall have served at least one term as magister of a subordinate lodge, and nominees for the office of Grand Magister shall have served at least one term as Grand Guardian. This provision can only be overridden by a unanimous vote of the Grand Lodge.

In the event that more than two candidates run for a single office, and no one candidate receives a majority of votes cast, the candidate with the lowest number of votes shall be dropped from the ballot and a new vote taken. This process shall continue, if necessary, until one candidate receives a majority of votes.

Under no circumstances may any member of Grand Lodge who is not present during voting cast a vote in this or any other Grand Lodge election.

The Grand Lodge may establish additional elected or appointed offices or eliminate offices thus established, and may define additional duties for the offices established in this constitution, by a two-thirds vote at a regular meeting.

(This section sets out the Grand Lodge officers and their basic duties. Since the Grand Lodge is certain to be quite small for the first few years of its existence, the constitution provides a basic structure and allows plenty of opportunities for expansion. The requirement that Grand Lodge officers should have held previous office is simply a way of helping to see to it that those who fill these positions have some idea of what they are supposed to be doing; as we'll see, the same thing is done at the subordinate lodge level.)

IV. Grand Lodge Meetings

The regular meeting of the Grand Lodge shall be held once each calendar year. Date, time and place for each Grand Lodge regular meeting shall be determined by vote at the previous Grand Lodge meeting. The Grand Lodge may also hold special meetings, which shall be called by the Grand Magister; all subordinate lodges of the Order shall receive at

least sixty days' notice of the date, time and place of any special meeting.

Representatives from at least three-quarters of all subordinate lodges, and either the Grand Magister, the Grand Guardian, or a Past Grand Magister as presiding officer, must be present at a meeting in order for the Grand Lodge to transact business.

Any member of the Order may be present at a meeting of the Grand Lodge, but only members of the Grand Lodge may vote. Those present who are not Grand Lodge members may speak only if invited to do so by the presiding officer.

During meetings of the Grand Lodge, the presiding officer may not vote except to break a tie.

(Most of the provisions in this paragraph are meant to prevent abuses of power. They are there to prevent an unscrupulous Grand Magister, or anyone else, from calling a "Grand Lodge meeting" of himself and his cronies and doing something against the will of the rest of the Order. Such things have happened in the history of the lodge system, more than once. The basic safeguards that prevent this should not be neglected in any order's constitution.)

V. Delegation Of Authority

In the period between Grand Lodge meetings, the Grand Magister shall be permitted to issue and withdraw charters, to issue dispensations, and to take such other actions as the Grand Lodge may instruct. The Grand Lodge may also grant committees of its members the power to exercise specific functions during the interval between its meetings. Any action of the Grand Magister or of a Grand Lodge committee taken between meetings, however, must be approved by a majority vote of the Grand Lodge at its next meeting, unless it has been approved by majority vote of the Grand Lodge in advance. If such approval is not given by the end of the Grand Lodge meeting immediately following, any actions not approved will become null and void.

(Grand Lodges typically meet once a year, and in the case of most small orders (and most magical orders are quite small) there is rarely any good reason to meet more often. This paragraph allows the elected officials of the Grand Lodge to handle routine

business between meetings. At the same time, the requirement that the Grand Lodge approve anything that is done between meetings provides a method to rein in abuses of power on the part of the officers—another basic safeguard.)

VI. Subordinate Lodges

Subordinate lodges of the Order shall consist of at least five initiated members of the Order, and shall meet regularly to carry out the purposes of the Order. Each subordinate lodge shall have the right to carry on its activities without interference, subject only to the terms of this constitution and to such legislation as may be established by Grand Lodge.

(Just as section II defines the Grand Lodge, this section defines the subordinate lodges and establishes their relationship to Grand Lodge.)

VII. Subordinate Lodge Charters

Any five or more initiated members of the Order may petition Grand Lodge for a charter to establish a new subordinate lodge. This petition may be granted by a majority vote of Grand Lodge or, between meetings of that body, by the Grand Magister. Should a lodge no longer have five initiated members, or wilfully vote to violate any provision of this constitution, of legislation established by Grand Lodge, or of the obligations of initiation, Grand Lodge shall have the power to withdraw the charter of that lodge by a majority vote, and between meetings of Grand Lodge the Grand Magister shall have this power, subject to Grand Lodge review.

(The right to withdraw charters is the primary lever that Grand Lodges typically have to keep subordinate lodges from breaking the rules and behaving abusively. This paragraph establishes that right, and sets out the conditions under which it can be exercised.)

VIII. Subordinate Lodge Officers

Each subordinate lodge of the Order shall elect a Magister, a Guardian, a Herald, a Scribe and a Treasurer. The Magister shall preside over all lodge meetings and appoint the Warder and Sentinel for his or her term. The Guardian shall take the place of the Magister when that officer is unable to fulfill his or her duties. The Herald shall have the duties prescribed by the ritual. The Scribe shall have custody of all lodge records,

handle all lodge correspondence, and keep records of dues and fees paid to the lodge. The Treasurer shall have custody of the funds of the lodge, and receive and disburse funds as the lodge may instruct. All elective officers shall also have those duties assigned them by the ritual, and may be given additional duties by majority vote of the lodge.

Each subordinate lodge shall also have two appointive officers, the Warder and Sentinel, whose duties shall be as defined by the ritual.

(This paragraph simply defines the officers of the lodge and gives them their basic duties.)

IX. Subordinate Lodge Elections

Elective officers shall be nominated and elected by majority vote of the members of the lodge on the last lodge meeting in the month of February of each year, and shall take office when installed by the Grand Magister or that officer's duly authorized deputy. The Ceremony of Installation shall be held between the Spring Equinox and the sun's entrance into Gemini each year. All officers shall hold office until their successors are installed.

All nominees for Guardian shall have served at least one term as an officer of the lodge, and all nominees for the office of Magister shall have served at least one term as Guardian. No member may hold the office of Magister for two terms in a row. These qualifications for office can only be overridden by a dispensation from the Grand Magister.

By vote of the lodge, one member may be elected to fill the offices of Scribe and Treasurer for the same term.

In the event that more than two candidates run for a single office, and no one candidate receives a majority of votes cast, the candidate with the lowest number of votes shall be dropped from the ballot and a new vote taken. This process shall continue, if necessary, until one candidate receives a majority of votes.

Under no circumstances may any member of the lodge who is not present during voting cast a vote in this or any other lodge election.

(Many of the provisions in this section have been covered already; most, again, are designed to prevent various abuses of power. The specific date of the Ceremony of Installation, as we'll see later on, has to do with the alchemical symbolism that governs that ritual.)

X. Subordinate Lodge Meetings

Each subordinate lodge of the Order shall meet at least once each month. Date, time and place for each meeting shall be established in lodge bylaws, and may be changed only through the procedure established in this Constitution for bylaws changes. At least five members of the lodge, including either the Magister, the Guardian, or a Past Magister as presiding officer, must be present at the meeting in order for the lodge to transact business.

Special meetings of the lodge may be held at other times and places, if approved by a majority vote of the lodge and a dispensation from the Grand Magister.

During lodge meetings, the presiding officer may not vote except when balloting for new members, electing officers or to break a tie.

(Here the protections put in place at the Grand Lodge level are repeated on the subordinate level.)

XI. Subordinate Lodge Membership

Any person eighteen or more years of age, who wishes to support the purpose of the Order, and who is willing to take and keep the obligations of membership of the Order, may be admitted to membership. No person shall be excluded from membership on account of sex, race, religion, or specific tradition of magic.

Applicants for membership must be proposed by a member in good standing of the lodge to which application is made, and shall be interviewed by a committee of three members appointed by the Magister, the proposing member being excluded from this committee. The committee shall make its report at the next following regular meeting of the lodge, and following this report the lodge shall vote on the application in the manner specified in the ritual. Three votes against shall be sufficient to bar an applicant from membership.

A member of any lodge may attend meetings of any other lodge, and may apply for associate membership of up to two other lodges. An associate member may not vote in the lodge in which he or she holds associate status, but has all other rights of a regular member.

Should a member wish to become an associate member of another lodge, or to transfer his or her regular membership from one lodge to another, he or she must be interviewed and elected to membership by means of the same process as a new member.

(These are essentially the standard lodge procedures for handling applications for membership, and most have been discussed earlier on in this book. The traditional method may seem out of place in a lodge intended to draw together a local magical community, but a lodge divided into warring camps—a common result when people are invited in without a screening procedure—will do very little good to anyone. Lodges that have more tightly focused purposes often use far more stringent procedures to select members; for example, potential members may have to complete a correspondence course, read and comment on a specific list of books, or learn some magical practice and perform it successfully for the interview committee.)

XII. Subordinate Lodge Bylaws

Each subordinate lodge of the Order shall establish bylaws, which shall be submitted to the Grand Lodge and shall take effect when approved by that body. In order to establish or amend bylaws, a two-thirds majority vote must be obtained at a regular meeting of the lodge. All members of the lodge shall receive in writing, at least thirty days prior to the meeting at which the vote shall be taken, an announcement of the date and time of the vote and a correct text of the bylaws to be enacted or amendments to be made.

(These provisions are, again, protective in nature, and their goal is to make sure that nothing is done behind the backs of the majority of lodge members.)

XIII. Subordinate Lodge Representatives

Each subordinate lodge of the Order shall elect, by majority vote, a representative to the Grand Lodge. Elections for this

position shall be held at least two months before the date set for the Grand Lodge meeting, and the Grand Scribe shall be notified of the results of the election at least one month prior to the Grand Lodge meeting.

(The representative serves as a point of contact between the subordinate lodge and the Grand Lodge, and also participates in the government of the entire Order. In many lodge organizations, there are special qualifications for holding this position—for example, nominees often have to have served a term as presiding officer. Since our designer is striving for maximum flexibility, though, she decides to omit this.)

XIV. Dues And Fees

The Grand Lodge shall, by two-thirds vote at a regular meeting, establish annual dues for membership in the Order, sufficient to pay the reasonable expenses of the Grand Lodge and its activities, and shall also establish fees for initiation in the same manner. Each subordinate lodge shall also establish dues sufficient for its reasonable expenses, which shall be set forth in the lodge bylaws. Neither the Grand Lodge nor any subordinate lodge shall pay any part of the dues of any member out of the common funds of the Order or the lodge, nor shall any member or class of members be charged dues or fees at a different rate from any other, except that the Grand Magister or a lodge may grant a stay of dues in case of genuine financial emergency.

(Most magical lodges can get by with quite reasonable dues—five or ten dollars a month from each member will normally pay the rent and buy incense—but the amount will need to be changed from time to time. This section simply sets out the procedure by which dues are established, and provides yet more protections against common abuses. A stay of dues simply allows a member who has no money to spare, but who is contributing to the order in other ways, to remain in good standing until his or her finances improve; dues that are stayed do not need to be paid at a later time.)

XV. Finances

All funds and assets of the Order, or of any subordinate lodge of the Order, shall be managed for the Order's benefit, and no

member or members of the Order shall receive any payment from Order funds, except as reimbursement for personal expenditures on behalf of the Order or a subordinate lodge, previously approved by a vote of the Grand Lodge or subordinate lodge and verified by receipts.

The Grand Lodge and all subordinate lodges shall keep complete and accurate financial records. Any member of the Order may inspect the Grand Lodge's financial records at any time; any member of a subordinate lodge may inspect that lodge's financial records at any time.

(Of the various problems that can show up in a lodge context, financial abuses are among the most common—and the most destructive. These provisions help keep these under control, by cutting sharply back on the options available for individual profiteering and by making sure that everything happens in plain sight.)

XVI. Termination Of Membership

Any member who wishes to leave the Order voluntarily, and whose dues are currently paid in full, may request a “demission card” from his or her subordinate lodge, which will be granted upon a majority vote of the lodge. A demission card certifies that the member was in good standing at the time of his or her resignation.

A member who does not receive a demission card, or whose dues are not currently paid at the time he or she leaves the Order, is considered to have left without demission. A former member who has left without demission, and who wishes to rejoin the Order, must receive a dispensation from the Grand Magister.

A member whose dues remain unpaid for one year is held to have left the Order without demission, and may not attend meetings or other Order activities, unless he or she applies for and receives a stay of dues.

(All of these provisions can be found in standard fraternal lodge practice. The value of a demission card or equivalent document is that if the member applies to join a different lodge of the same order at some later date, that lodge knows at once that the member was welcome in his or her previous lodge. It thus provides an additional screening method.)

XVII. Offenses Against The Order

A member who has violated any provision of his or her obligations of initiation, or of this constitution, is guilty of an offense against the Order. Any accusation of an offense against the Order shall be forwarded to the Grand Magister, and shall be investigated by the Grand Lodge in formal hearing, either at the next regular meeting or, if the Grand Magister so directs, at a special meeting called for the purpose. In either case, the accused member shall be notified at least sixty days in advance of the date, time and place of the hearing.

In formal hearing, the members of the Grand Lodge and the accused member shall have the right to question witnesses and to examine any evidence presented. Conviction shall require a two-thirds majority vote of members of Grand Lodge present; the accused, if a member of the Grand Lodge, shall not be permitted to vote.

(The process of dealing with violations of an order's oaths and laws is a difficult one—far and away the most difficult thing to be dealt with in the constitution—and needs to be handled with great care. Different orders handle it in different ways, but nearly all hold some kind of formal hearing or trial to decide on such charges. Our designer chooses to give this duty to the Grand Lodge, as a way of moving it out of the sometimes ugly realm of subordinate lodge politics.)

XVIII. Expulsion And Censure

A member convicted of an offense against the Order shall be expelled from the Order on a two-thirds vote of the Grand Lodge. An expelled member who seeks to be readmitted to the Order may do so only after two years, by applying to the Grand Magister and being approved by a two-thirds vote of the Grand Lodge at a regular meeting.

A member who is convicted of an offense against the Order, but who is not expelled, shall be censured. A censured member is required to publicly apologize for his or her actions before the Grand Lodge, and shall be barred from holding any elective office in the Order at any level for a period of two years.

Any member who is censured and refuses to apologize shall be considered to have been expelled until the required

apology is made, and the period of exclusion from elective office shall be counted from the date of the apology.

Any member present at a formal hearing who disrupts the proceedings, speaks or behaves abusively, or makes provably false statements during the hearing, shall have committed an offense against the Order and may be convicted and censured or expelled during the same formal hearing.

(There are various ways of dealing with people who have violated lodge obligations and rules, but most of them come down to the two alternatives given here. The stress given to an apology in the rules for censure may seem quaint, but there is a point to it; it represents an acknowledgement to the lodge egregor, as well as to the lodge members, that an error has been made, and thus helps to keep the egregor from being contaminated by the actions of the censured member.)

XIX. Amendments

Amendments to this constitution must be presented in writing at a regular meeting of the Grand Lodge, and may not be acted on until the next regular meeting, when they must be approved by a two-thirds majority in order to take effect.

(One last set of protections keeps changes to the constitution from being slipped through without the knowledge of the Order's members. At the same time, this procedure does permit changes to be made, something that will almost certainly prove necessary as the order grows and moves in new directions.)

Lodge Bylaws

An order with only one lodge and no Grand Lodge structure may choose to combine the constitution and bylaws into a single document, but if there is a Grand Lodge there will also need to be lodge bylaws for each subordinate lodge. In most cases, the bylaws of any given lodge will be fairly brief; most of the troublesome details should be covered in the constitution of the order, and what remains is simply a matter of filling in the blanks. The following bylaws for a lodge of the Order of the Athanor, Green Lion Lodge No. 1, are typical.

BYLAWS OF GREEN LION LODGE

I. Name And Number

This lodge of the Order of the Athanor shall be known and hailed by the title of Green Lion Lodge No. 1.

II. Authority

The lodge derives its authority from a charter dated (date), issued by the Grand Lodge of the Order of the Athanor, and all its actions shall be governed by the Constitution of the Order of the Athanor and relevant legislation established by the Grand Lodge of the Order.

III. Meetings

Regular meetings of the lodge shall be held on the first and third Friday of each month at 7:00 P.M., at (address).

Special meetings may be held if called according to Article X of the Constitution of the Order.

IV. Dues and Assessments

Dues for membership in the lodge shall be five dollars per month, payable at the first meeting of the month. In the event of special expenses, the lodge may vote a special assessment of all members by a two-thirds vote of members present at a regular meeting, and this shall be paid by all members within sixty days.

In the event that a member is unable to pay dues as a result of genuine financial emergency, the lodge may grant him or her a stay of dues by a two-thirds vote of members present at a regular meeting of the lodge.

A member whose dues remain unpaid for sixty days, and who has not received a stay of dues, shall not be considered in good standing in the lodge, and may not attend meetings until he or she pays the total of unpaid dues.

Chapter Seven

The Rituals of Opening and Closing

The next stage in the design of the Order of the Athanor is the creation of the ritual processes that are central to the Order's work. The ceremony of initiation is the most obvious of these, but there are also several other ritual workings that need to be present to make a functional lodge system.

Of these, the most important are the rituals of opening and closing. The space between worlds in which a magical lodge operates does not, as we've seen, come into being by accident. That space is opened up deliberately, by ritual methods, and when the lodge has finished its work the space is closed again in the same way.

Like most of the fundamentals of lodge technique, opening and closing rituals are handled in much the same way in different lodge systems, magical or not. The formula or basic framework, the order of events, and even many of the details are all part of the standard toolkit of lodge technique. The variations that do occur are mostly a matter of the particular symbolism being used by a given lodge, or—especially in the case of modern fraternal lodges—sheer lack of understanding of what it is the rituals are supposed to do in the first place.

There is, of course, one major difference between the openings and closings used by magical and fraternal lodges. Magical lodges are dealing with very much higher levels of what, for the sake of

convenience, we can simply call “energy.” Both kinds of lodges use these rituals to awaken specific states of consciousness in lodge members. A fraternal lodge opening is meant to create constructive but relatively ordinary states such as feelings of fellowship and an orientation toward the lodge’s ideals. A magical lodge opening, on the other hand, is meant to create some extremely unusual states of consciousness, states of high energy and intensity in which magical experience and magical action take place.

It’s possible to state the difference in another way, one that has important practical implications. If the states of consciousness central to a fraternal lodge aren’t effectively opened and closed by the ritual, the results will be fairly mild. The distance between these states and those of everyday consciousness are small enough for a person to conduct business and operate machinery while under the influence, so to speak. It’s equally possible to handle lodge business without ever leaving ordinary consciousness at all.

The same thing is not true of a magical lodge worth the name. In order to carry out magical initiations and other group workings, it’s vital that the members of a magical lodge be able to move effectively from ordinary states of consciousness to specific (and very intense) magical states. It’s equally critical that they be able to make the same trip in reverse, cleanly and reliably, at the end of the working. The kinds of awareness that make it possible to perceive hidden realities and shape the flow of power in the universe are simply not the same ones that make it possible to handle the details of everyday life in the outside world. This is why mastery of the methods to move from one to the other at will are one of the first requirements of any system of practical magic.

These considerations may make it sound as though non-magical opening and closing rituals have little to offer the magician or the magical lodge. A strong case can be made, though, for a different view. The openings and closings used by fraternal lodges have a subtle but central role in keeping the lodge true to itself. All lodge business is done in the specific state of awareness opened by the ritual, where the symbols and principles of the lodge have been formally reaffirmed and energized. As a result, formal and informal interactions in a lodge tend to be shaped by the lodge’s ideals, and

there's a tendency for those ideals to be reflected in the decisions that are made and the actions that are taken.

This is something that can be very useful in a magical lodge as well, for as often as not it's the organizational side of magical lodge work that has proved to be its Achilles' heel. Several major stages in the self-destruction of the Golden Dawn, it's worth remembering, centered on a set of relatively minor issues that a little less factionalism and a little more attention to organizational realities could have nipped in the bud. If the warring members had paid more attention to the Order's own ideals, much might have been done to limit the damage.

On the other hand, trying to carry out ordinary business in a lodge that has been opened with a full-scale magical opening is a difficult process at best. The business is not likely to be handled well, and the functioning of the lodge's magical work may be disrupted by such magically irrelevant activities. For this reason, it's a good idea to incorporate elements of fraternal lodge practice into the ritual framework of a magical lodge, and to arrange for lodge business to be carried out in a mild state of ritual consciousness while using a structure that ties into the symbolism and purpose of the lodge.

There are at least three workable ways in which this can be done. The first and simplest is to construct opening and closing rituals for business meetings that are entirely separate from the full magical opening and closing. These should share the core symbolism on which the lodge is based, but should use their own set of signs, words, and other ritual keys. A magical lodge using this option would perform the non-magical opening and closing for meetings devoted to lodge business, magical instruction, or any other purpose besides ritual working. It would reserve the magical opening and closing for meetings devoted to magical work.

The second, which is closely related, is based on having two or more degrees of initiation. The first calls on energies of relatively low intensity while the higher degrees invoke substantially more potent forces. If this approach is used, ordinary lodge business can be conducted in a lodge open in the first degree, while the important magical work of the lodge is done higher up the ladder of degrees.

The third option works in a subtler way. The difference between magical opening and closing rituals and their non-magical equivalents is largely a matter of addition: the magical rituals have elements which the non-magical ones do not. It's possible, given careful design, to create a single opening ritual in which the non-magical elements are in one section and the magical elements in another. If this is done, the non-magical section alone becomes the complete opening and closing ritual for business meetings, while the magical section is added to it when the lodge is to be opened for ritual work.

This third option is the one illustrated in the rituals of the Order of the Athanor. The opening and closing ceremonies are in two parts, Outer and Inner. The lodge is opened and closed in the Outer at every meeting, whether or not there is ritual work to do, but opened and closed in the Inner only when energies are awakened for magical work. This division of ritual functions allows for a great deal of flexibility, while still carrying out the necessary work of moving the lodge into and out of the specific states of consciousness central to the lodge experience.

Opening in the Outer

The rituals for opening and closing will be given in the order in which they are actually used, for the sake of clarity. It's understood that before the beginning of the opening, the lodge and its furniture have been arranged, and the members are more or less ready to begin. The symbol !, which is used throughout these rituals, represents one knock made with a gavel.

* * *

The Magister calls the lodge to order.

Magister: ! Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, the work of our Order awaits us. You will take your stations and join with me in opening the lodge. Sentinel, you will secure the outer door.

The Sentinel goes to the center of the room, faces the Magister, makes the Outer Sign and goes by the square to the inner door. When he or she has left the lodge room, the

Guardian goes to the inner door and waits. The Sentinel knocks once on the inner door to signify that the outer door is closed and guarded. The Guardian knocks once in reply.

Guardian: Magister, the outer door is secure.

The Guardian returns to station.

Magister: Warder, you will examine all present in the password of the current term.

The Warder rises, goes to the Magister's station, and receives the grip and the password from the Magister. The Warder then goes around the lodge clockwise, moving by the square, and receives grip and password from all members. If someone does not know these, the Warder turns toward the Magister and says:

Warder: Magister, one without the password.

The Magister then asks the Secretary if the person in question is a member of the Order in good standing. If so, the Magister instructs the Warder to give him or her the password. If not, he or she is escorted from the lodge by the Warder. When the entire process is finished, the Warder goes to the center of the room.

Warder: Magister, all present are correct.

Magister: You will resume your station. !!

All Officers rise.

Magister: Officers, you will now proclaim your stations, duties and emblems in the lodge, so that the powers you represent may be awakened in the energies of the Order, and the form of the Outer reflect the force of the Inner. Sentinel?

Guardian: The Sentinel's station is between the inner and outer doors. His/her duty is to guard the lodge against intrusion during our workings. His/her emblem is a drawn sword.

Magister: Warder?

Warder: My station is beside the Magister, to the right. My duty is to receive the password before the lodge is opened, to proclaim the lodge open and closed, and to assist the Magister in his/her duties in the lodge. My emblem is a staff.

Magister: Scribe?

***Scribe:* My station is beside the Magister, to the left. My duty is to record the proceedings of this lodge, to prepare all official documents, and to have custody of its official seal. My emblem is an open book.**

Magister: Treasurer?

***Treasurer:* My station is beside that of the Scribe. My duty is to have custody of all funds and resources of the lodge, and to manage them in accordance with the will of the lodge and the laws of our Order. My emblem is a key.**

(In lodges that have one member as Scribe and Treasurer, the first sentence of the Treasurer's charge is left out.)

Magister: Herald?

***Herald:* My station is to the left of the Magister, opposite the altar. My duty is to guide the candidate through the work of initiation, and to perform such other duties as our ritual prescribes. My emblem is the alchemical symbol of Mercury, and white is my symbolic color.**

Magister: Guardian?

***Guardian:* My station is beside the inner door, opposite the altar and the station of the Magister. My duty is to have charge of the inner door, to receive the signs from members when they enter and leave the lodge, to assist you in your work and to take your station upon your absence from the lodge. My symbol is the alchemical symbol of Salt, and black is my symbolic color.**

***Magister:* My station is opposite the altar and furthest from the door. My duty is to preside fairly and impartially over this lodge, to keep order during its meetings, and to carry out all other duties prescribed for me in the laws of our lodge and our Order. In all this, I ask your help and cooperation. My emblem is the alchemical symbol of Sulphur, and red is my symbolic color. Past Magister, what are the general duties of the brothers and sisters of the Athanor?**

***Past Magister:* To remember their obligations, to keep silence concerning the secrets of the lodge, and to work**

together in a spirit of friendship and cooperation in all things relating to the lodge and the Order.

Magister: !!!

All members rise.

Magister: Recalling the fellowship we owe, one to another, let us invoke the Higher in silence.

All members are silent for a time. Meanwhile, the Warder takes the lamp from the Magister's station and, moving by the square, lights the two candles beside the altar. The Warder then returns to station.

Magister: Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you will give the Outer Sign.

All do so, facing the Magister, who does the same in answer.

Magister: Warder, you will proclaim the lodge open in the Outer.

Warder: In the presence of the Higher, and by command of the Magister, I proclaim that the flame of the Athanor is lit and the Lesser Work begun.

Magister: !

All members are seated.

Magister: Guardian, you will inform the Sentinel that the lodge is open in the Outer.

The Guardian goes to the door and knocks once. The Sentinel knocks once in response, and the Guardian opens the door and lets the Sentinel in. The Guardian then returns to station. The Sentinel goes by the square to the altar, faces the Guardian and makes the Outer Sign. The Guardian replies with the same sign. The Sentinel then goes by the square and takes a seat near the door. This is done so that the Sentinel may take part in the ordinary business of the lodge.

The Order of Business

Once the lodge is open in the Outer, there are certain items of business that are always carried out, even if the primary purpose of the

meeting is a ritual working. These are: the roll call of officers, the introduction of members visiting from other lodges, and the call for members sick or in distress.

Prosaic as they may seem, all three of these involve the eregor of the lodge in a direct way. The roll call of officers is a way of affirming (and recording) who is coming to lodge meetings and who is not—in other words, who is participating fully in the work of the lodge and who is less involved. The introduction of visitors serves to include members from other lodges in the lodge eregor, while the “sick list”—one of the oldest of fraternal lodge traditions—directs the attention and the practical help of the lodge toward those members who are in need.

These protocols are performed as follows:

* * *

***Magister:* Scribe, you will call the roll of officers.**

The Warder rises and stands before his station. The Scribe then calls out the name and office of each officer of the lodge, and the Warder replies “present” or “absent” as the case may be.

***Scribe:* Magister, the roll has been called.**

If any officers are absent, the Scribe goes on to say, “and absences noted.” The Magister then appoints members who do not hold office to fill the vacant offices for the meeting.

***Magister:* Are there any visiting brothers or sisters of our Order to welcome?**

***Scribe:* Magister, there are (or “are not.”)**

Visitors from other lodges normally go to the Scribe before the meeting begins, prove their good standing in the Order by showing a current membership card, and give their names and home lodges. If visitors are present, the following ceremony is performed.

***Magister:* Warder, you will escort our guests to the Altar and introduce them to the Lodge.**

The Warder goes by the square to where the visitors are sitting and makes the Outer Sign. The visitors stand and do the same, then follow the Warder to the altar. They face the Magister.

Warder: Magister, officers, brothers and sisters of the Athanor, it is my honor to present _____, of _____ Lodge No. ____.

Magister: By the obligations and the mysteries that we share, welcome.

The Warder leads the visitors back to their places by the square, then returns to station.

Magister: Are any members of our Order sick or in distress?

At this point, anyone present who knows of a member needing healing or help should rise and address the Magister and describe the situation.

* * *

After these three things are done, the lodge either goes on with the Outer order of business, or begins the Inner Opening. The order of business is another ingredient in the "standard kit" of lodge methods, although different lodges put some of the items in different orders. One useful arrangement is as follows:

1. Reading of minutes from the last meeting of the lodge.
2. Reading of communications.
3. Reading of bills.
4. Reading of applications for membership.
5. Reports of interviewing committees.
6. Voting on applications for membership.
7. Reports of other committees.
8. Business held over from previous meetings.
9. New business.
10. Treasurer's report.
11. Lecture or instructional program.
12. Good of the Order.

Most of these categories are self-explanatory, but a few comments may be useful for clarity. Bills for lodge expenses are read to the lodge under item 3, then brought up as new business. The lodge discusses them, if need be, and then votes on whether to pay them.

The treasurer's report, item 10, is simply a discussion of how much money the lodge had at the end of the last meeting, how much has come in since then, how much the lodge has voted to spend, and how much is left. This constant reminder of financial realities is a good way to keep the lodge from going too far over its budget.

Voting on applications for membership has a ritual of its own. Like much of the "standard kit" of lodge technique, this ritual evolved for wholly practical reasons—in this case, the need to make sure that no one can cheat on this particular (and particularly important) kind of voting. It is done as follows:

* * *

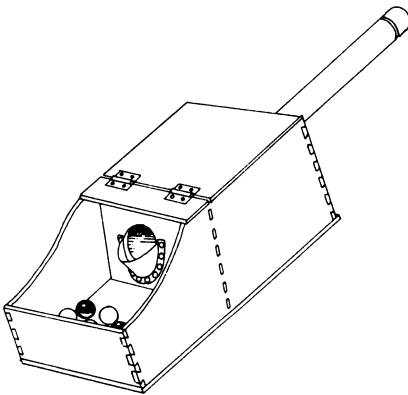
Magister: Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, we will now prepare to vote on the admission of _____ to our lodge and our Order. Warder, you will prepare the ballot box.

The Warder takes the ballot box from next to his or her station and takes it to the Magister, who looks into the compartment in back to make sure that no balls have been put inside in advance. The Warder then takes the ballot box by the square to the Guardian, who does the same. The Warder next

goes to the altar and places the ballot box on it, with its opening facing toward the Guardian's station, and then backs away from it and stands halfway between the altar and the Guardian's station, facing the altar.

Magister: We will now ballot on the name just read. White balls elect, black balls reject. Consider your vote well. !!!

All rise. The Guardian goes forward to stand beside the Warder. All other members of the lodge, except the



The ballot box, a device universally used in lodge membership voting. The tray in front holds white and black balls, which are dropped into the opening.

Diagram 7-1

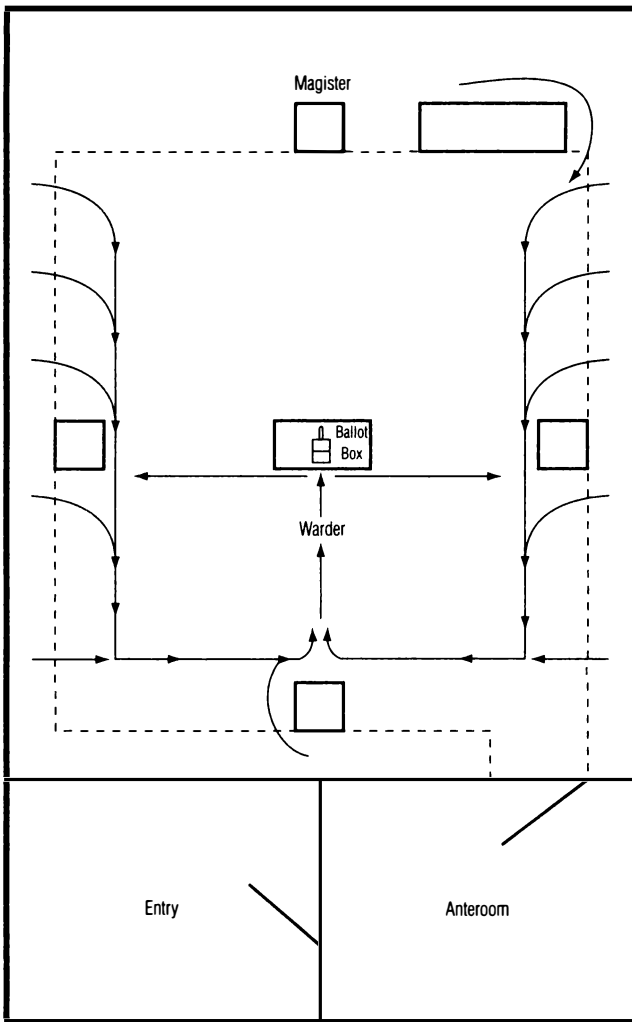


Diagram 7-2

Magister, file down the sides of the lodge room and form a single line behind the Guardian, as shown in Diagram 7-2. One at a time, beginning with the Guardian, all members advance to the ballot box. Each member votes by dropping a single white or black ball into the opening, and then returns to his or her place by the square. When all have voted except the Magister and the Warder, the Magister leaves his or her place, follows the same route to the ballot box, and returns to station.

Magister: Warder, I declare this ballot closed with your vote. !

All members are seated. The Warder goes to ballot box and votes, then takes box to the Guardian, who inspects the ballots. The Warder then takes the ballot box to the Magister, who inspects it. If there are fewer than three black balls, the application is accepted. If there are three or more, it is rejected.

Magister: Guardian, do you find the ballot favorable or unfavorable?

Guardian: Magister, I find it favorable (or unfavorable).

Magister: Brothers and sisters, by your vote the application of _____ for admission to our lodge and our Order is accepted (or rejected).

The Magister then clears the balls out of the compartment and returns it to the Warder, who returns to his or her station.

* * *

To return to the order of business, the lecture or instructional program is a crucial feature in magical lodge work, although some fraternal lodges have the equivalent. Every meeting of a magical lodge, sensibly enough, should include something magical. If there are no new members to initiate, there should be a ritual practice, a group magical working of some sort, or a lecture by a knowledgeable member. Meetings that are devoted entirely to mundane business quickly get boring for most people, and having too many of them is a good way to empty the lodge.

Finally, the last item—"Good of the Order"—is a time for members to bring up topics of general interest that do not require a vote of the lodge. These could include a new book of interest, a public ceremony or class being offered by some other group in the local magical community, a constructive suggestion for ritual work in the lodge, and so forth. Once this is completed, the lodge goes directly to close in the Outer.

Opening in the Inner

If there is ritual work to be done, the order of business should be set aside until the next meeting if at all possible. At most, a few necessary

items of business (such as paying rent) can be carried out quickly, so that the lodge can move as smoothly as possible from the Outer to the Inner.

Before the Inner opening is begun, a cup of water and a censer containing lit incense are placed on the altar, the cup on the Past Magister's side, the censer on the Herald's.

The Inner opening itself is done as follows:

* * *

The Magister calls the lodge to order.

Magister: ! Brothers and sisters of the Athanon, you will join with me in raising this lodge from the Outer to the Inner. Sentinel, you will resume your station.

As in the Outer opening, the Sentinel goes to the center of the room, faces the Magister, makes the Outer Sign and goes by the square to the inner door. When he or she has left the lodge room, the Guardian goes to the inner door and waits. The Sentinel knocks once on the inner door to signify that the outer door is closed and guarded. The Guardian knocks once in reply.

Guardian: Magister, the outer door is secure.

The Guardian returns to station.

Magister: Warder, you will purify the lodge with Water.

The Warder goes to the altar by the square, faces the Magister, takes up the cup of water, and dips the fingers of his or her left hand into the water. He or she then sprinkles water once straight toward the Magister's station, once toward the Past Magister's station, and once toward the Herald's station.

Warder: Magister, the lodge is purified.

Magister: You will consecrate the lodge with Fire.

The Warder puts down the cup, takes up the censer, and swings it once toward the Magister's station, once toward the Past Magister's station, and once toward the Herald's station. (See Diagram 7-3.)

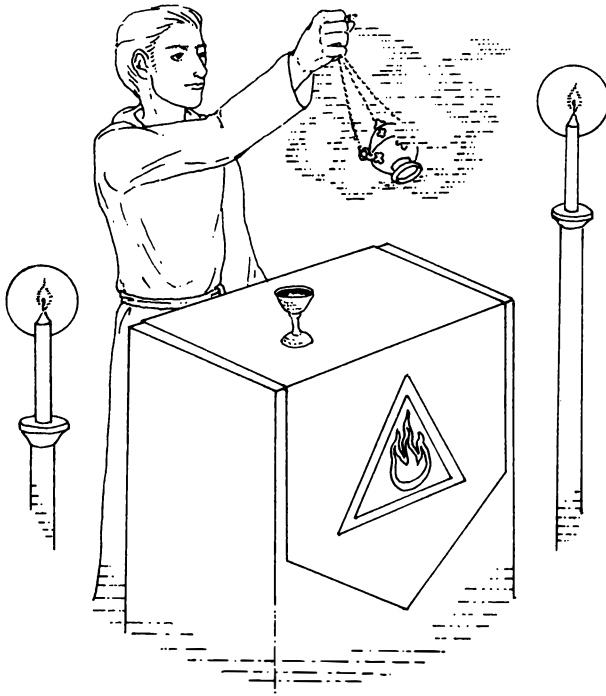


Diagram 7-3

Warder: Magister, the lodge is consecrated.

The Warder returns to station.

Magister: Let the elements of our lodge be transmuted in the fire of the Athanor, that the powers of the Inner may be awakened and the Work be accomplished. !!

The Magister calls up the officers. At this point the Magister, Herald, Guardian, and Past Magister all leave their stations, move in front of their podiums, and then advance straight ahead to the altar. At the end of this movement, one of these officers stands at each of the altar's four sides. They pause, then turn to the left, and move out and around in a clockwise spiral about the lodge. This process brings each officer back to stand in front of his or her podium, as shown in Diagram 7-4.)

The Magister returns to place behind podium.

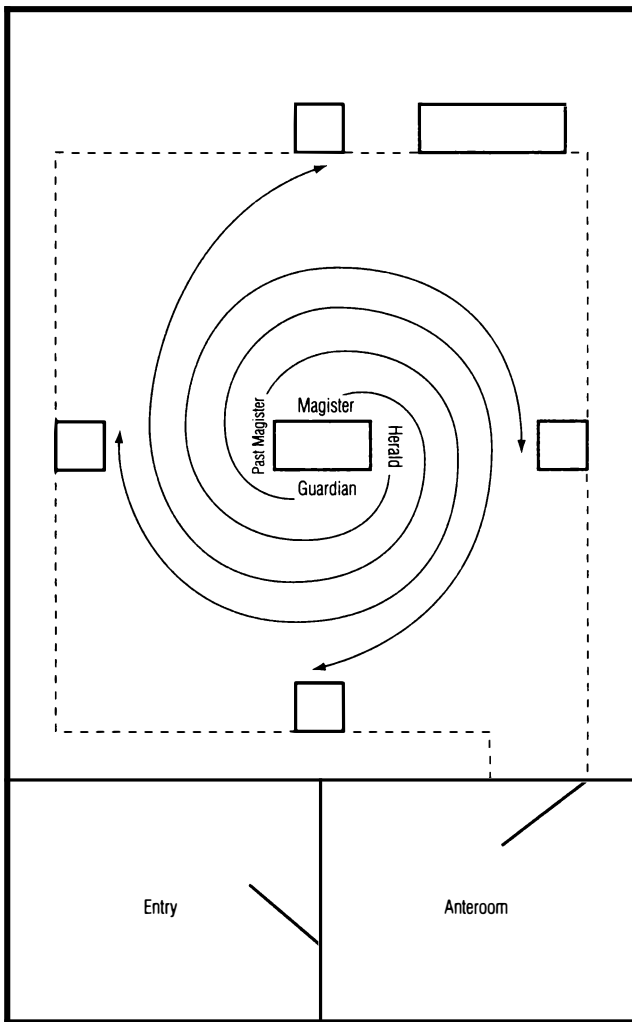


Diagram 7-4

Magister: In the presence of the Higher, and by the transmuted flame of the Athanor, I take up my station in the Inner. Officers, you will do the same.

The Guardian, Herald and Past Magister all return to their places behind their podiums. The Magister calls up the lodge.

Magister: !!! Brothers and sisters, let the lodge be established on the Inner.

There is a pause while the visualizations are carried out.

Magister: It is so done.

Herald: It is so done.

Guardian: It is so done.

Past Magister: It is so done.

Magister: Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you will give the Ascending Sign. As below —

The Magister and all present make the Sign.

All members together: So above.

Magister: Warder, you will proclaim the lodge open in the Inner.

Warder: In the presence of the Higher, and by command of the Magister, I proclaim that the Lesser Work is accomplished and the Greater Work begun.

The Magister seats the lodge.

Magister: ! Guardian, you will inform the Sentinel that the lodge is open in the Inner.

Guardian goes to door and knocks once. Sentinel knocks twice in response. Guardian knocks three times. Sentinel knocks once. Sentinel remains outside door until the ritual and the Inner Closing are finished.

Links Between Inner and Outer

At this point it may be a good idea to pause, and consider just what has been accomplished by the two stages of the opening ceremony. In the Outer Opening, the lodge defines and constitutes itself in what is, for all practical purposes, the standard fraternal lodge manner. It closes itself off from the outside world. It requires each person present to show his or her right to be there and, in the same action, begins to lead them into its own specific states of consciousness. It defines its officers and their duties, as well as the common duties of the members. It joins the members together in an invocation of the energies needed to awaken its deeper levels. It uses a formal gesture as a triggering device to anchor the invoked energies

and to combine them with reawakened responses from the ceremony of initiation. Finally, it proclaims its own existence, both in ordinary terms and in the language of its own symbolism. This, again, forms the basic framework of opening used in most traditional fraternal lodges.

The Inner Opening, by contrast, is a magical ceremony using practical methods drawn out of the toolkit of Western occultism, although these are filtered to some extent through the needs and technical requirements of the traditional lodge system. In this part of the opening process the lodge is again sealed, and then purified and consecrated with water and fire in a process specifically focused on the altar, which is where the magical energies of the lodge are focused. Next, the four major officers move from the outer edge of the lodge to its center, then return to the outer edge by way of a spiral pattern. This pattern of floor work provides the physical frame for a similar movement of energies in which the lodge in the Outer is withdrawn into the realm of Inner energies, while those energies are expanded out into space and time in the lodge room. The energies and their expansion are then anchored, first by the major officers and then by the entire membership of the lodge. Finally, the lodge affirms the process through another pattern of gesture and word, and the awakening of the energies is proclaimed—again, in both straightforward and symbolic terms.

It is possible to understand these two phases as separate workings, or even as separate *kinds* of workings, with no particular connection beyond the fact that both of them need to be done in order for a magical lodge to accomplish its work. However, there are deeper connections between the phases, and these need to be understood if the full potential of the system is to be grasped.

Some of these deeper connections will become clear only after the ceremony of initiation and the inner work of these rituals have been studied. The common vocabulary of lodge technique, though, provides one set of links more easily understood at this point. It's not accidental that Inner and Outer Openings have essentially the same structure, beginning with the sealing of the space by the Sentinel and Guardian, going on to a process involving the Warder, then to one involving all the major officers, then to an invocation

and Signs made by the whole lodge, and finally to a proclamation by the Warder and another interaction between Sentinel and Guardian. Nor is it accidental that the officers who move to and from the center in the most important act of the Inner Opening have previously defined themselves and their symbolism in the Outer. (The only one who does not define himself in this way, the Past Magister, instead defines the members of the lodge as a whole, and thus represents them in the awakening of energies at the altar.) As the officers spiral back out to their stations, they move through a space that has already been given ritual shape and meaning by the Outer Opening. Finally, it needs to be remembered that the words and Signs that are used in the Outer are first communicated to each member of the Order in a lodge open in the Inner, during the ceremony of initiation.

The Outer, then, does not cease to exist when the Inner is awakened, nor does the Inner fail to exist when only the Outer is awakened. Instead, the Inner dwells within the Outer and the Outer embodies the Inner, relating precisely as force and form relate in the traditional philosophy of Western magic. Furthermore, as we'll see shortly, these same patterns of reflection and interrelationship also connect the Outer and Inner Closing rituals.

What is the lesson of these patterns of interaction to the lodge designer? Certainly not that this approach is the only way to relate the business side and the magical side of magical lodge work. There are any number of different ways of weaving these together, using the techniques of the "standard kit" and those of whatever magical system may be used. Rather, the point that should be kept in mind is that the different aspects of any given lodge system should be connected using symbolism, structure, and lodge techniques to form the links. The presence of connections of this kind makes for a more effective, more powerful, and—since lodge ritual is, after all, a performing art, among other things—more esthetically pleasing ritual structure.

Closing in the Inner

After the meeting's magical work has been completed, it's necessary to bring the lodge back down from magical states of consciousness

into the less intense states produced and shaped by ordinary lodge methods. This process, called the Inner Closing, mirrors the Inner Opening almost precisely, because the same energies are being worked in the same patterns. Only the direction is different.

As with the Opening, the cup and censer are placed on the altar before the Inner Closing begins.

The Closing is done as follows:

* * *

The Magister calls the lodge to order.

Magister: ! Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you will join with me in lowering this lodge from the Inner to the Outer. Guardian, you will see that the Sentinel is at his/her station.

The Guardian goes to door, and knocks once. The Sentinel knocks twice in response. The Guardian knocks three times. The Sentinel knocks once.

Guardian: Magister, the outer door is secure.

The Guardian returns to station.

Magister: Warder, you will purify the lodge with Water.

The Warder goes to the altar by the circle, faces the Magister, takes up the cup of water, and dips the fingers of his or her left hand into the water. He or she then sprinkles water once straight toward the Magister's station, once toward the Past Magister's station, and once toward the Herald's station.

Warder: Magister, the lodge is purified.

Magister: You will consecrate the lodge with Fire.

The Warder puts down the cup, takes up the censer, and swings it once toward the Magister's station, once toward the Past Magister's station, and once toward the Herald's station.

Warder: Magister, the lodge is consecrated.

The Warder returns to station by the circle.

Magister: Let the elements of our lodge be transmuted once again in the fire of the Athanor, that the powers of the Inner may be manifest in the Outer and the Work be completed. !!

The Magister calls up the officers. The Magister, Herald, Guardian and Past Magister then leave their stations and stand in front of their podiums, turn right and advance in a counterclockwise, spiralling movement, going once around the lodge and ending at the altar. At the end of this movement, one of these officers stands at each of the altar's four sides. They pause, then turn about and go straight back to their stations, standing in front of their podiums. This motion is exactly the reverse of that in the Opening, as shown in Diagram 7-5.)

Magister: In the presence of the Higher, and by the transmuting flame of the Athanor, I relinquish my station in the Inner. Officers, you will do the same.

The Magister, Guardian, Herald and Past Magister all take their places behind their podiums. The Magister calls up the lodge.

Magister: !!! Brothers and sisters, let the lodge be returned to the Outer.

There is a brief pause.

Magister: It is so done.

Herald: It is so done.

Guardian: It is so done.

Past Magister: It is so done.

Magister: Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you will give the Descending Sign. As above —

The Magister and all present make the Sign.

All members together: So below.

Magister: Warder, you will proclaim the lodge open in the Outer.

Warder: In the presence of the Higher, and by command of the Magister, I proclaim that the Greater Work is accomplished and the Lesser Work resumed.

The Magister seats the lodge.

Magister: ! Guardian, you will inform the Sentinel that the lodge is open in the Outer.

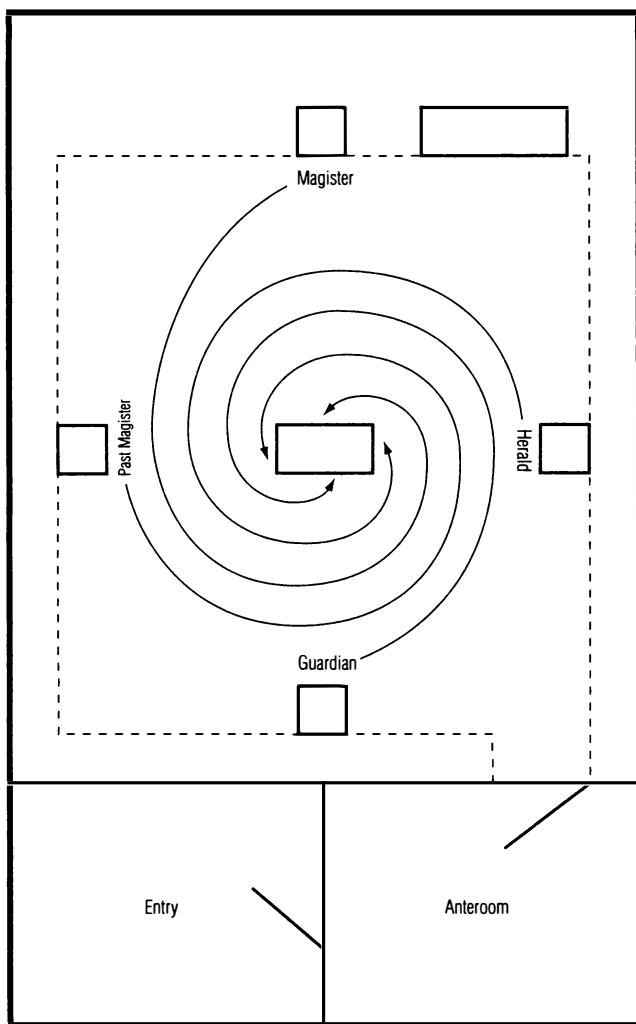


Diagram 7-5

The Guardian goes to the inner door and knocks once. The Sentinel knocks once in reply.

Closing in the Outer

Just as the Inner Closing both reflects and reverses the Inner Opening, the Outer Closing follows the same structure and works with the same energies as the Outer Opening. However, it does so

to shift the consciousness of the lodge members in the opposite direction—from the lodge's special states of awareness back into the realm of ordinary social life. The similarity between the Outer Opening and Closing is less exact than that between their Inner equivalents, though. As we saw in Chapter Two, opening and closing rituals have different requirements and, in the traditional lodge system, different standard forms. In the two-stage opening and closing system used here, those differences are almost entirely part of the Outer side of the work, and the rituals are designed with this in mind.

The *Emerald Tablet of Hermes the Thrice-Great*, which is quoted in this ritual, is one of the oldest and most important of the traditional texts of alchemy. It also plays an important role in the initiation ceremony, and is included here as an invocation of sorts, focusing the attention of the members on the experience (and thus also the ideals) of initiation.

It sometimes happens that there is a need to handle business in the Outer after a lodge has been opened and closed in the Inner. This should be avoided where possible, since people who have just finished a major magical working are rarely in the best possible state to carry out routine business. If it has to be done, though, the Sentinel should be brought into the lodge at the end of the Inner Closing and then sent back to his or her station at the beginning of the Outer Closing. Otherwise, if the lodge has been opened in the Inner, the Sentinel remains in the anteroom until the end of the Outer Closing.

The Outer Closing itself is done as follows:

* * *

The Magister calls the lodge to order.

Magister: ! Does any further work await the efforts of our lodge?

Lodge members may bring up any unfinished subject at this time. If there is none, the Scribe speaks; if any topic has been raised, it is dealt with, and then the Magister repeats the question until there is nothing further.

Scribe: Magister, there is none.

If the Sentinel is in the lodge room, the following form is used.

Magister: Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you will join with me in closing the lodge. Sentinel, you will resume your station.

The Sentinel goes to the altar as before, faces the Magister, makes the Outer Sign, and leaves the lodge room by the square. The Guardian goes to the inner door, the Sentinel knocks once, and the Guardian knocks once in reply.

Guardian: Magister, the outer door is secure.

The Guardian returns to station.

If the Sentinel is not in the lodge room, the following form is used.

Magister: Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you will join with me in closing the lodge. Guardian, you will see that the Sentinel is at his/her station.

The Guardian goes to door, and knocks once. The Sentinel knocks once in reply.

Guardian: Magister, the outer door is secure.

The Guardian returns to station.

Magister: By the obligations and the mysteries that we share, I charge you all to maintain friendship with one another, and silence concerning the secrets of our Order. Hear now the words of the Emerald Tablet, the heart of our secret wisdom. !!!

All members rise.

Chief: True, without error, certain and most true: that which is above is as that which is below, and that which is below is as that which is above, to perform the miracles of the One Thing. And as all things were from One, by the meditation of One, so from this One Thing come all things by adaptation.

The Guardian, Herald, and Past Magister join in at this point.

Major Officers: Its father is the Sun, its mother is the Moon, the wind carried it in its belly, the nurse thereof is the Earth. It is the father of all perfection and the consummation of the whole world. Its power is integral if it be turned to Earth.

All other officers join in at this point.

All Officers: Thou shalt separate the Earth from the Fire, the subtle from the coarse, gently and with much ingenuity. It ascends from Earth to heaven and descends again to Earth, and receives the power of the superiors and the inferiors. Thus thou hast the glory of the whole world; therefore let all obscurity flee before thee.

All members join in at this point.

All: This is the strong fortitude of all fortitude, overcoming every subtle and penetrating every solid thing. Thus the world was created. Hence are all wonderful adaptations, of which this is the manner. Therefore am I called Hermes the Thrice Great, having the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world.

All except Magister fall silent.

Magister: That is finished which I have to say concerning the operation of the Sun.

During the final portion of the recitation of the Tablet, the Warder goes to the altar and extinguishes the two candles.

Magister: Guardian, when the lodge is closed you will open the inner door and permit the brothers and sisters to depart.

Guardian: It shall be so done.

Magister: Warder, you will proclaim the lodge closed in the Outer.

Warder: In the presence of the Higher, and by command of the Magister, I proclaim that the flame of the Athanor is banked and the Lesser Work accomplished.

Magister: !

The Guardian opens the inner door and tells the Sentinel that the meeting is at an end.

Chapter Eight

The Ritual of the Athanor

Central to the whole structure of the lodge system, as mentioned more than once in the earlier parts of this book, is the work of initiation and the ritual structures that embody it. In a very real sense, everything in the traditional lodge system comes from and returns to the initiatory process. Equally, everything in any specific lodge system has both its root and its purpose in the initiation or initiations offered by that system.

Creating the rituals of initiation is far and away the most important task facing the would-be lodge designer, and to some extent the most difficult. During the golden age of lodge organizations, the success and even the survival of entire orders rose and fell on the competence with which their rituals were designed and written. Nowadays, the lodge designer has a somewhat easier task. Since a much smaller fraction of potential members has any real experience with lodge initiations, the standards of criticism are thus a little less exacting. At the same time, though, a modern lodge designer (unless he or she is a member of a surviving lodge organization) is unlikely to have the kind of background in lodge work available to the ingenious people who wrestled with the task of ritual design a century or more ago.

This chapter, along with the material already covered and the practical notes in Chapter Twelve, is intended to help make up for this lack. In using these resources, though, it's crucial to keep in

mind that the rituals we're examining are meant to be performed, not simply read. Many of the factors that make for an effective initiation ritual can only be understood in the context of performance. At the very least, it's a good idea to read the ritual given in this chapter aloud at least once, imagining the officers moving about the hall as the events of the ceremony unfold. If this sort of imaginative reenactment is done several times, with the reader picturing himself or herself first as the candidate and then as each of the major officers, the resulting experience can come close to an actual initiation ceremony in its effects.

In performing the Ritual of the Athanor, a few props will be needed over and above the ordinary lodge furniture and regalia. First, there will need to be three altar cloths; one black, one white and one red, corresponding to the three phases of the dramatic portion of the ceremony. On the black cloth will go a skull (real or a good imitation) and a drawn sword. On the white cloth will go a candlestick with a white candle and an open book (preferably an old book on alchemy or some related subject). On the red cloth will go an imitation snake, as lifelike as possible, with its tail in its mouth, and the symbols of sulphur, mercury and salt, cut from thin plywood or poster board and painted gold. The candidate will also need a blindfold and a length of cord for binding his or her hands.

The Ritual of the Athanor begins after the Inner Opening is completed. It is performed as follows:

* * *

***Magister:* Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, _____ has been elected to membership in our lodge and our Order. Warder, you will see that the candidate is in waiting, and prepare him/her for initiation.**

The Warder goes by the circle to the altar, makes the Outer Sign to the Magister, receives the same Sign in answer, and leaves the hall by the circle. The Guardian goes to the inner door and waits. Meanwhile, the lodge is prepared for the first phase of the initiation; the black cloth, skull and sword are put on the altar, and the cup and censer are put on the Past Magister's and Herald's station respectively. If possible, lights

should be turned down, leaving only a narrow spotlight on the altar. In the anteroom, the Warder addresses the candidate:

Warder: Before we proceed with the ceremony of initiation, I have the duty of administering to you an obligation of secrecy, pledging you to silence concerning what is about to happen. Are you willing to take the obligation?

Candidate: Yes. (If the candidate is unwilling, he or she is sent away and the ritual is at an end.)

Warder: Then place your right hand upon your heart, and repeat after me: I, (give your full name) do hereby pledge myself to keep secret whatever may happen during my initiation.

Once this has been done, the Warder blindfolds the candidate, and ties his or her hands together in front. Once the candidate is ready, the Warder knocks on the inner door once; the Guardian replies with two knocks; the Warder with three; the Guardian with one. The Guardian then opens the wicket or speaking tube in the door (or opens the door slightly, if there is none).

Warder: (in a low voice) The candidate is in waiting, and is prepared for initiation.

The Guardian closes the wicket, speaking tube or door, and faces the Magister.

Guardian: Magister, the candidate is in waiting, and is prepared for initiation.

Magister: You will admit him/her.

The Guardian opens the door, and then takes up his or her staff and stands in front of the door. The Warder leads the candidate forward through the door; once he or she is through, the Sentinel closes the door silently.

Guardian: Hold!

The Guardian steps forward and bars the candidate's way, holding the staff right hand high and left hand low, so that it presses against the candidate's body on a diagonal line as shown in Diagram 8-1.

Guardian: Who is this stranger that enters our lodge?



Diagram 8-1

Warder: A friend, who seeks to unite his/her efforts with ours in the work of our Order.

Guardian: Has he/she passed through the flame of the Athanor, and taken the obligation that binds us together?

Warder: He/she has not.

Guardian: Those who would transmute the Matter must first transmute themselves. Let the Herald be summoned.

The Herald leaves his or her station and goes to the door by the Circle.

Herald: I am here.

The Guardian steps back from candidate, lowering the staff.

Guardian: This is one who seeks to enter into our mysteries and join in our work. I commit him/her to your guidance, and command you to lead him/her through the stages of the Work.

The Herald takes the candidate by the arm.

Herald: Come, and hear the voice of wisdom in the path of darkness.

The Herald leads the candidate once around the hall by the circle, and then straight from the Guardian's station to the altar, as shown in Diagram 8-2. The Guardian returns to station as soon as this process begins, and the Warder goes to the

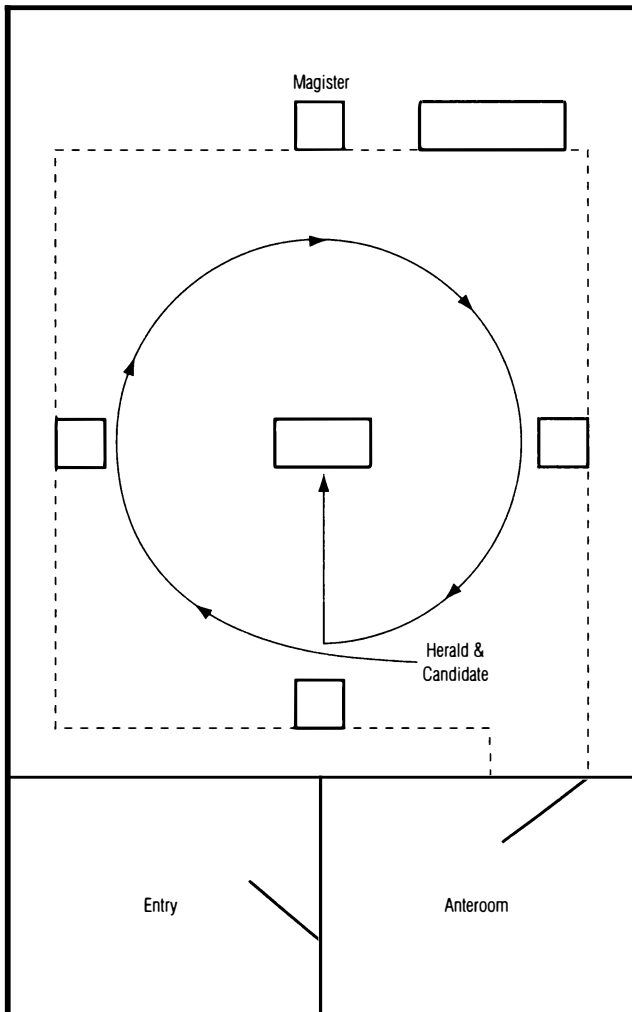


Diagram 8-2

altar and waits. Meanwhile, the Magister reads the following slowly and impressively.

Magister: True, without error, certain and most true: that which is above is as that which is below, and that which is below is as that which is above, to perform the miracles of the One Thing. And as all things were from One, by the meditation of One, so from this One Thing come all things by adaptation. Its father is the Sun, its mother is the Moon, the wind carried it in its belly, the nurse thereof is the Earth.

At this point, the candidate stands before the altar, with the Herald standing on one side and the Warder on the other. The Warder raises the candidate's blindfold.

Warder: Take the Egg and pierce it with a fiery sword.

Herald: Behold the symbols of the first stage of the Great Work, the stage of disintegration and death. The sword represents the destructive forces of nature and of the alchemical art, and its two edges are the oppositions—day and night, female and male, life and death—into which and by which all things are cut in two. The skull symbolizes the hard truth that all things pass away. All that is born must die, but all that dies, dies that it may be reborn.

The Warder lowers the candidate's blindfold again.

Herald: Come, and hear the voice of wisdom in the path of dawning light.

The Herald leads the candidate back to the Guardian's station and then back around the hall with the circle, while the Warder and the Past Magister clear the altar and put on the white cloth, the candle and the book. Meanwhile, the Magister reads the following.

Magister: It is the father of all perfection and the consummation of the whole world. Its power is integral if it be turned to Earth. Thou shalt separate the Earth from the Fire, the subtle from the coarse, gently and with much ingenuity. It ascends from Earth to heaven and descends again to Earth, and receives the power of the superiors and the inferiors.

The Herald and the candidate return to the altar in the same way, and the Warder raises the blindfold.

Warder: Nature teaches nature to overcome the fire.

Herald: Behold the symbols of the second stage of the Great Work, the stage of purification and labor. The flame of the candle symbolizes the fire of the Athanor, the alchemical furnace, in which and by which the First Matter is burnt free of its impurities; in the work of inner alchemy, it is the fire of Will. The book represents the guidance to be found in traditional lore, which the wise alchemist studies—but does not follow blindly.

The Warder lowers the candidate's blindfold once again.

Herald: Come, and hear the voice of wisdom in the path of living gold.

The Herald again leads the candidate back to the Guardian's station and then back around the hall by the circle, while the Warder and the Past Magister clear the altar and put on the red cloth, the symbols and the serpent. Meanwhile, the Magister reads the following.

Magister: Thus thou hast the glory of the whole world; therefore let all obscurity flee before thee. This is the strong fortitude of all fortitude, overcoming every subtle and penetrating every solid thing. Thus the world was created. Hence are all wonderful adaptations, of which this is the manner. Therefore am I called Hermes the Thrice Great, having the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world. That is finished which I have to say concerning the operation of the Sun.

The Herald and the candidate return to the altar in the same way, and the Warder raises the blindfold.

Warder: The Sun and its shadow complete the work.

Herald: Behold the symbols of the third stage of the Great Work, the stage of transformation and perfection. The three golden symbols represent Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt, the three principles of alchemy, from which and into which all things are made; they are form, energy, and substance in

the material world, and soul, life, and body in the human microcosm. The serpent swallowing its own tail is an image of eternity, of change entering into the changeless.

The lights in the lodge room are turned up, so that the room and officers are visible to the candidate.

Herald: **Magister, I present to you the candidate, who has passed through the three stages of the Work.**

The Magister rises.

Magister: **I welcome you to our lodge, and commend you for persevering through the Work. There remains the obligation, which will unite you with us in the work of the lodge and the Order. Nothing in it conflicts with the duties you owe to your faith, your family and friends, your community or yourself. Knowing this, are you willing to receive the obligation?**

Candidate: **Yes.** (If the candidate is unwilling to take the obligation, he or she is taken from the hall and the ritual is over.)

Magister: **Let the candidate be unbound. !!!**

All members rise.

Magister: **You will place your right hand over your heart, place your left hand upon the altar within the serpent's coils, and repeat after me:**

Magister and Candidate, in turn: **I (your full name), in the presence of the Higher, and of the brothers and sisters of this lodge, do pledge myself to keep the signs, grip, passwords, and rituals of the Order of the Athanor secret from every person in the world who has not been initiated into it, or who has demitted or been expelled from it. I furthermore pledge that I will obey the constitution of the Order and the legal resolutions of my lodge and the Grand Lodge in all my activities within the Order, and that I will never knowingly wrong the Order, a lodge or a member in any way or for any reason. I will consider the members of this Order as my friends and companions, and offer them such assistance in time of need as my circumstances allow; and finally, should**

I ever leave the Order, whether voluntarily or otherwise, I will consider my pledge of secrecy to remain fully binding.

Magister: Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you have heard the obligation. Do you accept the candidate as a friend and a brother/sister?

All: We do.

The Magister seats the lodge.

Magister: ! Warder, you will purify him/her with water and consecrate him/her with fire.

The Warder and Herald turn in opposite directions and leave the altar, going straight to the two stations where the cup and censer have been placed. They take these, turn, and then bring them straight back to the altar. The Warder then goes to the Magister's side of the altar, takes the cup, dips the fingers of his or her left hand in the water, and sprinkles water on the candidate three times. The Warder then puts down the cup, takes the censer, and swings it toward the candidate three times. The Warder finally turns to face the Magister.

Warder: Magister, the candidate is purified and consecrated.

Magister: Herald, you will lead our brother/sister to my station for instruction in the secrets of the Order.

The Herald brings the candidate around the altar to the Magister's side, and then leads him or her out and around in a spiral path clockwise around the lodge room, ending at the Magister's station, as shown in Diagram 8-3. This movement is identical to that made by the four major officers in the opening. While the candidate is receiving the secrets of the Order, the Warder and Past Magister clear the altar and replace the ordinary gold altar cloth, the cup and the censer on it. The Past Magister also sees that a chair for the candidate is placed between the altar and the Past Magister's station, facing the station.

Magister: The secrets of the Order of the Athanor comprise three Signs, a grip, a permanent password, and a term password. The first or Outer Sign is made in this way.

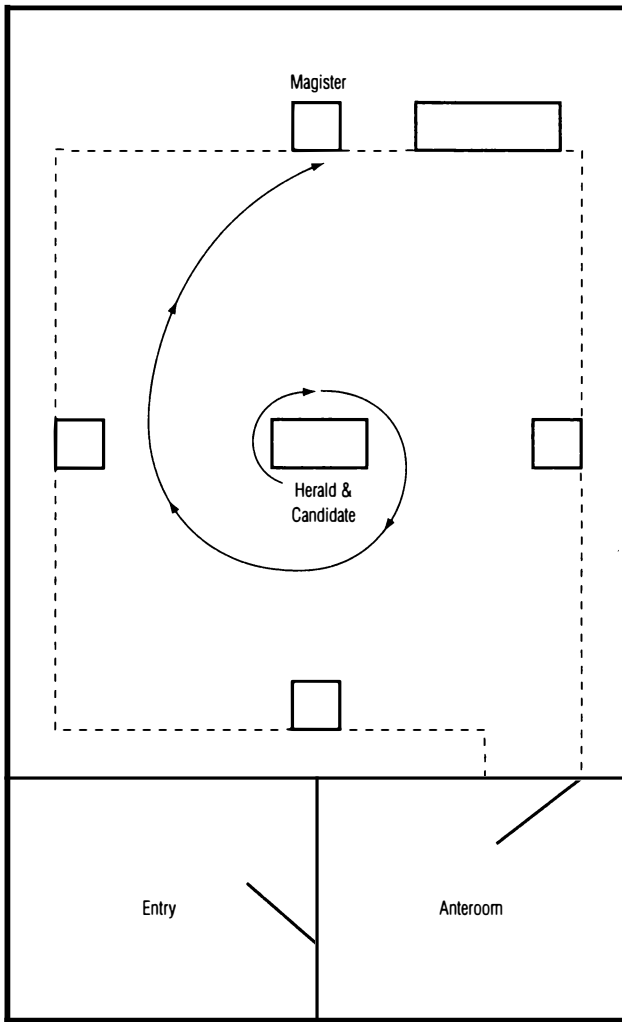


Diagram 8-3

(With this and the other Signs, the Magister demonstrates, and the Herald prompts the candidate to copy.) **It signifies the staff of the Guardian, which barred your way when you first entered this lodge. The second or Ascending Sign is made in this way; it represents the alchemical maxim, "As below, so above." The third or Descending Sign is made in the opposite way, thus; it symbolizes the corresponding maxim, "As above, so below."**

The grip is made by linking the first two fingers and thumb of the right hands, as though forming the links of a chain; the last two fingers are folded against the palm.

The Herald demonstrates, taking the candidate's hand in the grip.

The permanent password is LAPIS, which is the Latin word for stone, and the traditional term for the Philosopher's Stone that is the goal of the alchemical quest.

The term password is _____. It is changed each year so that only those who are members in good standing may enter our lodge. All passwords are to be communicated in a whisper.

Herald, you will escort our brother/sister to the station of the Past Magister, to receive the charge of initiation.

The Herald leads the candidate by the circle around the lodge room. When they approach the Guardian's station, the Guardian stands in their way.

***Guardian:* Brother/sister, it is my duty to guard the lodge against the uninitiated. I therefore require you to give the Outer Sign of our Order.**

The candidate gives the Outer Sign, prompted if necessary by the Herald.

***Guardian:* You will now give me the grip and the permanent password of our Order.**

The candidate gives these, again prompted if necessary by the Herald.

***Guardian:* Without these tokens, you cannot gain admittance into any lodge of the Order of the Athanor. See that you learn them well, and take care that you do not reveal them to anyone who is not a brother or sister of our Order. You may pass on.**

The Guardian steps aside and returns to station, and the Herald leads the candidate to the Past Magister.

***Herald:* Past Magister, by command of the Magister I present our new brother/sister for the charge of initiation.**

The candidate is seated.

Past Magister: My brother/sister, you are now an initiate of our lodge and our Order. The Order of the Athanor exists for the purpose of creating a common ground in which magicians of many different paths can meet together in harmony and explore the possibilities of the lodge system. Its symbolism, as you have seen, is drawn from the ancient traditions of alchemy, but it teaches no specific method of alchemical theory or practice, nor does it require its members to embrace any particular system of magic beyond what is required by its own ceremonial workings.

As a member of our Order, you will have the opportunity to work alongside magicians of many different traditions, and to share what you yourself know even as you learn from others. Remember that friendship should be a constant rule in your dealings with your brothers and sisters in the Order, and remember also that no one path or system of magical work is suited to all.

I would especially impress upon you the presence of the word "work" in what I have just said. Membership in a lodge of our Order carries with it opportunities for work of various kinds, and it is through these opportunities that the real value of our Order may be discovered. In particular, regular attendance at lodge meetings is a key without which the possibilities of the Order will remain closed to you. As with anything else, in magic or in life, what you get out of the Order will be precisely measured by what you put into it.

Past Magister rises and greets the candidate with the grip.

Past Magister: My brother/sister, I welcome you as a friend and a fellow initiate of our Order, and I look forward to participating with you in the work of this lodge.

Herald, you will lead our brother/sister to the Magister's station for final instruction in our mysteries.

The Herald leads the candidate by the circle to the Magister's station, while the Past Magister removes the chair.

Herald: Magister, I present to you our new brother/sister.

Magister: A lodge of the Order of the Athanor may be open in the Outer, to conduct regular business, or in the Inner, to perform ritual. In order to enter a lodge open in the Outer, you must knock once on the outer door, and when the Sentinel responds you must give your name and the permanent password. Once admitted to the anteroom, you will knock once on the inner door. The Guardian will respond with one knock, and then admit you. You will then advance to the altar, face the Magister, and make the Outer Sign; the Magister will respond with the same sign, after which you may take your seat.

In order to leave a lodge while it is open in the Outer, you must advance to the altar and make the Outer Sign to the Magister; when that officer responds with the same Sign, you may go to the inner door, where the Guardian will allow you to depart.

While a lodge is open in the Inner, no members may enter or leave. Should you knock on the inner door of a lodge open in the Inner, the Guardian will respond to your knock with two knocks; you will then knock three times, and the Guardian will respond with one knock. You must then wait in the anteroom until the lodge is lowered to the Outer.

All movement in a lodge open in the Outer is by straight lines and square corners; this is called "by the square." All movement in a lodge open in the Inner is circular, and moves clockwise around the altar; this is called "by the circle."

Herald, you will lead our new brother/sister to a seat in the lodge, and return to your station. We will then proceed to close in the Inner.

The Deeper Structure of the Ritual

The structure of this ritual should be fairly easy to grasp in the light of the symbolism discussed earlier and the material covered elsewhere in this book, but a few comments may be useful here.

The ritual as a whole can be divided into a ceremonial part and an instructional part, with the obligation as the dividing line between them. In the ceremonial part, the candidate is brought into the lodge room, barred (and startled) by the Guardian, taken through the three symbolic stages of the Great Work by the Herald, and introduced to the Magister. In the instructional part, after the obligation, the candidate is given the secrets of the Order, tested by the Guardian, lectured by the Past Magister, and then given further instruction in lodge work by the Magister before the lodge is closed.

These two phases appear in nearly every lodge initiation. Two primary choices helped determine the way in which they took shape in this particular ritual. First of all, our imaginary lodge designer has decided to put the explanation of each set of symbols into the ceremonial section, rather than putting a lecture on the symbols in the instructional section. Secondly, she decided to put the obligation in between the two sections, rather than near the beginning of the ceremonial section. In both cases, either alternative is workable, and can be found in any number of good rituals. There are even rituals in which the obligation, the explanation of the symbols, or both are divided into two parts, and one part put in each of these standard positions.

The use of the special obligation of secrecy at the beginning, before the candidate has left the anteroom, is a method used in some fraternal rituals where the main obligation is presented later on. Besides helping to awaken the special state of consciousness created by secrecy, it also tends to make the candidate nervous, and so helps generate the receptive state on which so much of the effect of lodge initiation depends. Similarly, the sudden pressure of the Guardian's staff and the sound of his voice is meant to startle. A large proportion of lodge initiations use one variant or another of this simple but effective device. (The Outer Sign, by imitating the sensory experience of the staff, draws on and reinforces this effect.)

The sequence of symbols on the altar comes from the lore of alchemy, but it also provides a gradual transition from the more threatening tone of the first part of the ritual to the more welcoming tone of the rest. The skull and sword, together with language meant to suggest violence and death, provide the death symbolism

that is all but universal in lodge initiations. As in these other rituals, they are meant to suggest a level of meaning connected to myths of death and rebirth. The candle and book are less threatening, and also connect to some images of magic very common in Western culture. The serpent with its tail in its mouth, an image of eternity and immortality, counterbalances the earlier symbolism of death. This and the symbols of the three alchemical principles are meant to strike a chord of recognition when the candidate, no longer blindfolded, sees the same symbols on the regalia of the four major officers in the lodge.

The cryptic sentences spoken by the Warder when these symbols are being revealed are taken from the *Atalanta Fugiens* of Michael Maier, an important Renaissance alchemical text. Their function is partly to establish atmosphere, partly to puzzle the candidate—which helps to maintain the receptive state—and partly to delay the explanation of the symbols until the candidate has had a few moments to stare at the symbols themselves. The decision to put explanatory material into the dramatic part of the ritual has a number of advantages, but it runs the risk of replacing the simple experience of the symbolism with verbal knowledge of the “knowing about” variety. A pause, a cryptic statement, or some other way of filling time can help to prevent this from causing trouble.

The instructional section itself, as it happens, is rather shorter than those found in most nineteenth-century lodge rituals, magical or fraternal. People a century ago seem to have had a great deal more tolerance for long speeches than their modern descendants, and lengthy passages that were apparently moving and effective in their nineteenth-century setting tend to produce nothing better than boredom or confusion nowadays. On the other hand, there are some things that should always be given in an instructional context. The somatic and verbal triggers given power by the ritual need to be presented here, and it's usually a good idea to introduce the ideals and goals of the lodge in a speech at this time as well. If the symbolism has not been explained during the ritual, this also needs to be covered in this stage of the work.

Some aspects of the Ritual of the Athanor depend on the inner work, which we'll be exploring in Chapter Ten. Other aspects will

become clear when we turn to the question of designing and performing magical lodge ritual in Chapter Twelve. In the meantime, however, we'll examine the other major rituals of the Order of the Athanor—the Ritual of Institution, in which a new lodge is brought into being, and the Ritual of Installation, in which the lodge officers receive power on inner and outer levels.

Chapter Nine

The Rituals of Institution and Installation

Our magical lodge designer has now completed the most important part of the work: the design of the initiation ritual. The work that remains, though, is more than a matter of filling in the fine print. The Order of the Athanor needs ritual workings not only to initiate new members, but to initiate—in a very real sense of the word—new lodges, and to empower the officers of the Order’s lodges to carry out their practical and magical functions.

The essential form of both of these latter workings is derived from the “standard kit” of lodge technique. However, since the Order of the Athanor is a magical lodge rather than a fraternal one it makes use of aspects of both that have received very little attention in the mainstream of the lodge tradition. Both the institution of a lodge and the installation of its officers need to transmit a living current of power, not merely the formal right to operate a lodge. They need to link the lodge and its officers into the egregor of the Order, and they can also be used to help charge and structure that egregor. Additionally, the magical habit of drawing on the energies of planetary cycles for important workings is fully relevant to this phase of lodge work.

Our designer thus has a good deal of work to do. One part of it, however, is made a little easier by the original choice of the Order’s symbolism. In traditional Western alchemy, the period when the Sun is in the Zodiacal signs Aries and Taurus (roughly March 22 to

May 21) is of the highest importance, for it is during this period that certain crucial subtle energies descend from the heavens to the Earth. They can be collected in several forms, above all in dew gathered just at dawn. These same energies make a possible source of power for the Order's workings. Our designer carries out a series of experimental rituals on her own during this part of the year and discovers that this can indeed be done successfully. Except in unusual circumstances, the installation of officers will be done during this period of the year.

Different lodge organizations use different numbers of officers for their rituals of institution and installation. The minimum seems to be two, while the usual maximum is one installing officer for every lodge officer to be installed. The choice among the alternatives is influenced by symbolism, but it also has a great deal to do with how large and well-organized the Grand Lodge or equivalent body—if there is one—is intended to be. Our designer has already realized that the Grand Lodge of the Order of the Athanor will be quite small at first. After consideration, she decides to use three officers for instituting or installing a lodge, to go along with the three-fold symbolism used elsewhere in the Order's rituals.

The Ritual of Institution

When a new lodge is chartered, the Grand Magister will either perform the Ritual of Institution or appoint a special deputy to do so. Two other members of the Order are selected by the Grand Magister to help with the ritual, and have the titles of Grand Warder and Grand Sentinel. The five (or more) members who have founded the new lodge are also present and play a part. The requirements of the ceremony are those of the Outer Opening, except that a charter for the new lodge and a book for recording members (in lodge jargon, a members' register) must also be present. The regalia of the Magister, Guardian, and Herald are at their stations, while the regalia of the other officers are at the Warder's station. These will be needed for the Ritual of Installation.

The Ritual of Institution begins with the Grand Magister or deputy in the Magister's chair, flanked by the Grand Warder and

Grand Sentinel, who are standing. The members present will sit on the sides, leaving the officers' stations empty. The lodge is not opened beforehand, because—in a wide range of senses—there is not yet a lodge to be opened.

Here and elsewhere, the words "Grand Magister" are replaced by "Deputy Grand Magister" if a deputy is conducting the institution or installation. The ritual is performed as follows:

* * *

The Grand Magister calls the assembled members to order.

***Grand Magister:* ! Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you will take your seats. Grand Sentinel, you will secure the outer door.**

The Grand Sentinel goes by the square to the door, without making the Outer Sign, and leaves the lodge room, closing the inner door. The Grand Warder then goes to the door and waits. The Grand Sentinel knocks once on the inner door.

***Grand Warder:* Grand Magister, the outer door is secure.**

The Grand Warder goes by the square to the Warder's station and stands there.

***Grand Magister:* Grand Warder, you will examine all present in the password of the current term.**

The Grand Warder rises, goes to the Grand Magister's station, and receives the grip and the password from the Magister. The Grand Warder then goes around the lodge clockwise, moving by the square, and receives grip and password from all members.

***Grand Warder:* Grand Magister, all present are correct.**

***Grand Magister:* You will resume your station, and announce the purpose of our gathering.**

The Grand Warder returns to station.

***Grand Warder:* Grand Magister, it is my pleasure to report that a sufficient number of members of our Order, guided by its teachings and seeking to pursue its work, have united to petition the Grand Lodge of the Order of the Athanor for a charter to establish a lodge of our Order. The charter has been duly granted, and our brothers and sisters**

are here assembled so that the lodge may be duly instituted and its officers installed.

Grand Magister: You will present the applicants for the charter.

The Grand Warder leaves his or her station and circles the lodge room clockwise by the square. All the members of the new lodge fall into line behind the Grand Warder and follow. When the Grand Warder has completed the circuit of the room, he or she turns back, goes halfway down the room and then turns

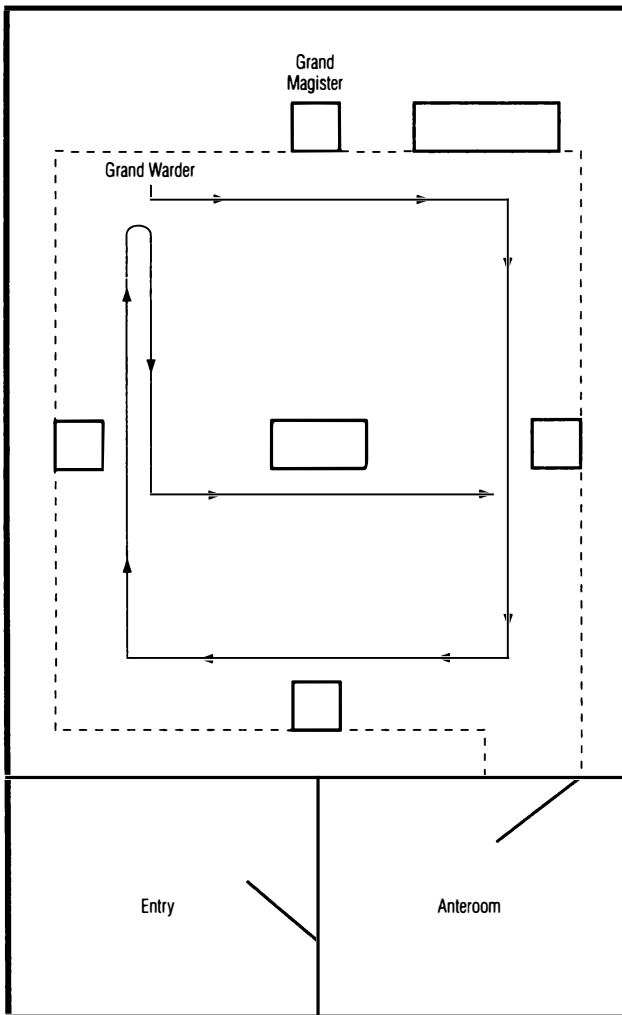


Diagram 9-1

across it, as shown in Diagram 9-1. The whole pattern of floor work finishes with the members of the new lodge lined up across the room, behind the altar; they and the Grand Warder then turn and face the Grand Magister.

Grand Magister: My brothers and sisters, it is my duty and my pleasure to present to you this charter, which transmits to you all the rights and responsibilities of a subordinate lodge of the Order of the Athanor. (The Grand Magister reads the charter aloud.) **“In the name and authority of the Grand Lodge of the Order of the Athanor, the following brothers and sisters of the Order,”** (the Grand Magister reads the names of the new lodge’s members) **“are hereby constituted as (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number), and are granted all rights, privileges and immunities proper to a subordinate lodge of the Order, subject to the restrictions imposed by the Order’s laws and regulations, and to the lawful authority of the Grand Lodge of the Order. Done this (day) day of (month), (year); signed, (name), Grand Magister; attested, (name), Grand Scribe.”**

Grand Magister: Are you willing to receive this charter, and to accept the responsibilities it brings with it?

Members of New Lodge: Yes.

Grand Magister: Then you will each place your right hand upon your heart and repeat after me:

Magister and Members of new lodge, in turn: I, (give your full name), in the presence of the Higher and of the brothers and sisters of the Athanor, do solemnly promise and declare that the charter for a subordinate lodge of the Order, read in my hearing, was applied for by me in good faith, and will not be used for any purpose except that for which it has been granted.

Grand Magister: You will sign the register of members.

The Grand Warder leads the members by the square to the Scribe’s station, where the members’ register has been placed. Each of the members signs the register in turn, and then the Grand Warder leads them back around to seats along the sides of the lodge.

Grand Magister: My brothers and sisters, by virtue of the power vested in me, I declare you a duly instituted lodge of the Order of the Athanor, to be named and styled (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number).

The Grand Magister knocks !!! All who are not already standing rise.

Grand Magister: Recalling the fellowship we owe, one to another, let us invoke the Higher in silence.

All members are silent for a time, building up the specific visualization from the Inner Work, which is the same as that used in the Outer Opening. Meanwhile, the Grand Warder takes the lamp from the Magister's station and, moving by the square, lights the two candles beside the altar. The Grand Warder then returns to his or her station.

Grand Magister: Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you will give the Outer Sign.

All do so, facing the Grand Magister, who also gives the sign.

Grand Magister: Grand Warder, you will proclaim this lodge duly instituted.

Grand Warder: In the presence of the Higher, and by command of the Grand Magister, I proclaim that the flame of the Athanor has been lit in (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number).

The Grand Magister knocks ! All members are seated.

Grand Magister: Grand Warder, you will inform the Grand Sentinel that the lodge is open in the Outer.

The Grand Warder goes to the door and knocks once. The Grand Sentinel knocks once in response, and the Grand Warder opens the door and lets the Grand Sentinel in. The Grand Warder then returns to station. The Grand Sentinel goes by the square to the altar, faces the Grand Warder and makes the Outer Sign. The Grand Warder replies with the same sign. The Grand Sentinel then goes by the square and takes a seat near the door.

The Ritual of Installation: Two Beginnings

Once a lodge has been instituted, its officers need to be installed. Each spring thereafter the installation ceremony will be repeated for the new term's officers. The core of the ceremony will be the same in either case, but the beginning will be different. A lodge that has not been newly instituted has officers already in place, and these will need to formally surrender their positions before the new officers can take their places.

The Ritual of Installation for a newly instituted lodge, by contrast, has a much simpler beginning. It starts immediately after the institution has been completed, and the lodge is considered to be open in the Outer at that point. This version of the ceremony is performed as follows:

Version One

***Grand Magister:* Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, we will now proceed to install the officers of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number) for the term now before us, and to light the flame of the Athanor. Has the lodge chosen its initial elective officers?**

If the answer is "yes," the ritual proceeds. If "no," the members will proceed to nominate and elect a Magister, Guardian, Herald, Scribe and Treasurer in the usual way. Once this is done, the ritual proceeds.

***Grand Magister:* Magister-elect, Guardian-elect, and Herald-elect, you will take your stations for this time, so that the lodge may be raised from the Outer to the Inner. I will take the station of the Past Magister for that purpose.**

Magister-elect, Guardian-elect, and Herald-elect move by the square to their stations, and put on the regalia of their offices. Grand Magister also goes by the square to the Past Magister's station.

***Grand Magister:* Magister-elect, you will proceed to raise the lodge to the Inner.**

At this point, the entire Inner Opening is performed exactly as given in Chapter Seven, except that the Grand Magister, Grand Warder and Grand Sentinel take the roles of the Past Magister, Warder and Sentinel. The Magister-elect addresses all officers by their proper titles during this ceremony (“Grand Sentinel” instead of “Sentinel,” and so forth). When the Inner Opening is complete, the Grand Magister leaves the Past Magister’s station and goes to the altar, facing the Magister.

Grand Magister: Magister-elect, the password of the last term is made void. I now require you and your officers-elect to relinquish your stations.

The Magister knocks !!! to call up the lodge. The Grand Magister advances in a straight line to the Magister’s station. When he or she reaches it, the Magister leaves it and goes straight to the altar, puts the Magister’s regalia on the altar, then goes to stand with the other lodge members along the side of the room. At the same time, the Guardian-elect and Herald-elect leave their stations and do the same, placing their regalia on either side of the Magister’s. The Grand Magister then knocks once to seat the lodge, and at this point the Grand Warder takes the collars of the other officers and arranges them on the altar, then returns to his or her place by the circle.

Grand Magister: Magister-elect, have you appointed a Past Magister for the term before us?

If the new lodge has a member who has served as Magister in another lodge, and who will not be holding another office in the lodge, the Magister-elect will say:

Magister: Grand Magister, our brother/sister (name) holds the rank of Past Magister in our Order, and will be taking that part in our work.

Grand Magister: Let the Past Magister advance to the altar.

If there are no Past Magisters in the new lodge, or if all of them will be filling other offices, the Magister-elect will say:

Magister: Grand Magister, although our brother/sister (name) does not hold the rank of Past Magister in our Order, he/she has consented to take that part in our work.

Grand Magister: Let the honorary Past Magister advance to the altar.

The Past Magister, honorary or otherwise, rises and goes by the circle to the Guardian's end of the lodge room, then advances straight to the altar and stands, facing the Grand Magister, on the Guardian's side of the altar. From this point on, the rest of the Ritual of Installation proceeds as described below.

* * *

If the lodge has not been newly instituted, it will be opened in the Outer by the outgoing officers in the usual way, and the following beginning for the Ritual of Installation will take place immediately afterward. The installing officers are waiting in the anteroom during the Outer Opening. This version of the beginning is performed as follows:

Version Two

A single knock sounds at the inner door.

Sentinel: Magister, an alarm at the door.

Magister: You will investigate.

Sentinel goes to inner door and opens the wicket or speaking tube. If there is none, he or she opens the door slightly.

Grand Warder: The Grand Magister with his/her officers, to perform the Ritual of Installation.

Sentinel closes door, turns to Magister.

Sentinel: Magister, the Grand Magister and his/her officers have come to perform the Ritual of Installation.

Magister: You will admit them.

The Magister knocks !!! to call up the lodge. The Sentinel opens the door, and the Grand Magister enters, followed by the Grand Warder, and Grand Sentinel, in that order. They advance to the altar, give the Outer Sign to the Magister, and receive it in answer. Magister then knocks ! to seat the lodge.

Grand Magister: Magister, I and my officers have come for the purpose of installing the officers of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number) for the term now beginning, and

of renewing the flame of the Athanor. Is the lodge prepared for the ceremony?

Magister: Grand Magister, all is in readiness.

Grand Magister: Then you will proceed to raise the lodge to the Inner. Grand Sentinel, you will secure the outer door.

Grand Magister and Grand Warder go by the square to two seats prepared for them on one side of the room. Grand Sentinel goes by the square to the inner door, leaves, and signals in the usual way. At this point the entire Inner Opening is performed exactly as given in Chapter Seven, except that the instructions to the Sentinel are omitted. When the Inner Opening is complete, the Grand Magister and Grand Warder leave their places and go to the altar, facing the Magister.

Grand Magister: Magister, the password of the last term is made void. I will now require you and your officers to relinquish your stations.

The Magister knocks !!! to call up the lodge. The Grand Magister and Grand Warder advance straight to the Magister's station. When they reach it, the Magister leaves it and goes straight to the altar, puts the Magister's regalia on the altar, and then stays there, facing the Guardian's station. At the same time, the Past Magister, Guardian, and Herald leave their stations and go in straight lines to the altar, placing their regalia beside the Magister's. These three officers then go in single file, Guardian leading, to the Guardian's end of the room, and finally go by the circle to stand with the other lodge members along one side of the lodge room.

Then the Scribe, Treasurer, and all appointed officers go by the circle to the Guardian's end of the lodge room, and in a single line advance straight to the altar, where each places his or her regalia around those already there. Each then turns and goes back to the Guardian's end of the room, and then goes by the circle to stand at the sides of the room.

As soon as the Warder leaves his or her station, the Grand Warder takes it. When all officers have surrendered their regalia and all but the Magister have returned to the sides of

the room, the Grand Magister knocks ! to seat the lodge. The Magister goes to the Guardian's side of the altar and faces the the Grand Magister, who occupies the Magister's station.

Magister: Grand Magister, my officers have relinquished their stations, and the period of our work is completed.

From this point on, the rest of the Ritual of Installation proceeds as described below.

The Ritual of Installation: Completion

Once one or the other of these beginnings have taken place, the rest of the Ritual of Installation follows. As mentioned earlier, this is founded on the symbolism of the descending energies of spring, which are used in alchemical practice and play a large role in alchemical theory as well.

It's important to keep in mind, though, that this is not merely an arbitrary symbolism. Planetary cycles of energy play a crucial part in a wide range of Western magical traditions as well as in alchemy, and these cycles have a concrete reality that is too little recognized in the present time. The position of the Earth amid the Sun, Moon, and planets relates to energy cycles within the Earth's subtle body—this is the basis for astrology, as magically understood—and any of these cycles can be used to guide and energize magical workings. The Sun's influence is far and away the most powerful, and the Sun in spring has influences and effects that most people recognize whether they have magical training or not. It's no accident that Beltane, Easter, and the Spring Equinox ceremony of the Golden Dawn (among other ceremonies) all take place when the Sun is in the same two-month window of interaction with the Earth.

The Installation Ritual of the Order of the Athanor normally takes place during the same period. (If a lodge is instituted at another time of year, its officers will be installed at that point, but the ceremony will be repeated to install new officers when spring next comes.) As with many other springtime ceremonies, this one serves to establish a vessel for the descending energies, and uses them to charge and enliven the egregors of lodge and Order alike.

Much of this process takes place in the inner work discussed in the next chapter, but elements of it are also echoed in the structure and symbolism of the ritual itself.

The ritual is continued as follows:

* * *

Grand Magister (addressing outgoing Magister or Past Magister): **The work of the Past Magister is to represent the members of the lodge in the work of our order, and to offer them such guidance and instruction as your own knowledge and abilities will permit, holding the harmony of the lodge and the progress of its members as your highest goals. Are you willing to accept this task?**

Past Magister: **I am.**

Grand Magister: **Then I proclaim you Past Magister of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number), and present you with the regalia of that office. As representative of the members of this lodge, you will then trace the Threefold Spiral.**

The Grand Warder, during the Grand Magister's speech, goes straight to the altar, takes the Past Magister's regalia from the altar, and places it on the new Past Magister. Once this is done, the Past Magister turns, goes clockwise around the altar and then to the Guardian's station, and begins walking clockwise slowly about the lodge room, spiralling slowly inward. He or she completes three circuits of the room and finishes at the Guardian's side of the altar, facing the Grand Magister, as shown in Diagram 9-2. The Grand Warder remains at the altar during this process, standing beside it on the Herald's side.

Past Magister: **Grand Magister, the Threefold Spiral is complete.**

Grand Magister: **You will take your place beside the altar. Magister-elect, Guardian-elect and Herald-elect, you will advance to the altar.**

The three officers-elect go by the circle to the Guardian's station, and then go straight to the altar, facing the Grand Magister. Meanwhile, the Past Magister goes to the side of the

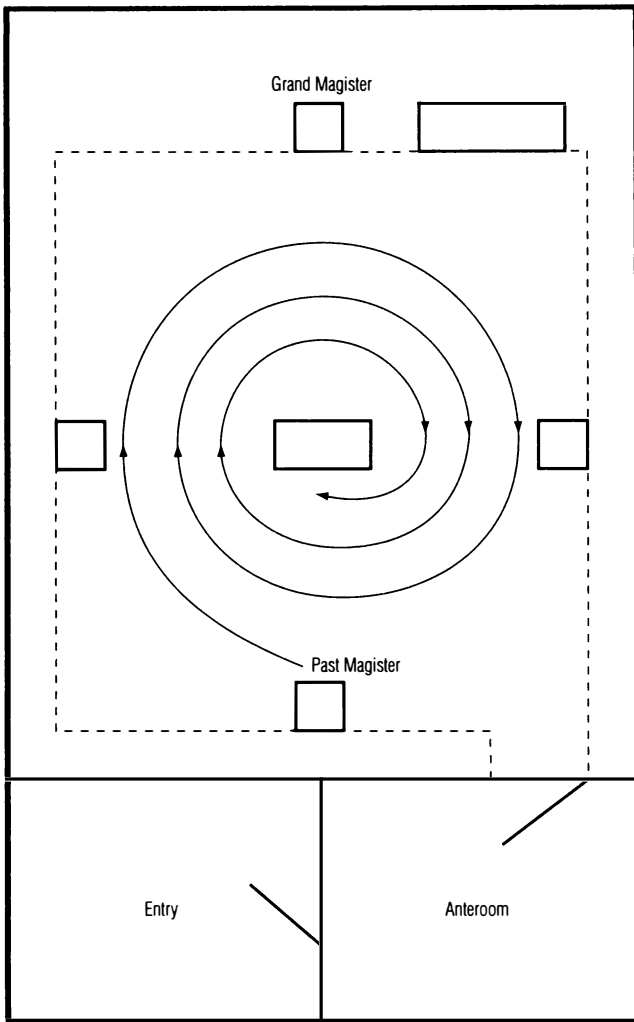


Diagram 9-2

altar closest to his or her station, and faces toward the Herald's station.

Grand Magister: Magister-elect, you have been elected by your brothers and sisters in this lodge to govern the work of the lodge for the next year. It is your duty to be impartial in all matters that may come before the lodge, to maintain the spirit of fellowship in the lodge, and to cooperate

with other lodges and with the Grand Lodge in carrying out the work of our Order. You will bear the symbol of Sulphur, the active and energizing Principle of alchemy. Are you willing to accept this task?

Magister-elect: I am.

Grand Magister: Then I proclaim you Magister of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number), and present you with the regalia of that office.

Grand Warder puts regalia on Magister.

Grand Magister: Guardian-elect, you have been elected to hold the second position in your lodge for the ensuing year. It will be your duty to preside in the Magister's place when he/she is forced to be absent from a meeting of the lodge, to assist him/her in all the duties of his/her office, and to have formal charge of the inner door during the meetings of the lodge. You will bear the symbol of Salt, the receptive and limiting Principle in alchemy. Are you willing to accept this task?

Guardian-elect: I am.

Grand Magister: Then I proclaim you Guardian of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number), and present you with the regalia of that office.

Grand Warder puts regalia on Guardian.

Grand Magister: Herald-elect, you have been chosen to hold the third position in this lodge, one with special responsibilities in the work of initiation. It will be your duty to guide each candidate to the light of the Athanor, and to assist the Magister and Guardian of your lodge as your abilities may allow or as circumstances may require. You will bear the symbol of Mercury, the mediating and spiritual Principle in alchemy. Are you willing to accept this task?

Herald-elect: I am.

Grand Magister: Then I proclaim you Herald of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number), and present you with the regalia of that office.

Grand Warder puts regalia on Herald.

Grand Magister: You will take your places at the altar.

Magister, Guardian and Herald all move to the sides of the altar closest to their station, while the Grand Warder steps to one side.

Grand Magister: You will now advance to your stations.

The Magister, Past Magister, Guardian, and Herald all turn at the same time and go straight to their stations. All but the Magister take their stations and sit. The Magister stops at the Magister's station, turns, and goes to the Warder's station, where he or she sits.

Grand Magister: Let the Scribe-elect and Treasurer-elect advance to the altar.

They do so, going by the circle to the Guardian's station and then straight to the altar.

Grand Magister: Scribe-elect, it will be your responsibility to keep accurate and impartial records of the work of your lodge, and to have the seal of the lodge in your keeping. Much of the harmony and success of the lodge will rest on the careful performance of your duties. Are you willing to accept this task?

Scribe-elect: I am.

Grand Magister: Then I proclaim you Scribe of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number), and present you with the regalia of that office.

Grand Warder puts regalia on Scribe.

Grand Magister: Treasurer-elect, you will be responsible for the funds and resources of the lodge. It will be your duty to manage them for the good of the lodge and the Order, setting aside all personal motives. Are you willing to accept this duty?

Treasurer-elect: I am.

Grand Magister: Then I proclaim you Treasurer of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number), and present you with the regalia of that office.

Grand Warder puts regalia on Treasurer.

Grand Magister: **You will now advance to your stations.**

The Scribe and Treasurer turn and go straight back to the Guardian's station, and then go by the circle to their stations.

Grand Magister: **Magister, the elected officers of this lodge have been duly installed. You will approach this station.**

The Magister rises and stands in front of the Magister's station, facing the Grand Magister.

Grand Magister: **By the power and the trust which have been placed in me as Grand Magister of the Order of the Athanor, I seat you in your place as Magister of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number), and confer on you the password of the term before us. You will install the appointed officers of this lodge, transmit the new password to the brothers and sisters, and take up the duties that await you.**

The Grand Magister knocks !!! All rise. The Magister advances to station and takes his or her place. The Grand Magister communicates the password in a whisper, and then leaves the Magister's station and goes to the Warder's station. The Magister knocks ! All are seated.

Magister: **I appoint (name) as Warder and (name) as Sentinel for the next year. Warder and Sentinel, you will advance to the altar.**

They do so, going by the circle to the Guardian's station and then advancing straight to the altar.

Magister: **Warder, it will be your duty to assist me in all my duties, to proclaim the lodge open and closed, and to test each person present when the lodge is opened. Are you willing to accept this task?**

Warder: **I am.**

Magister: **Then I proclaim you Warder of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number), and present you with the regalia of that office.**

Grand Warder puts regalia on Warder.

Magister: Sentinel, it will be your duty to guard the outer door during the ritual work of the lodge. Are you willing to accept this task?

Sentinel: I am.

Magister: Then I proclaim you Sentinel of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number), and present you with the regalia of that office.

Grand Warder puts regalia on Sentinel.

Magister: Warder, you will take your station. Sentinel, you will take a seat within the inner door.

The Warder and Sentinel return to the Guardian's station and then go by the circle to their places. The Grand Magister rises and goes straight to the Past Magister's side of the altar, and he or she and the Grand Warder face the Magister.

Magister: Warder, you will receive the password and transmit it to the brothers and sisters of this lodge.

The Warder rises and goes to the Magister's station, where the Magister gives him or her the grip and communicates the password in a whisper. The Warder then goes clockwise around the lodge, giving the grip and whispering the password to each lodge member.

Grand Magister: Grand Warder, you will proclaim the completion of our work.

Grand Warder: In the presence of the Higher, and by command of the Grand Magister, I proclaim that the flame of the Athanor has been renewed, and that the officers of (name of lodge) Lodge Number (number) have been installed and empowered for the work of the term now before us.

Grand Magister: Magister, I leave this lodge in your care. You will proceed with the work.

The Grand Magister and Grand Warder turn round to face the Guardian. They go straight back toward the Guardian's station, and then go by the circle to seats on the side of the lodge room. The Magister then performs the Inner Closing.

Next, the Grand Sentinel is called back into the lodge room and the Sentinel takes his or her place. The Magister then performs the Outer Closing.

Chapter Ten

The Inner Work of the Order

The material covered in the last four chapters will be familiar to anyone who has had any personal experience with the lodge system. The kind of organization, symbolism, and ritual used by the Order of the Athanor is quite close to that used by the surviving fraternal orders, and the latter two are closer still to the way things were done in many magical lodges before the time of the Golden Dawn. In fact, the Order of the Athanor (or another order drawn up on similar lines) could conceivably use nothing but the materials covered so far, leaving magic out of any active role in the lodge process, and still operate quite effectively in its own way. The result would be something like a fraternal order for magicians, serving social and symbolic functions but not magical ones. Such a lodge would be useful and interesting in its own sphere.

However, the full potential of the magical lodge requires the fusion of traditional lodge work with the disciplines of ritual magic. This, as we've seen, was one of the great contributions of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and it serves as the foundation for the truly magical side of lodge activities. In the Golden Dawn, these deeper dimensions of work redefined the whole initiatory system and gave rise to a complex toolkit of magical approaches that could be used by any of the Order's adepts. In the Order of the Athanor, similarly, many parts of the ritual work—the

Openings and Closings, most of the floor work throughout the ceremonies, the dramatic half of the Ritual of the Athanor, and important parts of the Rituals of Institution and Installation—have been designed with an eye to the needs of magic. A number of the formulae contained in these ceremonies have been designed so they can also be put to use outside the lodge, providing the Order's members with an array of approaches to practical magic.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the methods of magical practice used in the Order of the Athanor's workings are taken from the toolkit of basic Golden Dawn magical techniques. This is partly because these are the most commonly used methods of magic at present, and partly because they are the methods I know and am qualified to teach. Of those methods, focused visualization is by far the most important, for three reasons. First, nearly all current esoteric systems use it as a major part of their systems of magical technique. Second, it does not require the magicians using it to agree on some specific spiritual symbolism, unlike such methods as the use of Divine Names. Third, it is fairly easy to use effectively at a modest level of magical skill, but it can handle very high levels of magical power equally well.

It is worth repeating, though, that this is far from the only method that can be used to open up an inner dimension to lodge work. If you have been trained in a different system, it may be useful to go over this chapter with that other system in mind, noting the ways in which its methods could summon and direct similar forces while providing a magical foundation for ritual practice.

Opening in the Outer

We'll begin with the magical work of the Outer Opening, both because it comes first in any Order ritual and because it offers a fairly simple example of the sort of inner work that will be used all through the Order's rituals. Since the Outer Opening is used at times (such as business meetings) when the more intense levels of magical consciousness aren't particularly useful, its inner work is limited. There are only three places in the ritual, in fact, that call for magical action.

The first of these takes place near the beginning, when the Sentinel goes to secure the outer door. The two knocks, one by the Sentinel and the other by the Guardian, signal the members of the lodge to visualize a barrier of darkness just outside the limits of the lodge room, surrounding it on all sides and sealing it off from the outside world. This is reaffirmed by all lodge members whenever the same pattern of knocks at the inner door is repeated. Here and elsewhere, the Guardian takes the lead in forming this particular visualization, and maintains it when other members are doing something else. It's also worth noting that whenever the inner door is opened and someone enters or leaves the lodge, the Guardian and the other members visualize an opening being made, and then closed, in the barrier of darkness.

The act of sealing does the same thing for the lodge that a banishing ritual does for an individual magician beginning a ceremony. It closes the space off from outside influences, and focuses the attention of the lodge members on the work to be done inside the lodge. (It can also be used as basic training for a formula of magical invisibility, a point we'll return to later in this chapter.)

The second time inner work is used comes near the end of the Outer Opening, when the Magister instructs the members to "invoke the Higher in silence." At this point, all members visualize above the altar the symbol of the Order—a equal-sided triangle of light, one point upwards, with a flame burning in the middle of it. The two lower points are located at the wicks of the candles on either side of the altar, so that the flame itself seems to hover in the air above the altar itself.

When the Warder lights the two candles, the golden light of the flames is seen as spreading along the lines of the triangle until the entire triangle is golden. This visualization plays the same role in the lodge work that an invocation does in individual ritual; it calls down the core energy that is used in the ritual work to follow.

The image is held while the members make the Outer Sign and the Warder proclaims the lodge open. It is released only when the Magister knocks once to seat the lodge. The third element of inner work in the Outer Opening occurs when the sealing of the lodge is repeated and reinforced, which completes this phase of the process.

Opening in the Inner

Once the lodge is open in the Outer, the lodge has been sealed against outside forces, and the forces at the heart of the Order's work have been invoked into the center of the lodge. This framework of forces establishes a polarity between the outer edges and the center of the lodge space. This polarity derives from alchemical symbolism, and will be central to much of the work that follows.

It is at this point that the lodge begins the Inner Opening and sets out to raise itself and its members to the more intense and more specifically magical states of consciousness needed for initiatory ritual. There are six stages to this process.

First of all, the Sentinel returns to his or her station, and the sealing of the lodge is reaffirmed yet again, partly to reinforce the barrier of energies and partly to mark the beginning of a new phase in the work. Here and at all later sealings, the barrier of darkness needs only to be recognized, not consciously built up. In a lodge with a well-developed egregor, in fact, the presence of the barrier will be clear to anyone who turns his or her attention even for a moment to the outer edge of the lodge room.

Second, the lodge is purified with water and consecrated with fire. In Golden Dawn lodges and most of the groups descended from the Golden Dawn tradition, this is done at the four quarters, tracing out a circle at the limits of the lodge space. The Order of the Athanor does this a little differently. In its workings, the energies of the lodge are first awakened in the energized space over the altar and then expanded to encompass the whole lodge. Thus, while the Warder is purifying three times with the cup of water, the members of the lodge visualize a sphere of blue energy above and around the altar, containing the triangle and flame visualized in the Outer Opening. When the Warder consecrates three times with the burning incense, the members visualize a sphere of red energy taking shape in the same place, blending with the blue to create a brilliant purple light around the golden triangle and the flame.

Third, when the four officers at the quarters go to the altar, they visualize themselves entering into the sphere of purple light, and as each one silently repeats the permanent password—*Lapis*—

they concentrate on establishing a link between the energies awakened at the altar and the medallions of office they wear.

This link is critical to what comes next. As they turn and begin spiralling away from the altar, they visualize the sphere of purple light expanding so that it still contains them. When they stand before their stations, the light continues to expand in the corners of the lodge room until it fills all the space within the barrier of darkness established at the sealing of the lodge. All the other members of the lodge also visualize the expansion of the sphere of light.

Fourth, the same four officers formally take their stations. As they step into their places, each one visualizes a sphere of energy radiating out from his or her medallion of office. Each sphere corresponds to the color and symbol of the officer. The sphere for the Magister is brilliant red with the symbol of Sulphur at its center, that of the Guardian is black with the symbol of Salt, that of the Herald is white with the symbol of Mercury, and that of the Past Magister is gold with the Ouroboros serpent.

Each of these spheres expands until it completely contains the officer, and the symbol enlarges to a height of two to three feet. Each officer, as he or she visualizes the sphere, also repeats a keyword, which is *Philosophorum*. (*Lapis Philosophorum*, the Stone of the Philosophers, is one of the most common names for the mysterious transformative substance that the alchemists sought to make in their laboratories.) The keyword is used as a trigger for the energies each officer directs during the initiatory work. After a few repetitions of the Inner Opening in a given lodge, the simple repetition of the keyword will tend to bring the appropriate energies quickly into focus.

Fifth, the lodge is established on the Inner. At this point all the imagery established in the Opening is visualized again: the barrier of darkness outside the lodge, the triangle and flame over the altar, the purple light filling the lodge, and the four colored spheres around the officers at the four quarters. This simply reaffirms and solidifies the imagery, fixing it in place so that it forms a stable context for the work to come. This visualization is continued while the Ascending Sign is given and the Warder proclaims the lodge open in the Inner, and is released only when the Magister seats the lodge.

Sixth, the sealing of the lodge is reaffirmed by the knocks of the Guardian and Sentinel. This time, however, the presence of the purple light just inside the barrier of darkness is part of the visualization, and this same pattern is repeated any time the Inner sequence of knocks—one, two, three, one—is repeated.

Closing in the Inner

The inner work of the Closing mirrors that of the Opening just as the ritual forms do, and for the same reason. Only the direction of movement is different. The Inner Closing also has six steps.

First, the sealing of the lodge is repeated, with the purple light seen extending up to the edges of the barrier of darkness.

Second, the Warder purifies with water and consecrates with fire, just as in the Opening. This is repeated here to clear away the residual energies of the ritual work, leaving only those of the lodge itself. The same visualizations are used as before; the final sphere of purple light is envisioned as a more intense area within the energies of the lodge.

Third, the four officers at the quarters spiral back in toward the altar. As they do so, they and all members of the lodge visualize the purple sphere drawing inward until it returns to its former size above and around the altar. Standing at the altar, they repeat the permanent password, *Lapis*, and this time concentrate on disconnecting the purple energies of the awakened lodge from their medallions of office. The officers then turn and go back to their stations, leaving the sphere of purple light behind.

Fourth, the officers contract their spheres of energy and symbols as they step back into their stations, using a different keyword, *Occultus*. (*Lapis Occultus*, the Hidden Stone, is another term for the goal of the alchemical quest.) The energies of the spheres are drawn back into the medallions of office and stored for the next working in the Inner.

Fifth, as the lodge is formally returned to the Outer, the sphere of purple energies is contracted into the flame at the center of the triangle, where it can no longer be seen. At this point, the lodge has the same inner form it had at the end of the Outer Opening—the

flame and triangle above the altar, and the barrier of darkness outside the borders of the lodge room. This visualization is held while the members of the lodge make the Descending Sign and the Warder proclaims the lodge open in the Outer.

Sixth, as the Guardian and Sentinel knock, the usual sealing of the lodge in the Outer is reenacted and reinforced.

Closing in the Outer

Here, as in the Outer Opening, there are three elements of inner work to be done, and one of them—the sealing of the lodge, which is repeated at the beginning of the Closing, needs no comment.

The second takes place during the reciting of the Emerald Tablet. During this time, the members of the lodge again visualize the triangle and flame above the altar. When the reading reaches the word “finished” in the last sentence of the Tablet, though, the symbol is visualized as dissolving into formless light, which radiates out in all directions as far as the barrier of darkness, and then is no longer seen.

The third element of the inner work occurs when the Warder has finished proclaiming the lodge closed, and the Magister knocks once with his or her gavel. At this point, the barrier of darkness itself is visualized as unraveling and dispersing, until it can no longer be seen. The Guardian, who has the responsibility of “guarding the door” on inner as well as outer levels, should take the lead in this process and make sure that all traces of the barrier are gone at the meeting’s end.

The Ritual of the Athanor

The inner work of initiation is normally the most demanding part of any magical lodge’s activities, and for good reason: the success of every other part of magical lodge work depends on the potency and impact of the initiation ceremonies. The Order of the Athanor is no exception. During the Ritual of the Athanor, a series of energy patterns are created by the lodge members, allowed to have their impact on the candidate, and then replaced by others. It is essential that this be done smoothly and effectively—an achievement that,

like any other goal in magical training, can best be reached by intensive study and regular practice.

The inner work of the initiation begins as soon as the Warder leaves the lodge room to prepare the candidate. As the black cloth, the skull, and the sword are put on the altar. All members visualize the purple energy that fills the lodge space turning to black, an intense darkness that fills the room like smoke. Along with the darkness comes a suffocating sense of brooding, restriction, and gloom. Only the symbols on the altar and the flames of the two candles beside it are clearly visible in the darkness.

Around these, forming a ring around the altar, a circle of flames is visualized, crackling and dancing in the darkness like a bonfire in the night. At the same time, all around the outer edge of the lodge room, towering shapes in black hooded robes are visualized, their faces invisible in the shadows high above. These are the Watchers, legendary spirits who traditionally guard the entrance to the inner realms of being, and who watch the candidate with a penetrating gaze.

This pattern of imagery—the thick darkness, the fires around the altar, and the shadowy presence of the Watchers—is maintained all through the black phase of the initiation, from the point when the black cloth is placed on the altar until the white cloth is put down in its place. All the lodge members who do not have other work to do in the ceremony concentrate on holding this visualization at the highest possible level of intensity.

When the candidate enters the lodge room, the four major officers—Magister, Guardian, Herald, and Past Magister—turn their attention to him or her, leaving the rest of the imagery to the other members. The candidate is visualized as a figure surrounded by an egg-shaped region of muddy darkness, barely lit from within by a faint light. He or she is symbolically the raw material or *prima materia* of the alchemical work, and this egg (which represents the aura or subtle energy body of the candidate) is the material on which the alchemy of initiation will work. This visualization is maintained all through the first stages of the initiation, as the candidate is barred by the Guardian, given into the Herald's keeping, taken around the hall, and up to the altar.

As the candidate reaches the altar, all members visualize the circle of flames springing up into a roaring blaze. As the blindfold is lifted for the first time, the muddy darkness of the candidate's aura is visualized as burned away into pure blackness. No trace of light can be seen coming through it from within. This new visualization is maintained until the candidate returns to the altar a second time.

Meanwhile, the candidate begins a second journey around the lodge hall, and the black phase gives way to the white phase. As the white cloth, the candle, and the book are set on the altar, all members visualize the blackness in the hall giving way to a brilliant white light, which fills the lodge room like mist. The circle of flame around the altar is kept in place, and the Watchers are still there, but now robed in white. With this pattern of imagery comes a feeling of openness and vast space, as though the lodge room had suddenly become many times larger.

When the candidate returns to the altar and is shown the symbols of the white phase, his or her aura again passes through the flame and is transformed into pure white, through which the candidate's body can be dimly seen. This visualization is maintained until he or she returns to the altar a third time.

The red cloth, symbols, and serpent mark the coming of the third stage of the initiation, and when they are put on the altar the white light in the lodge room breaks up into a shimmering rainbow of colors and then turns brilliant red. The imagery of the circle of flames and the Watchers is retained, although the Watchers now have red robes, and each towering figure bears the symbol of Ouroboros, the serpent swallowing its tail, over the center of its chest. In place of the brooding oppression of the black phase and the expansion of the white, the red phase has a feeling of vast power.

When the candidate comes once again to the altar and the blindfold is lifted, the flames around the altar burn away the whiteness from his or her aura, leaving it blazing red. This image is maintained while the candidate is shown the symbols of the red phase, is introduced to the Magister, and takes the obligation.

When the members of the lodge formally accept the candidate, saying "We do," the fires around the altar flare up one last time, and the red color gives way to shining gold in his or her aura. At

the same time, three other things are visualized. First, the Watchers all make the Outer Sign, signifying that the candidate has passed them by, and disappear. Second, the light in the lodge room changes from red to gold, and then back to purple. Third, the symbol of the Order, the flame and triangle, is visualized in the candidate's aura, just above and in front of his or her head. All these visualizations are built up and held as the blindfold and bonds are removed and the Warder and Herald bring cup and censer to the altar. During them, too, the feeling of power that marks the red phase is replaced by a sense of stability, harmony and balance.

The purification and consecration of the candidate marks the last major element of inner work in the ceremony. As in the Inner Opening and Closing, the purification with water forms a blue sphere above and around the altar, and the consecration with fire joins red to blue, forming a sphere of purple light. These spheres enclose the candidate as well as the altar, but his or her own aura remains golden, forming the complementary color to purple.

When this has been completed, all members visualize the ordinary imagery of a lodge open in the Inner, re-establishing it in place, and then proceed to the instructional part of the ceremony and the Closing that follows.

The Ritual of Institution

The Ritual of Institution is, from the perspective of inner work, simply a different way of opening a lodge in the Outer. The one significant difference is that it opens a lodge that has never been opened before, and thus does not yet have an egregor of its own to reinforce the effect of the ritual work. It is for this reason that officers of the Grand Lodge do this first opening, and lead the inner work involved in it.

This is precisely the same as the inner work of the Outer Opening. When the Grand Sentinel and Grand Warder exchange knocks at the beginning of the ceremony, everyone present—the Grand Lodge officers and the members of the new lodge alike—visualize the barrier of darkness surrounding the lodge room, closing it off from the outside world. Similarly, the invocation of

the Higher, with its formulation of the Order's symbol above the altar, and the final sealing of the lodge are done in the way already discussed.

The Ritual of Installation

The installation of new officers, by contrast, makes use of its own magical formulae, and requires approaches to inner work that are a little different from those we've examined so far. The first element of this inner work takes place when the password is declared void, and the officers of the past term (or the officers-elect who have assisted in opening the lodge in the Inner) surrender their stations and regalia. This is in many ways the critical act of the entire ritual. It clears away the energies of the past term, which are anchored in the password, and it returns the specialized energy patterns of the officers—patterns that, especially in the case of the four major officers, are focused in the regalia—to the center of the lodge's collective energy at the altar.

This is mirrored and amplified by the inner work of this stage. As the Grand Magister declares the old password void, all present visualize the triangle and flame above the altar dissolving into formless light and dispersing. At this point the inner aspect of the lodge is simply purple light with the barrier of darkness surrounding it. It is a vessel, into which new energy will be poured.

It is in this vessel that the officers of the past term relinquish their offices. The four major officers, as they advance to the altar, silently repeat the keyword *Occultus* to contract their spheres of energy into their regalia of office. (The password *Lapis* is not used here, since this phase of the working isn't intended to shape the energies of the lodge as a whole.) They then place their regalia on the altar, giving up their offices in every sense, and go to join the other members of the lodge. The other officers do not have specific patterns of energy to give up, but they carry out the same act in their own way.

It is at this point, with the lodge transformed into an empty vessel for the descending energies, that the Past Magister is installed and begins the Threefold Spiral. As the Past Magister receives the regalia of that office, he or she silently repeats the keyword

Philosophorum, expanding the sphere of golden light and the symbol of the Ouroboros serpent to fill his or her aura. As the representative of the entire lodge, he or she then goes to the Guardian's station and begins to spiral slowly inward.

As this is beginning, everyone present visualizes a vortex taking shape in the lodge, centered on the altar and turning as the Past Magister moves. It spins faster and faster, rising upward through the barrier of darkness into the heights. Down it, subtly at first but with increasing force, comes a current of golden energy; this is drawn down by the vortex and gathers itself above the altar, where the symbol of the Order was—and will be. It forms a sphere of golden light, bright as the Sun, the same size as the sphere formed by the purification and consecration in the Inner Opening.

When the Past Magister proclaims the Threefold Spiral complete, the vortex slows and stops, but the sphere of golden light remains. All of the officers' regalia of the lodge are within the sphere, and those present focus on the idea of the light charging, purifying and empowering the regalia.

In the following section of the ritual, each of the elected officers advances to the altar and receives his or her regalia. As this is done, each of the three remaining major officers silently repeats the keyword *Philosophorum* while donning the regalia, and visualizes the energy and symbol of his or her office expanding, just as in the Inner Opening. When the major officers go to their stations, the lodge is reestablished in the Inner, except that the symbol of the Order has not yet taken shape above the altar.

There is no particular inner work to be done while the other officers receive their regalia. The one remaining element focuses on the password of the new term, which the Magister receives from the Grand Magister and gives through the Warder to the other members of the lodge. As the Magister is given the password, he or she visualizes the sphere of golden light above the altar suddenly transforming itself into the triangle and flame of the Order, which shines with golden light. As the Warder receives the password, he or she visualizes the same thing, and each member of the lodge does the same as he or she is given the password. (The Grand Lodge officers present, for their part, already know the password,

and they visualize the transformation of sphere into symbol when the Magister formally takes his or her station.)

This completes the inner work involved in the Order's rituals. It does not, however, exhaust the magical potentials of the ceremonies we've outlined in the last three chapters. Just as the techniques of ritual magic are brought into the lodge setting to empower the lodge's work, the forms and symbols of the lodge can be put to use outside the lodge by its members in a range of individual magical workings, and these form the other side of the Order of the Athanor's inner work. All these workings are designed to be used by initiates of the Order. All of them, though, are based on formulae that can easily be adapted to the rituals of other lodges.

Applications of the Outer Opening

We begin here, as before, with the Outer Opening, both because it comes first in the order of ritual work and because it provides a relatively simple introduction to the way magical applications can be derived from lodge ritual.

Most lodges, fraternal as well as magical, put a good deal of emphasis on sealing the lodge at the beginning of opening rituals. This has been particularly emphasized in the Order of the Athanor. Partly, our imaginary lodge designer does this to reinforce a skill that is too often neglected in modern group practice, but she has another motive as well. The process of sealing the lodge can provide effective approaches to two different disciplines of practical magic. The first is the useful practice of sealing the aura; the second is one approach to the magical art of invisibility.

Sealing the Aura

The aura or, to give it its technical name in Golden Dawn magic, the Sphere of Sensation, is an egg-shaped region of energy extending several feet out from the physical body. It serves as the intermediary by which all the forces of the macrocosm, the universe as a whole, interact with the microcosm of the human individual. In some traditional writings, it is called "the magical mirror of the universe." This is a fair description of the way it functions, because

every pattern in the macrocosm is reflected by it into the microcosm, and vice versa.

There are times, however, when it's useful to veil this magical mirror. Sometimes this is a matter of concealing the magician's own thoughts and feelings from others who might be sensitive to them. More often, though, it is a matter of keeping the self free from the effects of some outside force. Anger, hostility or other destructive emotions radiating from another person can cause emotional or even physical disturbance if reflected by the aura into the inner layers of the energy body. (In those who, knowingly or not, possess a certain degree of magical power, this can become a method of attack; this is one source of the legends concerning the "evil eye.") Similarly, places that have acquired an unpleasant emotional charge, and crowds in which a negative egregor has formed, can affect the aura and the rest of the self in various ways. Finally, there is the phenomenon of full-scale magical attack, in which a trained magician deliberately sets out to harm someone with his or her skills. This is rare—fortunately—but it does happen now and again, and it is a possibility any magician needs to be able to face.

In all these cases, the ability to seal the aura against outside energies is an excellent first line of defense, and in all but the last case it is usually the only defense needed. A member of the Order of the Athanor who needed to do this would find a method ready-made in the technique for sealing the lodge used in the Outer Opening. Used as a method of practical magic, this would be done as follows:

First, visualize your aura as clearly as possible, seeing and feeling the egg-shaped zone of energies all around your physical body.

Second, stamp twice on the ground with the right foot, imitating the knocks of the Guardian and Sentinel, and say, "I invoke the power of Protection. My aura is sealed." (This can be done aloud in a formal, openly ritual way, when being observed is not a risk. With practice, though, it can also be done in a way no observer would notice, with the stamps reduced to two casual movements of the right heel and the words said silently.)

Third, visualize the same barrier of darkness used to seal the lodge, but surrounding your aura, closing it off against all outside

forces. The more forcefully this image is built up, the more effective the sealing of the aura will be. This completes the ceremony.

Like any magical technique, this one needs regular practice in order to become effective. A significant part of the learning process, though, takes place whenever the magician is present at a meeting of his or her lodge, and the whole process is jump-started by the experience of initiation, which establishes the core imagery of the practice at a deep level. In turn, the more often this technique is practiced outside the lodge the more the magician who does it can contribute to this phase of the lodge work.

The sealing of the aura can be repeated any number of times, but once it is no longer needed the aura should be ritually opened. This is done as follows:

First, visualize the aura surrounded by the barrier of darkness, as before.

Second, stamp once with the right foot, imitating the knock of the Magister's gavel that closes the lodge, and say "I release the power of Protection. My aura is opened." (Again, this can be done aloud in an obviously ritual way, or it can be done silently, with no one the wiser.)

Third, visualize the barrier of darkness dispersing and vanishing. Make sure that you visualize your aura free of every trace of it, and then release the visualization. This completes the ceremony.

Invisibility

The idea of becoming invisible, of passing unseen through a crowd, is one of the common themes of fairy tales and fantasy fiction, and most people—even most magicians—have tended to assume that it has no reality outside these realms of wish-fulfillment. That assumption, though, is a result of the all but incurable material-mindedness of Western culture. It seems to be true that there is no way to prevent light that falls on a solid body from bouncing off it, and bringing an image of it through the lens of a watching eye. On the other hand, there are certainly ways to see to it that the image that reaches the eye never quite makes it into the conscious awareness of the watcher.

Most people have had the experience of looking for something lost, only to find that it has been out in plain sight all the while. The eye has seen, but the mind has not. This is the key to magical invisibility, a key that has been used effectively for centuries by magical systems around the globe. The ninja of Japan, whose martial ways were founded on deeply magical traditions of esoteric Buddhism, based much of their art of invisibility on this principle. So did the Hermetic adepts of the West, who for many centuries had equally good reason to study effective ways of keeping out of sight.

According to the magical map of reality, consciousness is not limited by the physical space separating one brain from another. Ideas, emotions, and perceptions held in one mind can influence others directly and indirectly, as a little experimentation will quickly show. If the idea of being invisible, of not being seen, is held intently in the mind, using some symbolic language to keep it free of the confusions that can beset ordinary verbal thought, that idea will tend to be reflected in the minds of others. If the idea is held with enough clarity and force, this reflection will keep them from noticing the one who holds it.

In modern magical practice, one of the standard formulae of invisibility is to formulate a veil or barrier—the “shroud of concealment,” as it has been called—surrounding the outer edge of the aura. The process of sealing the lodge can be used as the foundation for this same symbolic form, and thus as the basis for a formula of invisibility—one of at least two that can be derived from the rituals of the Order of the Athanor.

The formula is put to work as follows:

First, as in the sealing of the aura, visualize the aura around yourself, trying to see and feel it as clearly as possible.

Second, stamp twice with the left foot, imitating the knocks of the Guardian and Sentinel, and say “I invoke the power of Invisibility. Unseen, I pass into the unseen.” Again, this can be done as an openly ritual act or in a subtler manner.

Third, visualize the barrier of darkness forming around your aura. This time, however, concentrate on the idea that your physical body is becoming invisible. Try to actually see your body fading out of sight. This visualization must be done with as much clarity

and concentration as possible, as it is the key to the entire formula. Continue to hold it as long as you seek to remain invisible. This completes the ceremony.

Though this formula is quite simple as methods of ritual magic go, it takes correspondingly more practice to master. Some dozens of attempts may be needed before the first real effects begin to show up, although you may notice that pedestrians walk straight into you almost at once! Each practice, though, will build on those already done, as the deeper levels of your mind become used to the double stamp and the words as triggers linked to the state of invisibility. The left foot is used in this formula and the right one in the sealing of the aura to keep the two from being too easily confused. There are likely to be times when you wish to pass unseen but still want to keep your aura wide open to subtle perceptions, just as there will certainly be times when you may want to seal your aura while still remaining visible.

The process of becoming invisible should always be reversed when you are finished with it. This is done as follows:

First, visualize the barrier of darkness around your aura and your body as invisible, as you did at the end of the working for becoming invisible.

Second, stamp once on the ground with the left foot, imitating the knock of the Magister's gavel that closes the lodge, and say, "I release the power of Invisibility. I pass from the unseen into light." Once again, this can be done openly or subtly.

Third, visualize the barrier of darkness dissipating and vanishing, and your body coming back into full visibility. Be sure to visualize the barrier entirely gone, and your body fully visible, before releasing the visualization. This completes the ceremony.

There are other potential applications that can be developed out of elements of the Outer Opening, but the two given should show clearly enough how these may be built up using the ritual as a framework.

Applications of the Inner Opening

There is an equally wide range of magical applications to be derived from the ritual of the Inner Opening. These range from relatively

simple borrowings of ritual formulae for individual workings up to advanced magical work in which the structure of the lodge is mapped onto the structure of the human body and subtle energies are shaped and circulated accordingly.

This last approach is the basis for the well-known Middle Pillar exercise, which has been borrowed and adapted by an enormous number of current esoteric groups. The basic structure comes straight out of the opening of the Golden Dawn Neophyte Grade ritual. In this exercise, the five central Spheres of the Cabalistic Tree of Life are formulated along the midline of the body and then used as the foundation for a series of patterns of circulating energy. The body of the magician, in effect, is made one with the structure of the lodge, and the same energy transformations that awaken the lodge are used to awaken the subtle levels of the magician as well.

This same sort of exercise could easily be developed out of the rituals of the Order of the Athanor or those of any other lodge system, but doing so here would require far more background discussion than space will allow. Instead, two less advanced applications will be presented and the rest left as exercises for those who wish to explore them.

Purification and Consecration

Perhaps the easiest way to derive a formula of practical magic from a lodge ritual is to extract a single, useful process from that ritual and put it to use in individual magical work. This is exactly what we will do here, using the purification by water and consecration by fire as an example.

It is sometimes useful to charge a physical object with magical energy for general purposes—for example, to consecrate candlesticks and the like for an altar, or to prepare a magical tool for non-ritual use—or to clear something of subtle energies that are no longer wanted. This is different from the more specific and more focused work done to consecrate a talisman or a magical working tool, work that involves summoning and binding very specific forces into an object. Here, by contrast, what is wanted is a more general way of cleansing and charging an item with magical energy.

The following short ritual requires an altar or small table, a cup of water, and a censer or incense-stick holder burning frankincense (or some other astringent, purifying incense). The ritual is performed as follows:

First, place the object to be charged in the center of the altar. Set the cup of water to the left side and the censer to the right.

Second, take up the cup in both hands, holding it up in the air before you. Concentrate on the water in the cup. Be aware of its coolness and wetness, its power to receive and absorb. Think of the measureless deeps of the sea, the power of great rivers, the rushing of mountain streams, the sparkle of sunlight on waves, and intensely imagine all of these things present in the water in your cup.

Third, dip the fingers of your left hand in the water and sprinkle water three times on the object you intend to charge. As you do so, visualize the object suddenly filled with blue light, and with the presence and feeling of water. Hold that visualization for a few moments and then say, "I purify with water."

Fourth, put down the cup, and take the censer or stick of incense, holding it up with both hands. Concentrate on the fire, feeling its heat and dryness, its radiating energy. Think of streaming rays of sunlight, crackling flames, volcanic lava far beneath the earth, latent heat present in all things, and intensely imagine all of these things present in the burning coal and the smoke of the incense.

Fifth, wave the censer or stick three times over the object you intend to charge. As you do so, visualize red light and the presence and feeling of fire suddenly flaring into being within the object, then blending with the blue to fill the object with shimmering purple light. Hold this visualization for a few moments, and then say, "I consecrate with fire." This completes the ceremony.

A Ceremony of Opening

Another application that can be derived from the Inner Opening is an opening ritual for individual magical work. Such rituals have an important place in magical practice. They awaken the links between macrocosm and microcosm in a balanced way, and help

the magician enter into the special states of awareness needed to perform effective magic. Most traditions have at least one such ceremony, and in many cases—the Golden Dawn among them—these are borrowed from lodge openings in a fairly straightforward manner. The following ritual has been created in this way.

This ritual of Opening can be used at the beginning of any magical working. As given, it is somewhat simpler than many of the opening rituals used in modern Hermetic magic, but it will be found more than adequate for most practical uses. At the same time, those who wish to add banishing and invoking rituals, names and words of power, vibratory formulae and energy circulations, or any of the other standard techniques of intermediate and advanced magical practice will have little difficulty fitting them into the framework provided here.

The ritual requires an altar, two candles in candlesticks, a cup of water, and a censer or incense-stick holder. The altar is set up in the middle of the working space with a candle on each side of it and the cup and censer in the middle. Magicians who have mastered the elementary techniques of ritual may also wish to use a lamen—a consecrated symbol worn about the neck, which usually represents the individual magician's highest aspirations—to allow a closer approximation to the lodge Opening. Of course, the full set of magical working tools may be used by those who desire to do so. The ritual is performed as follows:

First, stand at the altar. Knock twice on the altar with your right hand or an appropriate working tool, and visualize the barrier of darkness taking shape around the outer edges of your working space. Say, "In the presence of the Higher, I seal this space for the duration of this magical working." Then make the Outer Sign.

Second, light the two candles on the altar, imitating the action of the Warder in the Outer Opening. Then recite a prayer or invocation to the power or powers governing the magical operation you intend to perform.

Third, take the cup of water in both hands. Concentrate on it, as in the ceremony of purification and consecration given above, focusing on water in all its forms. Then dip the fingers of your left hand into the water and sprinkle water once to the front, once to

the left, and once to the right. Visualize a sphere of blue light taking shape above and around the altar, and say: "I purify with water."

Fourth, put down the cup and take up the censer or stick of incense in both hands, and concentrate on it as before. Then wave it once to the front, once to the left, and once to the right. Visualize a sphere of red light flaring into being and joining the blue light, forming purple, and say: "I consecrate with fire."

Fifth, put down the censer or stick, and stand at the altar, being aware of the purple light around you. If you are wearing a lamen, concentrate on forming a link between the energies and the lamen. Turn to the left and begin walking around and outward in a clockwise spiral, just like the officers in the Inner Opening. The spiral takes you once around the working space before you come to the outer edge. As you move, the sphere of purple light expands to fill all the space within the barrier of darkness.

Sixth, go slowly clockwise all the way around the outer edge of the working space, concentrating on the presence of the purple light within it and the barrier of darkness around it. Stop at each of the four quarters and formulate the image with maximum force. (An invocation of the powers of the four elements could be added here, calling on each of the elements in its proper quarter. This can be highly useful, and will make the Ritual of Opening a little more compatible with some magical systems. It is not required, though.)

Seventh, finish the circuit of the working space and return to the altar, facing the same direction you did at the beginning. Make the Ascending Sign, saying, "As below—so above." Raise your hands, and say: "In the presence of the Higher, I proclaim that the flame is lit and the Work begun." Knock on the altar with your right hand, once, twice, thrice, and once. This completes the Opening; the main work of the ritual follows immediately thereafter.

The Ceremony of Closing

Just as the Ritual of Opening is used to begin magical workings, a Ritual of Closing is needed to end them, and the Inner Closing of the Order of the Athanor provides a workable model for this as well.

The requirements for this ritual are the same as those of the Opening. It is performed as follows:

First, standing at the altar, knock on the altar with your left hand, once, twice, thrice, and again once. Then purify with water and consecrate with fire, exactly as in the Opening.

Second, step around the altar and go straight to the edge of the working space in front of you. Then, going counterclockwise, walk slowly around the working space, concentrating on the purple energy within the space and the barrier of darkness outside it. Stop at each of the quarters. If you have summoned the forces of the elements, release them at this time.

Third, returning to the place where you started, begin a counterclockwise spiral inward to the altar. As you move around the working space, visualize the purple energy drawing inward with you. As you reach the altar, the sphere of energy has returned to its original size.

Fourth, stand at the altar, facing the same direction you were at the beginning. If you are wearing a lamen, concentrate at this point on detaching the energies of the sphere from the lamen. Make the Descending Sign, and say, "As above—so below." Extinguish the two candles, reciting a prayer or invocation of thanks to the power or powers that govern the working. Then raise your hands, and say: "In the presence of the Higher, I proclaim that the flame is banked and the Work completed." As you say this, visualize the sphere of energy dissolving away into formless light and disappearing.

Fifth, say, "I now command that all powers called by this rite of magic shall return to their sources. Go in peace, and peace be between us." Then knock on the altar with the right hand, once, and visualize the barrier of darkness unraveling and fading into nothingness. Make sure that it is entirely gone before you leave the altar. This completes the ritual.

Applications of the Ritual of the Athanor

With the next element of the Order of the Athanor's ritual work, we touch on what is at once one of the most important and one of the

most neglected insights of the Golden Dawn tradition. A series of documents studied by Golden Dawn adepts, and published in the third volume of Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*, takes the Neophyte Grade—the first initiation in the Golden Dawn sequence—as the basis for a series of major ritual workings meant to accomplish most of the important tasks of practical magic. This is not simply a borrowing of the sort discussed above. It rises out of a deep understanding of the nature of initiation and of the relation of the initiatory work to other kinds of magic.

It has been suggested more than once by magical writers that the initiation of a candidate is like the consecration of a talisman: something passive and unfocused is given shape, direction, and energy. The secret concealed in this comment is that both operations (and many other magical operations besides) can be done using the same formulae and even the same ritual forms. A magician who has passed through a particular initiation ceremony can use versions of the same ceremony to “initiate” a whole series of magical operations. The magician becomes the presiding officer of the ritual, and the subject of the ritual—the spirit to be evoked, the talisman to be consecrated, the transformation body or state of invisibility to be taken on, the magician's own nature to be transmuted, and so on—becomes the “candidate” of the rite. This can be taken quite literally, as the example below will demonstrate.

The difficulty of this sort of work should not be underestimated. The great Neophyte Formula rituals given in the Golden Dawn document Z-2 are far and away the most demanding magical workings anywhere in the Order's papers, and require an extremely solid grounding in the whole theory and practice of Golden Dawn magic if they are to be put to work effectively. The same will be true of equivalent ceremonies in any other system. Still, ceremonies of this kind make up one of the hidden treasures of lodge work, and they also have important uses in the process of awakening the inner side of a new lodge system.

In order to put together magical applications for the Ritual of the Athanor, it's necessary first of all to outline the ritual itself in schematic form. This might be done as follows:

- A: The lodge in which the ritual takes place.
- B: The Magister.
- C: The other officers of the lodge.
- D: The candidate.
- E: The Outer Opening.
- F: The Inner Opening.
- G: The preparation of the candidate.
- H: The candidate is admitted and barred by the Guardian.
- I: The candidate is taken once around the lodge by the Herald, and then to the altar; symbols of the Black Phase.
- J: The candidate is taken around the lodge a second time by the Herald, and then to the altar; symbols of the White Phase.
- K: The candidate is taken around the lodge a third time by the Herald, and then to the altar; symbols of the Red Phase.
- L: The candidate is presented to the Magister, takes the Obligation, and is accepted by the members of the lodge.
- M: The candidate is purified with water and consecrated with fire.
- N: The candidate is instructed in the secrets of the Order.
- O: The candidate is tested by the Guardian.
- P: The Charge of Initiation is given by the Past Magister.
- Q: Final instructions by the Magister.
- R: The Inner Closing.
- S: The Outer Closing.

This outline shows the basic structure of the Ritual of the Athanor, and shows how that same structure can be put to use in other works of practical magic. All that needs to be done is to put the focus of the working in place of the candidate, and change the other elements of the ritual accordingly. For example, to perform an Athanor Formula ritual for invisibility, the outline could be rewritten as follows:

- A: The room in which the ritual takes place.
- B: The magician.
- C: The energies of invisibility summoned in the ritual.
- D: The shroud of concealment.
- E: The magician prepares the room and himself or herself for the ritual.
- F: The ritual of Opening, as given earlier in this chapter.
- G: The preparation of the magician's aura for the shroud of concealment, by invoking the powers governing invisibility.
- H: The magician's aura is visualized, and a barrier of darkness visualized around it; the idea of becoming invisible is clearly formulated.
- I: The magician repeats the words of the Herald, "Come, and hear the voice...", goes once around the room and then to the altar. First conjuration of the shroud of concealment, in words based on the symbols of the Black Phase.
- J: The magician quotes the Herald again, and goes around the room a second time and then to the altar. Second conjuration of the shroud of concealment, in words based on the symbols of the White Phase.
- K: The magician quotes the Herald once again, and goes around the room a third time and then to the altar. Third conjuration of the shroud of concealment, in words based on the symbols of the Red Phase.
- L: The magician invokes the Higher, binds the shroud of concealment to obedience, and accepts it, concentrating all his or her strength on seeing his or her physical body fading completely from sight.
- M: Once this is accomplished, the magician purifies the shroud with water and consecrates it with fire.
- N: The magician makes the Outer Sign, leaves the room and goes forth unseen in the world.
- O: The magician returns to the room, making the Outer Sign.
- P: The magician commands the shroud of concealment to disperse, visualizes his or her body becoming visible again,

and makes sure that no trace of the shroud remains on his or her aura.

Q: The magician then conjures the powers governing invisibility, thanking them for their assistance and binding them to depart in peace and to return when called.

R: The ritual of Closing, as given earlier in this chapter.

S: The magician clears away the ritual equipment and eats a light meal (at least) in order to close down his or her inner awareness and return to ordinary consciousness.

An actual ritual of invisibility can be constructed and performed using this framework. The example given below is only one of many possible ways to put this pattern to work. It makes use of the traditional symbolism of Saturn, which governs invisibility in the Golden Dawn system of magic, and some of the more basic tools of Golden Dawn ritual practice. On the physical plane, its requirements are simply those of the ritual of Opening given above. It is performed as follows:

First, perform the complete ritual of Opening.

Second, standing at the altar, trace above it the symbol of Saturn (♄). Visualize the symbol as though you were drawing it in deep indigo light. Concentrating intently on this symbol, say aloud: "In the Great Name YHVH ALHIM (pronounced "yeh-ho-wah ell-oh-heem"), that Name of the Infinite One that rules over the sphere and the nature of Saturn, I invoke thee, thou powers and spirits of Saturn! Descend into this place from thy habitations in the darkness and silence of the Great Deep. I invoke and conjure thine aid and assistance in this work of the magic of light. Come to me, and help me to awaken in myself the power of invisibility, so that I may walk unseen in the realm of matter, and so that all those who look upon me may see me not! Help me to form about myself the shroud of concealment; cloak me in darkness, that I may better serve the Light."

Third, visualize your aura clearly and distinctly, as an egg-shaped region of pale light surrounding your body. Now stamp twice on the ground with your left foot, and say aloud, "I invoke

the shroud of concealment. Unseen, I shall pass into the unseen." As you do this, visualize a barrier of darkness surrounding your aura. Spend some time building it up, so that it is as clear and intense as you can make it. At the same time concentrate on the idea that this shroud will prevent you from being seen by anyone.

Fourth, say, "Come, and hear the voice of wisdom in the path of darkness." Then, moving slowly, go clockwise around the room once, concentrating on the barrier of darkness around you. Get used to the feeling of moving inside it, of keeping up the visualization while walking. Complete one circuit around the room, and then return to the altar and say: "Shroud of concealment, I conjure thee by the powers and symbols of the first stage of the Great Work, the stage of darkness. Let darkness surround and enshroud me, so that I may walk unseen in the realm of matter, and so that all those who look upon me may see me not!" Visualize the shroud around you becoming darker and more solid, and yourself becoming less and less visible.

Fifth, pause, and then say, "Come, and hear the voice of wisdom in the path of dawning light." Go around the room again, still concentrating on the presence of the shroud of concealment. Return to the altar, and say: "Shroud of concealment, I conjure thee by the powers and symbols of the second stage of the Great Work, the stage of purification. Let me rise from visibility to invisibility, so that I may walk unseen in the realm of matter, and so that all those who look upon me may see me not!" Again, visualize the shroud becoming more solid and yourself less visible.

Sixth, pause again, and then say, "Come, and hear the voice of wisdom in the path of living gold." Again, go once around the room, concentrating as before, and return to the altar. Say: "Shroud of concealment, I conjure thee by the powers and symbols of the third stage of the Great Work, the stage of perfection. Let the veil about me be made perfect, so that I may walk unseen in the realm of matter, and so that all those who look upon me may see me not!" Once again, visualize the shroud becoming more solid and more opaque, while your body can barely be seen at all.

Seventh, still standing at the altar, raise your hands and invoke: "YHVH ALHIM (pronounced yeh-ho-wah ell-oh-heem),

Lord of the powers of Saturn! Behold this shroud of concealment which I have fashioned from the forces of thy realm. It has passed through the three phases of the Work, and stands ready for its purpose. Awaken in me and through me, Lord of the Mighty Ones, the power to control this shroud of concealment at will, and guide me also in using rightly this secret power of the Magic of Light." Lower your hands, and address the shroud: "Shroud of concealment, by the great Name YHVH ALHIM, I conjure thee and I command thee. Conceal me, and everything upon my body or within my grasp, from all watching eyes, from this moment until I again release you. Unseen, let me pass into the unseen, so that I may walk unseen in the realm of matter, and so that all those who look upon me may see me not!" Then, slowly and clearly: "I accept thee as a protection and a concealment."

Eighth, concentrate all your will and all your imagination on the idea of literally vanishing from sight. Strive to visualize your body becoming transparent, so that you can see the floor of the room right through yourself. This is the critical act of the operation, and it must be done with maximum focus and concentration if a state of full invisibility is to be reached.

Ninth, when this has been accomplished, take up the cup of water, dip the fingers of your left hand in the water, and flick water toward your left shoulder, your right shoulder, and your forehead, in that order. Say: "Shroud of concealment, I purify thee with water." Put down the cup and take up the incense; wave the stick or censer toward the same places in the same order, and say, "Shroud of concealment, I consecrate thee with fire."

Tenth, continuing to concentrate on the idea of being invisible, make the Outer Sign, leave the room and go out to accomplish whatever purposes you have in mind. It's a good idea to change out of your ritual robes into ordinary clothes before going outside, at least in the early stages of learning, since it can take some time to get full control over the state of invisibility. It's also a good idea to remember the limits of invisibility: human beings may not see you, but cars can still run you over, and alarms and other security equipment have no consciousness to affect and will detect you just as they normally would. Finally, it's a very good idea to remember

that, as the proverb has it, what goes around comes around. If you use this or any other magical ability to hurt or abuse other people, you have only yourself to blame for the payback.

Eleventh, when you have finished, return to the room, making the Outer Sign at the altar. Say: "The purpose for which I took on invisibility is accomplished. Shroud of concealment, by the great Name YHVH ALHIM, I now conjure and command thee to disperse, and I return thine energies to their sources." Stamp twice on the ground with your left foot and say, "I release the power of invisibility. I pass from the unseen into light." Visualize the shroud of concealment dispersing and disappearing, until every trace of it is gone. Then say: "Powers and spirits of Saturn! In the great Name YHVH ALHIM, I thank thee for thy help in this work of invisibility, and I bind thee to depart in peace, to harm none in thy passing, and to return when thou art invoked again by the ceremonies of the Magic of Light."

Twelfth, perform the complete ritual of Closing as given earlier in this chapter. This completes the ceremony.

Applications of the Ritual of Installation

Just as initiation rituals can be transformed into formulae for practical magic, other lodge rituals—for example, installation rituals—can be put to work in the same way. In doing so, however, it's important to keep the differences between different ritual types in mind.

Initiation rituals are intended to build up a specific and highly focused magical energy in a previously inert subject. They establish a context of energies, and then work through a step-by-step process that brings the candidate into harmony with those energies. Installation rituals, on the other hand, start with an energy that already exists in the macrocosm. The energies of the equinoxes used in the Golden Dawn Equinox ritual are one example, as are the descending solar forces of transmutation used by the Order of the Athanor. Here the process is one of emptying and then filling. The object to be charged, whether it be a lodge egregor or something else, is made ready for the energies that are to be invoked,

linked with those energies, and then used to direct the energies in whatever way may be desired.

To put the Order of the Athanor's Installation Ceremony to work as a formula of practical magic, again, an outline of the original ceremony forms the first step. That outline might be made as follows:

- A: The lodge in which the ritual takes place.
- B: The installing officers.
- C: The officers of the lodge to be installed.
- D: The energies invoked in the ritual.
- E: The egregor of the lodge and the Order.
- F: The Outer Opening.
- G: The entrance of the installing officers.
- H: The Inner Opening.
- I: The previous term's password is made void and the officers of the lodge relinquish their stations.
- J: Installation of the Past Magister.
- K: The Past Magister traces the Threefold Spiral, bringing down the energies of the macrocosm to the altar.
- L: Installation of the Magister, Guardian and Herald.
- M: The four major officers of the lodge go to their stations.
- N: Installation of the other elective officers of the lodge.
- O: Magister is formally seated, and receives the password.
- P: The appointed officers are installed.
- Q: The password of the new term is communicated to the members of the lodge, and the installation is proclaimed complete.
- R: The Inner Closing.
- S: The Outer Closing.

This outline can then be used as a framework for practical ritual, by simply putting the energies to be invoked in place of the springtime forces used in the Installation, and putting the focus of the ritual in place of the egregor of the lodge. While this formula

can be used for a wide range of purposes, it is particularly suited for the consecration of talismans. The following is one example of the way this could be done.

- A: The room in which the ritual takes place.
- B: The magician.
- C: The purpose of the talisman.
- D: The energies invoked in the ritual.
- E: The talisman itself.
- F: The magician prepares the room and himself or herself for the ritual, and places the talisman on the altar.
- G: The magician invokes the Higher and proclaims the purpose of the ceremony.
- H: The ritual of Opening.
- I: The magician banishes all unwanted energies from the talisman, and proclaims that it is ready for consecration.
- J: First conjuration of the particular energies of the macrocosm involved in the consecration.
- K: The magician walks around the room, tracing the Threefold Spiral by his or her movements, and concentrates on bringing down the invoked energies of the macrocosm to the altar and the talisman.
- L: Second conjuration of macrocosmic energies, detailing exactly what the magician wills the talisman to do.
- M: The talisman is taken to the four quarters of the room, and the magician commands that the energies in the talisman be established permanently therein.
- N: The talisman is returned to the altar. Third conjuration of macrocosmic energies, calling upon them to assist the forces bound into the talisman in order to give it irresistible strength.
- O: The magician breathes three times upon the talisman, transmitting a portion of his or her vital force to it and giving it magical life.

- P: The magician then conjures the forces concentrated in the talisman, calling upon them to work in harmony with the whole pattern of the macrocosm, and to remain at work until the talisman is deconsecrated.
- Q: The talisman is wrapped in silk to preserve it from the effects of the Closing, and the magician proclaims that the ritual has been accomplished and that the talisman has been duly consecrated.
- R: The ritual of Closing.
- S: The magician puts the talisman in a safe place where it will not be disturbed by anyone, and allows it to get to work.

This framework, once again, can be expanded into a complete ritual in any number of ways. Much depends on what specific energies are being invoked into the talisman, and this in turn depends on the symbolic alphabet used by the magician. In the Golden Dawn system, the traditional planets of astrology and the four elements form the primary system of symbols for talismanic use, but this is only one possibility out of many.

The talisman itself may be anything from a circular piece of heavy paper covered with complex geometrical designs and Hebrew words of power to a cloth bag full of herbs and graveyard dust. Relying on the system I know best, though, here is one fairly basic sample ritual built up on the formula we've been examining. It is intended to consecrate a talisman of Venus.

This ritual should be performed when the influences of Venus are at their strongest so there will be the maximum amount of macrocosmic energy on hand to draw on. Astrologically, this would be when Venus is in either Taurus or Libra, rising or at the midheaven, and in a positive aspect (trine, sextile or conjunction) to a waxing moon. Those who prefer to use the system of planetary hours will want to perform the ritual on a Friday, and during either the first or the eighth planetary hour after dawn, calculating each of these hours as one-twelfth of the actual time between sunrise and sunset. Those who are patient enough to want to wait for a date and time when both these systems apply are welcome to do

so, but it's worth noting that this happens only a few times a decade at best.

Requirements for the ritual are those of the Opening given above, along with the talisman itself, a piece of white silk in which it is wrapped, and a sentence that states in exact detail what the talisman is being consecrated to do. The ritual is performed as follows:

First, prepare the talisman for consecration, placing it on the altar between the candles, atop a piece of white silk large enough to wrap it completely. Rose-scented incense and a green altar cloth will help establish the proper symbolic context, as both of these correspond to Venus.

Second, look up, and say: "In thy great and merciful Name YHVH TzBAVTh (pronounced "yeh-ho-wah tza-ba-oth"), I invoke thee, lord of the spirits and powers of Venus. I invite thy presence in this place of magic during the ritual I am about to perform, for the purpose of consecrating a talisman of Venus, that through thine aid and in perfect harmony with thy will it may accomplish the following work." Say aloud a sentence you have devised stating what the talisman is to do, finishing with "And I proclaim that with thy help and through thy power this talisman will be consecrated and its purpose accomplished."

Third, perform the complete Opening ritual as given above. When this is done, return to the altar and raise your hands above the talisman. Say: "All is in readiness. I now banish all unwanted energies from the physical form of this talisman, that it may be a fitting vessel for the forces of the sphere of Venus." Sprinkle water on the talisman three times, saying, "I purify with water," and wave the incense over it three times, saying, "I consecrate with fire." The visualizations given above for purification and consecration can be used here. Then raise your hands above it again, and visualize a current of white light descending from your hands onto the talisman, and concentrate on the light washing away any energy that may have entered into the talisman before that moment. When this image has been strongly established, say: "I therefore proclaim that this talisman is ready for its consecration as a vessel for the powers of Venus."

Fourth, trace in the air over the talisman the traditional symbol of Venus (♀). Visualize it as though you were drawing it with emerald light. Say: "In and by the mighty Name YHVH TzBAVTh, which ruleth over the sphere of Venus and all its forces, I summon thee, spirits and powers of the Seventh Sphere! Be present with me in this working, as thou art present throughout the macrocosm in this hour. Let the forces of Venus descend, so that the talisman before me may be duly consecrated and its purpose accomplished in perfect harmony with the will of the Infinite One."

Fifth, say: "I therefore trace the Threefold Spiral." Turn around and go to the outer edge of the working space, then turn right and begin to walk slowly around and inward. While doing this, visualize a vast spiral of energies reaching upwards and outward from the altar, spinning faster and faster, and drawing the emerald-green energies of Venus in and down to the talisman on the altar. This visualization is the most important phase of the rite, and should be done with as much concentration and focus as you can manage. Walk around the altar three times, ending up standing at the altar facing the talisman. As you reach the altar, visualize the spiral of energies descending, bringing all the force of Venus with it, and collapsing down into the talisman itself. You should visualize the talisman glowing with a brilliant emerald light from this point on.

Sixth, say, "The threefold spiral is complete." Then trace the symbol of Venus above the talisman as before, and say, "In and by the great Name YHVH TzBAVTh, which rules over the powers of Venus, and in and by the reflection of the powers of Venus in myself, I charge thee, forces which I have placed in this talisman, to accomplish the following purpose." Repeat the sentence describing what the talisman is to do. Say: "I command thee to accomplish this work faithfully and truly, without doing harm to any being, and in perfect harmony with the will of the Infinite One."

Seventh, slip your hands under the white silk and lift up the talisman, being careful not to touch it with your bare skin. Go to the eastern side of your working space, and hold up the talisman. Say: "The power of YHVH TzBAVTh goeth forth through all the realms of Air. Spirits and powers of Air, I call upon thee to place the power of the rushing winds in this talisman, that it may accomplish

its purpose." Visualize a warm and dancing wind sweeping in from the farthest east to your talisman, charging it with the power of Air.

Go around to the southern side of the space, still holding the talisman. Raise it up, and say: "The power of YHVH TzBAVTh goeth forth through all the realms of Fire. Spirits and powers of Fire, I call upon thee to place the power of the shining flames in this talisman, that it may accomplish its purpose." Visualize a hot and burning wind rushing in from the farthest south to your talisman, charging it with the power of Fire.

Go around to the western side of the space and raise the talisman. Say: "The power of YHVH TzBAVTh goeth forth through all the realms of Water. Spirits and powers of Water, I call upon thee to place the power of the rolling waves in this talisman, that it may accomplish its purpose." Visualize a cold wind damp with rain blowing in from the farthest west to your talisman, charging it with the power of Water.

Go around to the northern side of the space and raise the talisman. Say: "The power of YHVH TzBAVTh goeth forth through all the realms of Earth. Spirits and powers of Earth, I call upon thee to place the power of the unyielding stone in this talisman, that it may accomplish its purpose." Visualize a wind rich with the scent of fresh earth rushing in from the farthest north to your talisman, charging it with the power of Earth.

Eighth, return the talisman to the altar, setting it down on the silk, again making sure not to touch it with your bare skin. Raise your hands, and say: "The power of YHVH TzBAVTh goeth forth throughout the universe! In and by that mighty Name, I conjure thee, spirits and powers of Venus in every realm and sphere and world in all the universe, to work together with the powers that have been placed within this talisman, so that its purpose may be irresistibly accomplished, in perfect harmony with the will of the Infinite One."

Ninth, say: "Talisman of Venus, by all the powers here invoked, and by the image of those powers in myself, I awaken thee into magical life, and empower you to accomplish the purpose for which thou hast been made." Bend down so that your mouth is within a few inches of the talisman, and breathe on it three times, concentrating

on the idea that you are passing on the breath of life to the talisman. Then say, "And I command thee to work in perfect harmony with the forces of the macrocosm and with the will of the Infinite One, and to continue to work until thy purpose is accomplished in full or until I shall deconsecrate thee by the rites of magic."

Tenth, wrap the talisman in the white silk, again making sure not to touch it directly. Once it is wrapped, stamp once with your right foot and say, "I therefore proclaim that this work of magic has been accomplished, and that this talisman has been duly and fully consecrated. Spirits and powers of Venus not bound into the talisman, in the Name YHVH TzBAVTh, I command you to depart from this place." Then perform the complete Closing ritual as given above; this completes the ceremony. The talisman should then be put into a container that will not interfere with its energies—a clean manila envelope works well—and placed in a location where it will not be disturbed.

Chapter Eleven

A Meeting of Green Lion Lodge

The last five chapters have outlined our imaginary Order of the Athanor in some detail, providing the same sort of material that would appear in the rituals, bylaws and instructional papers of an actual magical lodge. For those who haven't had the experience of belonging to a lodge, though, it can be hard to go from these bare bones to an understanding of what belonging to a working lodge is like. For this reason, we'll go one step further into the world of the Order of the Athanor in this chapter, and attend—at least in spirit—a meeting of one of its lodges.

The following account is a work of fiction, then, but it's based throughout on my own experiences (and those of others) in real magical and fraternal lodges. In the course of the meeting, a number of the issues discussed elsewhere in this book will put in an appearance in one form or another, just as they do in the work of any lodge. As with the rituals, too, those readers who use their own powers of imagination to place themselves inside the events of the meeting may learn more than those who leave it at the level of abstract words on paper.

THE CITY BUS SQUEALS to a halt, and Jessica—our imaginary lodge designer—pays her fare and gets off. The neighborhood is shabby-genteel, a mix of old one-and two-story commercial buildings and newer houses. Half a block away, a nondescript brick building looms up three stories into the evening. The first floor has been rented out to a florist's shop, but the symbol of one of the old fraternal orders is painted on a sign over a door to one side. She settles the big shoulder bag she is carrying and starts walking toward the building.

The door is unlocked. Inside, a steep stair heads up to the lodge rooms. Jessica climbs it slowly—it has been a long day—and finally knocks once at the door on the second-floor landing. Footsteps sound from inside; the wicket in the door opens, revealing an eye, and then the door itself swings inward.

"Hi." Roger, another of the founding members of the Order and the current Warder of the lodge, steps out of the way. "Ready for the ritual?"

"More or less." Jessica walks through the anteroom into the lodge room itself. No one else has arrived yet; she leaves her shoulder bag by the Past Magister's station and turns around. "Has our candidate confirmed?"

"Yeah. Tish called her yesterday."

The officers' collars are already out on the podiums, and the altar is in place: Roger's doing. He belongs to the fraternal lodge that owns the building, and opens and closes the hall for Green Lion Lodge. Just how much the older lodge knows of Green Lion's activities, Jessica has never been sure, but there has been very little friction so far; the fact that three Green Lion members have joined the fraternal lodge—its first new initiates in a couple of decades—certainly hasn't hurt.

Another knock sounds at the door, and Roger heads back into the anteroom to let the newcomers in. Jessica sits down in the Past Magister's chair and closes her eyes for a moment, reviewing her part in the initiation.

"Well, look here." A bubble of laughter: Tish, this year's Magister, has arrived. "Didn't know we were doing dreamwork tonight."

Jessica grins. "I'm meditating."

"That so? Maybe I should try telling my boss that one of these mornings." Tish sits down on the bench nearby. "Looks like the thing between Josh and Beth is going to need taking care of sometime soon," she says, suddenly serious. "I've been getting phone calls from both of them most of this week."

"Ouch." Jessica frowns, considering it. Half personality clash, half philosophical disagreement, the dispute in question is one of the few the lodge has faced since the days when the Order was first being organized. "I hope it'll keep. We've got an initiation to do."

"If we wait too long, people may start taking sides. I have an idea or two for dealing with it, anyway."

Jessica nods, despite her misgivings. Tish is in charge now, she reminds herself; let her make her own mistakes. "Well, we'll see how it goes."

More people are arriving now: Paul, who is Scribe and Treasurer this term; Sandra, who is Herald; others, Josh and Beth among them, who do not hold office. Paul comes over to where Tish and Jessica are sitting. "Another application," he says. "Think we'll be able to fit it in tonight?"

Tish looks up at him. "We ought to manage."

"Okay. That and paying rent are the only pieces of urgent business I know about." He goes over to the Scribe's desk, plugs in his laptop computer and starts unpacking papers from his briefcase while the machine boots up. Jessica watches him; the lodge will probably need both a Scribe and a Treasurer in the upcoming term, she suspects, and decides to bring it up at the next business meeting.

By now most of the lodge members have arrived. The altar is prepared, the candlesticks are on either side of it, and Roger is putting the colored cloths on the podiums of the major officers. Some of the members are already getting into their robes. Jessica glances at the clock: quarter to eight. She opens her shoulder bag, takes out her robe and the soft-soled white slippers that go with it, and tucks the bag neatly under her chair where it will be out of the way.

A few more minutes pass, and the last members arrive. Jessica puts on robe and slippers and settles the golden tabard of the Past Magister over her robe, with her collar and medallion of office over that. Most of the others have already robed up.

A change has come over the room, something that is not just a matter of robes and regalia; the highly varied group of people present in the old hall has once again begun, subtly but definitely, to turn into a lodge.

At five minutes to eight someone knocks three times on the door. The Sentinel, Brian, gets up and leaves the room, closing the anteroom door behind him. After several minutes, he is back. "We've got a candidate," he announces, shutting the door again, "and I've locked the outside door. Ready to roll."

The last few members robe up and go to their places in the lodge room. There is a moment's hush, and then Tish raps once with the gavel. The time is eight o'clock exactly. "Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, the work of the Order awaits us. You will take your stations and join with me in opening the lodge. Sentinel, you will secure the outer door."

Brian rises, goes to the center of the floor, gives the Outer Sign and leaves. Jessica, with the others, waits for the double knock that follows. When it comes, she turns her attention to building up the image of the barrier of darkness around the hall. In the early days of the Order, that image had taken shape fitfully at best; now, with a year and a half of practice, it formulates suddenly and with power. The whole room all at once seems veiled, shut off from the outside; even the low murmur of traffic from the street outside seems hushed.

In the stillness, the Guardian's voice seems unexpectedly loud. "Magister, the outer door is secure."

"Warder," Tish goes on, "you will examine all present in the password of the current term."

The password is "transmute"; Jessica whispers it to Roger when he comes to her station. He goes on, testing each of the members with the password and grip.

"Magister, all present are correct."

"You will resume your station," says Tish. The gavel raps twice; Jessica and the other officers stand.

The ritual goes on, line by line, each officer describing his or her duties and symbolism. Jessica's mind wanders a little, thinking about the candidate in the anteroom. What must she be thinking now, sitting across from the Sentinel and his drawn sword, with

murmurs of the ritual coming faintly under the door? That stirs memories of Jessica's own first initiation into a magical lodge in another city, years back, and of other rituals since then.

Still, she is ready when her own part comes. "To remember their obligations, to keep silence concerning the secrets of the lodge, and to work together in a spirit of friendship and cooperation in all things relating to the lodge and the Order."

Tish raps three times, and all the members stand. "Recalling the fellowship we owe, one to another, let us invoke the Higher in silence."

In that silence, the second visualization takes shape: not quite as crisply as the first, and Jessica puts more effort into the formulation. By the time Roger has finished lighting the candles, the symbol of the Order blazes in the inner eye so brightly she is almost surprised it does not cast shadows. Holding the image, she makes the Outer Sign with the others, and lets go of the visualization only when Tish's gavel sounds once and the Guardian goes to the door. The barrier of darkness is still there, in force. It takes no more than a flicker of awareness to affirm it, and to complete the Outer Opening.

The sentinel comes back into the lodge room, and the first part of the order of business goes like clockwork. All of the officers are present, there are no visitors from the Order's one other lodge, newly established in a college town a hundred miles away, and no one is sick or in distress, as far as anyone knows. Tish pauses, then says, "Since we've got an initiation tonight, we'll be skipping everything that isn't urgent. Scribe, I think you had something."

"We have an application," says Paul, "from a Michael T. MacFarland. Everything's filled out, and there's a ten dollar check for the initiation fee."

"Any volunteers for the interview committee?" Tish asks. After a moment, a few hands go up. "Brian, you're chairman. Sandra, Tom, you're on. The rest of you are alternates." Turning back to Paul: "There was something else, wasn't there?"

"We have one urgent bill, for thirty-five dollars, for tonight's hall rental."

"I'd entertain a motion to pay our bill," says Tish. The motion is made, seconded, passed by a show of hands. "Anything else?"

Josh stands up, waits until Paul shakes his head, and then says, "Magister."

"Brother Josh."

"I know we have an initiation to do, but we need to get the ball rolling on a magical training program for the lodge. Half the reason I joined was to get access to serious training, and I know I'm not the only one."

Beth is on her feet in a moment. "Magister, I move that this whole topic be tabled, if we can't get rid of it altogether. The last thing we need is some kind of official dogma—"

"That's not what I'm talking about—" Josh begins, his voice rising.

Tish's gavel comes down, hard, and everyone jumps. Josh and Beth both look embarrassed. Tish waits a moment, and then says, "One at a time, please. There's been a motion to table and that has to be handled first. Do I hear a second?"

"Seconded," says Brian.

Dismayed, Jessica watches the dynamics of the quarrel take shape in the lodge. Obviously some amount of taking sides has already happened, and the glares crossing the room trace out what could too easily become battle lines.

"It's been moved and seconded to table the topic," says Tish. "Before we vote, though, I'd like to address the lodge."

Under strict parliamentary procedure, Jessica knows, Tish could not get away with that. No one seems particularly fixated on *Robert's Rules of Order*, though.

"Two things," Tish says. "First of all, as a general rule, I'd like to ask anyone who wants to bring up something controversial to do it on a night when we don't have inner work to do, okay? We've got a candidate out there in the anteroom, remember.

"Second—Sister Beth, Brother Josh, this whole thing is getting a little out of hand. You two have been going at this for a couple of months now, and it hasn't helped the lodge any."

There is a murmur of agreement in the room, and Jessica relaxes a little; maybe an open clash can be avoided after all.

"So I'm appointing both of you to a new committee, the Instructional Committee. Sister Jessica, I'd like you to chair that, if you would."

Jessica, startled, still has the presence of mind to stand before speaking. "If it'll help, yes."

Tish turns back to Josh and Beth, who both look as though they have been hit by something large, like a truck. "Your job is to come up with an instructional program that everyone can accept. You'll meet until you can come up with a unanimous report—and I don't want to hear one word about it from either of you until you've done it. Okay?"

Josh nods, but Beth says, "What if we can't agree?"

"Then you keep meeting." Tish gives her a long steady look. "Jessica will keep me posted on how things are going. Okay?"

Beth nods, uneasily, and sits down. "We will now vote on the motion to table," says Tish. "All in favor, vote by the usual sign." Hands go up, Josh's and Beth's among them. "Hands down. Opposed?" No one raises a hand. "The subject is tabled."

Jessica sits back in her chair, considering Tish's move. It will at least keep the dispute from boiling over soon, and there is at least a chance that something useful will come out of the committee, if she can keep Josh and Beth from each other's throats. That may be awkward. Still, short of splitting the lodge—which is a last resort—it might well offer the best way to resolve the matter permanently.

"Is there anything else?" Tish asks. No one answers. She raps once with the gavel, then, and begins the Inner Opening. "Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you will join with me in raising this lodge from the Outer to the Inner. Sentinel, you will resume your station."

Brian makes the Outer Sign and leaves the room. When the double knock comes, a moment later, Jessica joins with the others in reaffirming the barrier around the lodge.

"Warder, you will purify the lodge with water."

Roger stands, goes to the altar and performs the purification. The sphere of water takes shape around him. It is a little ragged at first; the energies of water often are, Jessica knows, when there has been controversy in a lodge, and she puts extra effort into strengthening it. The sphere of fire, by contrast, is clear and strong.

"Let the elements of our lodge be transmuted in the fire of the Athanor," Tish says, "that the powers of the Inner may be awakened and the Work be accomplished." She raps twice with the

gavel. Jessica, along with the other major officers, rises and goes to the altar, entering into the sphere of purple light. She has stilled and focused her mind, and all her attention centers on the energies, the password *Lapis*, and the link this forms between her medallion of office and the awakening forces of the lodge.

She can feel the link as it crystallizes, turns left with the other officers and begins to walk the outward spiral that extends the energies through the lodge. All this is familiar ground, practiced not only in lodge but in her own ritual workings at home, and it goes off smoothly and with definite force. Sandra, the Herald, is having a little trouble holding her focus, and the visualized purple light on her side is thinning out; Jessica directs a part of her attention there and strengthens the image, so that the deployment of the energies finishes crisply.

She returns to her place, stands in front of her podium.

"In the presence of the Higher," Tish says, "and by the transmuting flame of the Athanor, I take up my station on the Inner. Officers, you will do the same."

Jessica steps behind her podium, and formulates the sphere of the Past Magister around her: golden, and blazoned with the Ouroboros serpent. She silently repeats the keyword *Philosophorum*, and feels the energies snap into focus, filling her aura with the forces she will need to direct in the ritual.

Tish's gavel raps three times. "Brothers and sisters, let the lodge be established on the Inner."

The whole pattern of imagery that makes up the inner side of the lodge takes shape again: the barrier of darkness, the triangle and flame over the altar, the purple light filling the space between, and the four spheres of the major officers at their stations.

"It is so done," Tish intones, and each of the other major officers repeat the words. The Ascending Sign is made, sealing the pattern, and the lodge is proclaimed open in the Inner; finally, a single rap allows the members to sit, and the Guardian and Sentinel knock—once, twice, thrice, once—to signal the end of the Opening.

Tish allows a brief pause, then goes on at once to the beginning of the Ritual of the Athanor. "Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, Cathy Hashimoto has been elected to membership in our

lodge and our Order. Warder, you will see that the candidate is in waiting, and prepare her for initiation."

Roger rises, goes to the altar, and makes the Outer Sign. Tish makes the same sign in response, and Roger turns and leaves the lodge room by the circle. Barry, the Guardian, opens and closes the door. Light switches click, and only the altar remains in a pool of light; everything else is dark. Still, with Sandra's help, Jessica has no trouble getting the altar set up for the black phase in a matter of moments. She goes back to her station with the cup of water.

"One thing," Tish says then, just loudly enough that everyone in the room can hear her. "I know there are a lot of strong feelings about the thing we discussed a little while ago. Try to set those aside, and remember that this is what we're about. Enough said."

Jessica draws in a deep breath, and then begins to build up the imagery of the black phase. Darkness, she says to herself. Deep, thick, smothering, darkness within darkness: *now*.

It formulates around her, slowly but with growing intensity. She allows a smile, then turns her attention to building up the circle of flames around the altar and the circle of Watchers surrounding the lodge. She can feel the other lodge members building the imagery as well, the less experienced ones struggling with wandering thoughts as they try to focus on darkness, the more experienced ones synthesizing, balancing, drawing together the energies of the lodge into a whole.

A knock sounds on the door. The Guardian responds with two. Three more come from outside. The Guardian knocks once more, listens through the wicket, turns and says, "Magister, the candidate is in waiting, and is prepared for initiation."

"You will admit her," says Tish.

The candidate is brought, blindfolded and bound, into the darkness. Jessica pulls her attention back from the imagery of the black phase and directs it to the candidate's aura, building up the related imagery of murky darkness veiling a faint but unwavering light. She scarcely notices the words spoken by Guardian, Warder, and Herald as the candidate is challenged and given into the Herald's keeping. The words of the Emerald Tablet sound through the silent lodge as the candidate makes her first circuit of the room.

Jessica keeps her focus in place until the candidate comes to the altar, and the attention of the whole lodge focuses for a moment on the image of rising flame and the transformation of the candidate's aura to pure darkness, the darkness in which the inner light will be revealed. She sees the candidate's face clearly for a moment—pale and dazed, with wide blinking eyes—while the blindfold is up. That reminds Jessica, again, of her own first initiation. She brushes aside the thought, turns her attention back wholly to the work at hand.

As soon as Sandra leads the candidate away from the altar, Jessica rises and goes to the center of the room. The altar cloth and symbols for the white phase are on a shelf inside the altar, and she takes these out while Roger clears away the cloth and symbols of the black phase. It takes only a few moments as the altar is silently made ready for the next part of the ritual. Jessica goes back to her station. The imagery of the lodge changes from phase to phase; the suffocating darkness gives way to light and vastness.

The candidate returns to the altar, and the attention of the lodge focuses on her and on the transformation of her aura from black to white in the flames. Once she leaves the altar, Jessica goes out again, prepares the altar for the next phase, and feels the change in the lodge energies as white gives way to red and the image of the Ouroboros serpent appears on the vast, robed Watchers.

The candidate comes to the altar a third time, and Jessica joins with the others in accomplishing the work of the flames. Sandra recites the Herald's part, and the lights come up. Tish begins the Obligation. Now comes the most complex part of the ritual's imagery, and Jessica readies herself. There have been initiations, recent ones, in which she has had to hold to energies of the lodge together by herself at this point. As the most experienced magician in the Order, not to mention its founder, she has been able to handle the burden. Still, it takes effort and preparation.

"Brothers and sisters of the Athanor," Tish says, "you have heard the obligation. Do you accept the candidate as a friend and a sister?"

The moment is here. "We do," she says along with all the others, and at the same moment turns her awareness to the imagery—only to find that the lodge is already at work, flawlessly. The Watchers make the Outer Sign, and vanish. The energies in the

room turn from red to gold, and then to purple. The candidate's aura flashes suddenly to gold, and the triangle-and-flame symbol of the Order blazes above her forehead. Jessica's energies join with the others, and the Work is completed.

The candidate is purified with water and consecrated with fire, and Jessica joins in the visualizations. She goes to clear away the symbols of the red phase from the altar while the candidate receives the secrets of the Order, and puts a chair between the altar and her own station. Finally, she can sit down in own her chair and relax. She has one more part to play in the ritual, and then work to do in the Closings, but none of it will take any particular effort. She sits and waits until Sandra brings the candidate to her station.

"Past Magister, by command of the Magister I present our new sister for the charge of initiation."

Jessica rises, gestures for the candidate—Cathy, she reminds herself—to sit down in the chair out in front of her station. "My sister, you are now an initiate of our lodge and our Order," she begins, and goes on with the rest of the charge. Part of her, at this moment, remembers writing those same words two years ago, when the Order of the Athanor was nothing more than ideas in a three-ring binder. But she keeps her attention on the words she needs to say, greets Cathy with the grip of the Order, and sends her on to Tish for the last part of the instructional phase.

Once Tish has finished and Cathy has been taken to a seat along the side of the room, Tish's gavel raps again. "Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you will join with me in lowering this lodge from the Inner to the Outer. Guardian, you will see that the Sentinel is at his station." The raps that follow cue Jessica, along with the rest of the lodge, to reformulate the barrier of darkness. As Roger goes to the altar to purify with water and consecrate with fire, she and the others formulate the spheres; blue, red and purple. She notes with relief that the blue sphere has regained its normal strength.

"Let the elements of our lodge be transmuted once again in the fires of the Athanor," Tish says then, "that the powers of the Inner may be manifest in the Outer and the Work completed." She raps twice. Jessica is ready. She rises, focuses her awareness on the link between her medallion of office and the energies of the lodge,

and spirals back to the altar with the other major officers. The sphere of energy contracts with them, taking with it the forces raised and wielded in the initiation. Reaching the altar, Jessica repeats the password *Lapis* silently, and feels the sudden shift as the energies disconnect from the medallion. She turns and goes back to her station.

"In the presence of the Higher, and by the transmuting flame of the Athanor, I relinquish my station in the Inner," says Tish. "Officers, you will do the same."

Jessica contracts the golden sphere of energy, returning it to the Past Magister's medallion, and silently repeats the keyword *Occultum* as she steps back behind her podium. The lodge room seems empty now. She faces the altar and waits.

The gavel raps three times. "Brothers and sisters, let the lodge be returned to the Outer." The visualization goes smoothly. "It is so done."

Jessica repeats the words in her turn, makes the Descending Sign with the others, keeps her attention focused on the visualization while the Warder declares the lodge closed in the Inner. The sealing of the lodge is reaffirmed again, this time without the presence of the energies up against the barrier.

Tish brings down her gavel. "Does any further work await the efforts of our lodge?"

A few eyes turn to Josh and Beth, but neither of them stir. "Magister, there is none," says Paul.

"Brothers and sisters of the Athanor, you will join with me in closing the lodge," Tish says, and begins the Outer Closing. Jessica joins in the visualizations and the words of the Emerald Tablet, the banking of the energies, and the final dispersal of the barrier of darkness. Finally Tish's gavel comes down one last time, and the evening's working is at an end.

The meeting, however, is not. Tish goes over to where the new initiate is standing, and says, "We've got cookies and sandwiches in the dining room, if you're interested." With a smile: "I'd recommend it. Food helps settle you down after something like this." Other members are already taking off their robes and heading toward the anteroom. After a minute or two, Jessica does the same.

She is not quite halfway there when she sees Beth heading toward her with a determined look on her face. Josh is not far behind. Oh lord, she thinks, and holds up a finger before either of them can speak. "Not a word until I get a cup of tea." She goes past them, into the anteroom and through a door to one side.

The dining room is as noisy as the lodge room was quiet. Part social hour, part informal discussion, and part opportunity to come down gently from the altered awareness of lodge ritual, the period after each lodge meeting has become one of the most popular parts of meeting nights. Three members of the lodge are assigned to bring snack foods to each meeting. This time, there are bagels and tubs of cream cheese, chips and dip, and three large plates of homemade cookies, along with coffee and tea. Jessica collects tea and a bagel, then sits down at one of the long tables. She is going to have to handle this carefully, she knows.

"Okay." She turns to Josh while he is still sitting down. "You want to see a magical training program set up in the lodge." She turns to Beth. "You want to make sure that it doesn't force everyone to do their magic in the same way." To both of them: "I don't see any reason why we can't manage both of those at the same time. I have some ideas, and I'm sure both of you have some of your own. We need to set a time to meet, and then—" She doesn't have to fake a tired look. "I'd rather drop this for tonight. It's been a long day."

Neither of them is ready to argue. They quickly settle on an evening later in the week, at Jessica's apartment, and go to get snacks. Neither one returns to Jessica's end of the table.

Jessica sips her tea and listens to the conversations going on around her. Two of the most experienced members are discussing different methods of consecrating a talisman of the Sun. Others are talking about a new book on shamanism. Tish is answering a younger member's questions about the African *Ifa* oracle, which is one of her chief areas of study. After a while, Jessica gets drawn into the conversation on shamanism, and ends up suggesting a middle ground in what has become a freewheeling argument about whether shamanic traditions have any relevance for the modern magician. At one point, she notices Cathy Hashimoto; the new initiate is sitting at another table amid a crowd of lodge members, still

looking a little dazed and saying little, but listening to the talk with evident interest.

It is about an hour after the meeting's official end before the first members begin to leave, and another half hour before the room begins to look empty. Cathy Hashimoto says her goodbyes and leaves with the friend who sponsored her, promising to be back at the next meeting in two weeks. Half a dozen members have already begun to wash dishes in the little kitchen just off the dining room. Roger has gone back into the lodge room to make sure that everything is put away and the hall can be closed for the night. Jessica finishes her second cup of tea and gets up.

"Care for a ride home?" says Tish, who is one of the few people left in the dining room.

"Please." Jessica fetches her shoulder bag, wishes Roger and the kitchen crew a good night, and follows Tish out through the ante-room. Their footsteps echo down the long stair that leads from the world of the lodge to the outer world, a bridge between realms.

MINUTES OF GREEN LION LODGE #1

Meeting of February 14, 1997

The lodge was opened in due form at 8:00 P.M. with Tish Price, Magister, presiding. Roll call found all officers present. There were no visiting brothers or sisters, and no members were reported sick or in distress.

As a candidate for initiation was in waiting, the regular order of business was suspended.

Under urgent business, an application for membership was received from Michael T. McFarland. Brian Wu, Sandra Lessing, and Tom Bankhead were appointed to the interview committee.

A bill for \$35.00 for hall rental was presented. Sandra Lessing moved to pay the bill and Jessica Allen seconded: passed.

Josh Norton raised the topic of a lodge instructional program. Beth Cabrini moved to table and Brian Wu seconded: passed. Tish Price appointed Josh, Beth, and Jessica Allen to an Instructional Committee to report back to the lodge.

Business being completed, the lodge passed from the Outer to the Inner and the Ritual of the Athanor was performed for Cathy Hashimoto. The lodge passed from the Inner to the Outer and, no further business appearing, closed in due form at 9:27 P.M.

Financial Report for the Meeting

Balance carried over from last meeting: \$535.48

Receipts: \$10.00

Disbursements: \$35.00

Balance carried forward to next meeting: \$510.48

Submitted: Paul Lisle, Scribe & Treasurer

Chapter Twelve

Creating a Magical Lodge

The Order of the Athanor is fictional, but nearly every part of that fiction has direct equivalents in the realm of actual magical lodges. Above all, the path that the Order took from a set of ideas in someone's head to a fully functioning magical lodge is one that has been followed countless times, in one way or another, in the four centuries since the lodge system and the magical traditions of the West first came into contact. The same path can be followed today. While there are certainly existing magical lodges that are worth joining, the point of this chapter—and one of the major points of this book as a whole—is to offer guidance and help to those who want to design, organize, and take part in a magical lodge of their own.

There are pitfalls and difficulties to be faced along the way, especially for those who have no personal experience of the lodge system. Still, most of these problems can be overcome by nothing more exotic than simple common sense, a willingness to think things through to their consequences, and a basic grasp of the way lodges work. The lodge system is flexible and sturdy enough to handle the ordinary troubles and growing pains that are always part of a new lodge's development. The lodge system also has a great many self-correcting features built in, and the mistakes that will inevitably be made can almost always be fixed later on. As long as lodge designers and members keep in mind the principles

and purposes of the system as outlined in this book, it's difficult to go too far wrong.

It is, admittedly, the task of keeping those things in mind that can become the major challenge to a new lodge. Some of those principles, like the lodge approach to leadership, fly in the face of habits of thought and behavior that are all but universal in our present culture. When lodges are put together by people who have no prior personal experience of the lodge system in action, it can be hard to keep these habits from distorting the system. Worse difficulty can arise when lodge founders or members have unstated agendas of their own, whether these are political, financial, sexual, or simply the further feeding of an already bloated ego.

So as we turn to the process of creating a new lodge, there are two crucial points that need to be kept in mind. First, the lodge system has rules of its own, and these do not necessarily follow our common assumptions about the way groups work. Second, every step in the design, founding, and operation of a lodge should be governed by the stated purpose of the lodge, not by any other agendas its founders or members might bring to it. In shaping each part of a new lodge, everyone involved needs to ask "Is this in keeping with the lodge system?" and "is this in keeping with the purpose of this particular lodge?" These two points are the touchstones of the lodge designer, and careful attention to them will prevent most of the potential troubles that new lodges face.

In this chapter, we'll go step-by-step through the stages of putting together a magical lodge. Three things must come together to start the process: the lodge's purpose, its core group of initial members, and its basic symbolism. These typically take shape together, but for the sake of clarity we'll discuss them separately.

Step One: Establishing the Purpose of the Lodge

The idea that each lodge has a specific, stated purpose was introduced in Chapter Six, when the imaginary designer of the Order of the Athanor was beginning the process of lodge design. This same idea, as just suggested, is a critical factor at every stage of that

process, and a good deal of attention should be paid to formulating the purpose and measuring other aspects of the lodge against it.

Sometimes the purpose of a new lodge will evolve naturally out of one or both of the other basic elements mentioned above. A group of friends who have been working together on various rituals and guided meditations on some particular theme, for example, might well choose to deepen and broaden their work by reshaping their group into a lodge. In this case the new lodge will have its core group and its basic purpose in place, and will only need to refine its symbolism before starting work at the level of lodge structure and ritual design. In the same way, a magician who has come to focus his own magical work on the tradition of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, say, might decide to link up with other magicians of the same kind and start a new Golden Dawn lodge. In this case, not only the purpose and symbolism but the rituals themselves are already given, and the only task—admittedly, not a minor one—is to create a lodge structure that will avoid the disastrous problems with leadership and authority that wrecked the original Golden Dawn. Finally, a group of initiates of an existing lodge organization may choose to found a new lodge of that organization. In that case, of course, the entire system comes in a package, more or less complete, and simply needs to be put to work.

On the other hand, not every new lodge discovers its purpose so easily. It's not at all uncommon for people to start a magical lodge simply because they are interested in lodge work and there are no suitable magical lodges nearby. This is as valid as any other reason, but the founders of such a lodge will need to think about exactly what they want from lodge work, and what they would like the new lodge to become. Similarly, the initial group may decide to start a lodge with a general idea of its purpose, and then will have to sit down and work out the fine details later.

There are any number of purposes for a magical lodge to exist, over and above the simple (but by no means unimportant) purpose of exploring the possibilities of lodge work itself. One of these, as outlined in the last several chapters, is the purpose of building community among magicians. This is the magical lodge equivalent of the central purpose of most fraternal lodges. It has not been very

common among magicians, at least in the last few centuries, but it has a good deal to recommend it nonetheless.

Probably the most common purpose for magical lodges has always been that of offering training and initiation in some particular system of magic. Lodges of this kind function as schools for magicians, and their degree ceremonies are linked to a curriculum of study and practice that each member must complete to pass from degree to degree. The Golden Dawn is the best-known example of the type, but there have been many others. Any magical system can be used as a basis for training in a lodge of this sort, so long as it is thoroughly mastered by the lodge members who will be teaching it, and just as thoroughly integrated into the grade structure of the lodge.

Another common focus for lodge work is the opportunity for intensive work with a particular symbolism or mythology. Nearly any pattern of symbolic meaning can be used as the basis for lodge work. If several like-minded magicians wish to work together to open up the inner, magical aspects of such a pattern, forming a lodge on that basis is one of the classic ways to do it. Such lodges are typically smaller than the great teaching orders, since their more specific focus will often appeal to fewer potential members. In the past, lodges of this kind have included groups working with the legends of the Holy Grail or the Knights Templar, many of the various Druid orders, and a variety of lodge systems on the fringes of Masonry. With certain exceptions, which we'll discuss shortly, almost any imaginable myth or symbolic structure can be used as the focus of this sort of lodge work, given thorough study and the inner work necessary to bring it to life.

A third common purpose is the carrying out of major magical workings toward a specific goal or a series of goals, whether decided in advance or chosen by the lodge in the course of its meetings. Lodges of this sort vary widely in their character, depending on the goals chosen and the magical methods used to reach them. At one end of the spectrum there are lodges that devote their energies to very broad positive ends, such as furthering the spiritual evolution of humanity. On the other, there are lodges organized for very specific magical purposes that direct all their work toward some tightly focused end. Again, any magically attainable goal can become the

focus of a lodge of this type, so long as the goal is one that can motivate the lodge members to put in the energy and effort involved.

Finally, of course, more than one of these purposes can be pursued by the same lodge simultaneously. In fact, most of the magical lodges that have left records behind seem to have done just that. Any lodge that does not create a community among its members has failed at one of the central tasks of the lodge system. Most magical lodges have to include at least some training, as very few people who join lodges come to them with as much magical training as one might wish. The symbolism of any lodge, fraternal or magical, is normally one of the major factors drawing potential members. The opportunity to do group magical workings of various kinds is an important point in most magical lodges.

It should be kept in mind, though, that all these goals will come into conflict now and again, if only because there are limits to how long meetings can be allowed to run. As early as possible in the process of lodge design, therefore, the founding members of a lodge need to ask themselves and each other what purposes are most important, what comes next, and what comes last or not at all. A lodge that is created as a magical school, but also makes room for social, symbolic, and practical functions as members desire and circumstances permit, is likely to be a very different lodge from one that is founded as an inclusive magical community but allows for a certain amount of instruction, exploration, and practical working.

Step Two: Assembling the Core Group

The second basic element is a core group of members for the new lodge. This core group should be involved in the lodge design process from the beginning, and not simply in the role of approving audience. It's possible for one person to put an entire lodge system together and then recruit members for it, but this often works poorly in practice. Most of the time, a lodge that starts out with only one member will never get much larger. How large should the core group be? To a great extent this depends on circumstances and on personalities, but four or five people is a fair minimum, and fifteen to twenty, in most cases, is a maximum. The goal is to have a

founding membership large enough to fill all the roles in the rituals of the new lodge but small enough that every member can take an active role in putting the lodge together. There may be a certain amount of fluctuation in the group—some people will join and then drift away, while others may become involved later on—and you'll want to keep this in mind as well.

It's fairly common for the initial members of a lodge to come out of some existing group. In many cases, this is nothing more organized than a collection of friends and acquaintances with a common interest in magic. In other cases, new lodges spin off from existing magical groups as members decide that they wish to carry out some specific kind of lodge work as well as, or instead of, the work being done in the original group.

What is to be done, though, if you are interested in starting a magical lodge and no such group is available as a nucleus? There are a number of approaches. One route is to organize a discussion group on magic at a local occult bookstore, or to join one that already exists. Another is to attend public events in the local magical community, making contact with potential core group members while letting your interest in lodge work be known. Still another, generally less effective, is to put up a notice or two on bulletin boards at bookstores or other magical community centers, asking those interested in the possibility of forming a magical lodge to give you a call.

Of course, no such approach is foolproof. All of these, and all similar approaches, depend on a mastery of basic social skills, a generally low-key approach, and a willingness to keep your ego out of the way of the work of building a lodge. Keep in mind that no one has any reason to join your proposed lodge unless you give them one. The best way to do this is to make it clear that everyone involved will have an active role in the creation and work of the lodge—and then to act accordingly.

The point of belonging to a lodge, after all, is that it brings the member into a community in which everyone benefits equally from the lodge's resources and everyone takes a role in the decisions that affect all. This doesn't mean that all the members will want to involve themselves in, say, the design of the rituals or the setting up of the lodge's organizational structure. Different people have differ-

ent needs and talents, and will be more or less interested in different aspects of the work. It does mean that all those who want to take part in some phase of the work should be allowed to do so, as long as they abide by the core purpose of the lodge and the principles of courtesy and fairness that are central to the entire lodge system.

Step Three: Crafting the Symbolism of the Lodge

The basic symbolism of the lodge is at once the most flexible and the most difficult of the three fundamentals, and will require a good deal more discussion than the other two. To some extent this is a function of the sheer number of possibilities available. Magical lodges have traditionally had only a limited number of purposes, and there is only so much that can be said about the process of bringing together the core group of members for a new lodge. The number of different symbolic patterns used by magical lodges over the last four centuries, by contrast, is enough to boggle the mind, and there are many more perfectly workable possibilities that have not yet been tried.

In a great many cases, it's the symbolism that provides the seed from which the rest of a lodge grows. Hundreds of magical lodges have been founded because several magicians became entranced with the possibilities of some particular symbolism, and tried to put those possibilities to work by means of the traditional lodge system. Still, not all lodges start this way, and even those that do often need to spend a good deal of time exploring and developing their symbols and myths in order to turn them into the foundations of effective lodge organizations.

Those lodge designers that don't start out with a specific symbolism in mind can draw on an almost limitless array of resources. One obvious starting place is the purpose of the planned lodge. A lodge intended to serve as a school for magicians can draw its symbolism, as the Golden Dawn did, from the specific system of magic it will teach, while a lodge focusing on work with some particular mythology has its symbolic framework ready-made. Books of folklore, mythology, and legend are easy to find, as are books on magical and mystical traditions of the past. All these are valid sources,

and so are the imaginations, dreams, and magical experiences of the lodge members themselves.

Turning this raw material into a coherent lodge symbolism, though, will take a certain amount of work—and will involve a certain number of potential problems. The symbolic element of lodge work, as we saw earlier, is made particularly difficult for the modern lodge designer by the problems our present culture has in understanding the nature, forms, and meanings of symbolism. Many of the points raised in Chapter Three are highly relevant at this stage of lodge design—especially those having to do with the differences between symbols and signs, between definable and indefinable meanings, and between interpretations and experiences.

Fortunately, there are also some practical pointers that can be given here. None of them should be treated as though they were carved in stone. The art of crafting lodge symbolism is exactly that—an art. It depends on creativity and the personal touch rather than on following a cookbook approach. The following points, though, are rules of thumb that have proved themselves in practice, in both fraternal and magical settings.

A Symbolic Context

One of the most important pointers is that there needs to be some sort of overall structure to the symbolism of the lodge in the first place. To take a collection of unrelated symbols, put them together haphazardly, and use them as the basis of lodge work is very nearly a guarantee of incoherence. Only sheer blind luck will allow such a lodge's rituals to produce useful results. There needs to be a structure of meaning in which all the symbols of the lodge have their place, and it should be chosen with the purpose of the lodge in mind. This structure must be rooted in the core narrative of the lodge and the symbolic identity it gives to its members, and it will provide the context for everything that will be done in the lodge. Once you know the story that your lodge and its rituals will be telling, and the identity that lodge members will take on when the lodge is open, you have the anchor for the entire symbolic structure of the lodge. For this reason, the process of working out these things should be done with as much care, patience, and thought as possible.

The most common way to establish this context is to borrow an existing mythic narrative or symbolic pattern. It's also possible, although more difficult and a good deal more risky, to come up with a new structure, a new myth, that will connect the symbols of the lodge into a unified, meaningful whole. In any case, the designers of any new lodge organization should be able to explain at a moment's notice what role any particular symbol plays in the lodge symbolism and how it interacts with the other symbols that are used.

Balanced Polarities

Another useful rule is that any symbolic energy that appears in a lodge's symbolism should have its symbolic opposite as well. There is a habit, nearly two thousand years old in the West, of assuming that all polar oppositions have one good side and one evil side, and the good side should be included while the evil side is thrown out. This habit of thinking shows up all through our modern social, religious, and political thought. In nearly every case it is a source of confusion, not of understanding.

From an older and wiser viewpoint, which is (among other things) the viewpoint of the Western magical tradition, good is to be found at the point of balance between opposites, and evil consists of getting stuck at one or another of the unbalanced extremes. For a symbolic structure to be balanced, therefore, in most cases it's a good idea to include both sides of any polarity you use. If the symbolism of light plays a role, the symbolism of darkness should also appear. If a god is invoked, a corresponding goddess should probably be invoked as well—and the positive as well as the negative aspects of both sides of the polarity should appear in the ritual symbolism. A polarity strictly between “good guys” and “bad guys” is a highly limiting one, and tends to produce little more than self-righteousness in its initiates.

Systemic Integrity

Another rule holds that it's rarely productive to mix symbols, principles, or gods from different cultures or systems of thought. This is especially true in rituals that work with those personified transcendent powers we call gods and goddesses. The pantheons of

traditional pagan religions have evolved over thousands of years to form (among other things) a complete and balanced set of symbols that express the universe on an inner level. To pick and choose from a number of different pantheons on the basis of sheer personal preference is like picking a set of letters from a number of different alphabets purely on the basis of how much you like the shapes, and then trying to write with the resulting set. Unless you know your way around all the alphabets in question, and choose carefully, you're likely to find that there are many words you can't spell.

Contemporary Biases

Along the same lines, it's wise to do your best to forget about current fashions in social or political thought when putting together the symbolism of a lodge. All the political and social movements of an age—whether these are labeled as “conservative,” “liberal,” “radical,” or what have you—reflect that age's imbalances with a great deal of precision, and a lodge that draws its themes, imagery, or underlying structure from these sources usually ends up reinforcing accepted ways of thinking about the world, rather than leading the initiate's awareness into new understanding and insight. Such rituals—and there have been a fair number of them—are often quite popular, since it's always comforting to have one's prejudices confirmed. Nonetheless, they have little of value to offer the magician, or anyone else.

The same is also true of popular fiction—particularly fantasy fiction, which is, for all practical purposes, the folk mythology of the modern magical revival. An enormous percentage of magicians today read it, and no small number get into magical studies in the first place after encountering magic in fantasy. To a sometimes embarrassing extent, members of the magical community have tended to model both themselves and their approach to magic after their favorite fantasy novels. Given this, it's probably inevitable that sooner or later someone will try putting together a lodge based on some favorite novel or imaginary world—an esoteric equivalent, in effect, of the Tribe of Ben-Hur.

Inevitable or not, there's little to be gained from such a project. For all their air of far away and long ago, the imaginary kingdoms

of fantasy are a product of modern popular culture, with all its biases and assumptions—including a long list of false assumptions about magic. They have little or nothing to do with real magic, or for that matter real spirituality. This is not to devalue fantasy or condemn it. It's simply to stress that there is a difference between entertainment and authentic magical lore.

Many of the imaginative tales of our culture speak to human needs that our culture cannot or does not meet, and it's precisely the fact that this culture has blinded itself to the reality of magic that has made tales of magical adventure so popular at present. Still, gods and goddesses who have been invented by authors as plot engines for popular fiction are simply not the same as gods and goddesses who have been experienced by generations of mystics and magicians as living powers in the inner realms of existence. Similarly, systems of magic put together by authors for fictional effect can be counted on to have no more than a fictional effect if you try to put them into practice in the world where we actually live. However inspiring or enjoyable your favorite fantasy novels may be, they make a very poor substitute for authentic symbolism, myth, and magic, especially in the context of a magical lodge.

Other People's Traditions

One last rule of thumb holds that it's almost always a mistake to appropriate a set of symbols you have no right to use. This point needs to be understood carefully, as there have been a great many claims bandied about on this subject, not all of them intelligent or free of personal motives. It is certainly true that symbols and myths are no one's property, and attempts to claim ownership over common symbolic patterns usually have more to do with marketing than with magic.

On the other hand, the egregors linked to some living patterns of symbolism are very deeply woven into specific organizations and their structures. To try to make use of the symbols of a surviving fraternal lodge without being initiated into it, for example—over and above the ethical issues involved—is usually a waste of time, because the egregor of a living lodge will shut out anyone it identifies as an intruder. No matter how much energy may go into the egregor from

outside, the initiates on the inside are the only ones who can draw on it. Using such symbols is thus a little like making deposits to someone else's bank account. This is true even when, as sometimes happens, there are several different and competing organizations linked to the same egregor, each passing on valid links to it.

Matters are different once the original organization has finally and fully ceased to exist. This is, for example, one of the subtle factors that has shaped the history of the Golden Dawn tradition during the last few decades. The last of the original Golden Dawn lodges had gone extinct, or mutated into very different forms, by the early 1970s—and it has been since that time that new Golden Dawn lodges working the full traditional system have flourished. Once the Order's egregor had been cut off from a living lodge tradition, it became available to those magicians who had the skill and the knowledge to tap into it. Until the last fragments of the original Order had gone out of existence, though, magicians who set out to found lodges on the Golden Dawn model typically had to use a slightly different symbolism and a different name, simply to keep from coming into conflict with the Order's egregor.

These same factors also come into play on a much broader scale, one in which the egregors involved are those of whole cultures. Over the last hundred years or so, many people in Western societies who have been dissatisfied with the obvious failings of their own culture have turned to the traditional wisdom of other peoples. Sometimes this has been done the honest way, by making personal contact with the keepers of that wisdom and passing through the relevant process of training and initiatory experience. Such spiritual exchanges between societies are both valid and valuable, and those who have made the often difficult leap between the inner worlds of different cultures deserve the highest respect.

In too many recent cases, though, borrowings from other cultures' traditions have been done in a manner more like petty theft. Too many Westerners in recent years have made free use of the ceremonies, symbols, and sacred traditions of various non-Western peoples, exploiting the spiritual heritage of other cultures without bothering to earn the right to do so—and often without even taking the time to learn much about the teachings they claim to follow. Very

often, too, popular “New Age” philosophies have been dressed up in various exotic costumes and marketed as ancient wisdom from any number of distant lands, while the authentic traditions of the peoples in question have been utterly ignored. There are many who have tried to appropriate the symbols and energies of a Native American tribe’s traditional religion, for example, in order to access this system’s spiritual power. To do so without passing through its ceremonies and learning its teachings under the supervision of tribal elders is even more pointless than trying to use the rituals of the Knights of Pythias or the Odd Fellows without becoming a Knight of Pythias or an Odd Fellow first.

More obviously modern inventions, such as the watered-down “generic shamanism” that has been marketed so freely over the last decade or so, pose a different danger to the lodge designer: that of creating a symbolism that simply reinforces our ordinary, non-magical ways of understanding the world, rather than passing beyond them to a wider view. Far from challenging the current Western worldview, many “New Age” teachings are popular nowadays precisely because they fit so well with our usual habits of thought, even when decked out in exotic trappings from halfway around the world.

From one perspective, such follies are relatively harmless, and even a positive sign of sorts (just as in making beer, it’s the froth on the surface that shows that real ferment is under way at a deeper level). Still, for the lodge designer, there’s a danger in these fashionable pseudo-spiritualities. Many of the traditions of other cultures are guarded by egregors far more potent than those of the strongest Western lodge organizations, and those egregors—as with those of lodges—are deeply linked to specific patterns of organization and initiation.

The moral here is a simple one. If you wish to use material from living lodge or cultural traditions in the process of lodge design, make contact with the egregor first in the traditional manner, by an initiation or the equivalent given by the rightful keepers of the tradition. If you wish to use material from a lodge or a culture that no longer exists, your options are much wider, since an egregor that is no longer linked to its original organization or ethnic group is normally much more open to contact from outside. Still, careful

research is a vital necessity here so that you can be sure that your lodge will be linking into the egregor in question rather than simply reflecting the prejudices of the modern world.

Step Four: Putting the Pieces Together

Once you've settled on a purpose, assembled a core group of members, and chosen a basic symbolism for your new lodge, the foundations are in place. What follows is a matter of building on these foundations in each of the four areas of lodge work discussed in Chapter One: structure, symbolism, magic, and secrecy.

In terms of structure, you'll need to set a time, date, and place for regular meetings, establish the initial constitution and bylaws of the lodge, and open a checking account in the lodge's name. Each of these has requirements of its own.

There are any number of potential meeting spaces for a magical lodge, but far and away the best is an actual lodge room of the standard design. In many cases it's possible to rent space from a local fraternal lodge, although it may not be wise to mention the word "magic" when talking about your plans with the lodge secretary. If this can't be arranged, talk to contacts in the local occult community about where classes and indoor rituals can be held. Another option is to make use of a living room that can be cleared of furniture, or to put an empty garage or basement to use as a lodge space. Remember to plan for storage space for the lodge's furniture and equipment. Many fraternal lodge buildings have closets or lockers that may be available to rental groups, but other kinds of meeting spaces may be less well equipped.

The scheduling of meeting times will depend on when and how often the members of your core group will be available. Most lodges meet somewhere between once a week and once a month, with two meetings a month a common average. Weekday evenings are the most common time for lodge meetings.

The constitution of a lodge is the basic organizing document—the piece of paper that defines the lodge organization, its purpose and activities, and the way in which it is governed. The bylaws cover the details of meetings, dues, and the like. The constitution and bylaws of your lodge will evolve over time, but a beginning

needs to be made as soon as the lodge starts to meet. The constitution and bylaws of the Order of the Athanor in Chapter Six may be useful as a model, but the basic questions—what lodge officers there will be, whether or not there will be a Grand Lodge or equivalent, and so on—will need to be settled by your core group based on the specific purposes of the new lodge. Once written and approved by vote of the lodge, the constitution and bylaws should be copied and given to every member so there's no question what the rules are. Be sure to put a provision in the constitution allowing the bylaws to be made and amended by the lodge.

This new constitution also needs to include the details of the process for admission to the lodge. Once the initial core group is formed, new members should always pass through the standard lodge admission process—application, interview, and vote of the lodge—before joining in. If there are other requirements for entry, such as mastery of a basic set of magical techniques, those should also go into effect at once. This will help establish habits that will be useful later on, and it will also carry out its primary function of sorting out potential members.

A checking account, into which all dues are deposited and out of which all lodge expenses are paid, is almost always a necessity. In an organization with a grand lodge and subordinate lodges, it's normally best to have a separate checking account for each. In the United States, your lodge needs to get a tax identification number in order to open a bank account. A phone call to the nearest IRS office will get you the form you need, which (as of this writing) is Form SS-4. Be sure to have the checks printed with an extra signature line, and require all lodge checks to be signed by two different lodge officers. This is another of the standard ways to keep the temptation of petty theft to a minimum.

In addition to these basic steps, there are also the issues of incorporation and tax-exempt status, which we'll discuss a little later in this chapter. (Not all lodges need to go through these complex and often expensive processes, though.)

In terms of symbolism, the lodge will need to flesh out the skeleton of its symbolic structure in much the same way that our imaginary lodge designer did in Chapter Six. All of the standard

forms of lodge symbolism you intend to use in ritual work will need to be detailed, and kept in harmony with each other and with the overall pattern of symbolism. The officers of the lodge and the structure of the lodge room need to be settled at this step. The symbolic colors and forms that will be used in the lodge's magical work should also be worked out at this stage, so that the members of the core group can begin working with them and start the process of building up the new lodge's egregor.

As this is done, and as the rituals begin to evolve, appropriate lodge furniture, robes, and equipment will need to be made or bought. Your lodge's budget and the skills and talents of its members will determine just how elaborate these will be. It may be worth noting that simplicity often works as well as the sort of extreme ornateness found in older magical orders, and can be carried off successfully for a good deal less money. Books on theatrical costume and props can be a valuable guide to producing impressive visual effects for a modest price. Another excellent resource is Chic and Sandra Tabatha Cicero's comprehensive book *Secrets of a Golden Dawn Temple* which gives detailed instructions for making nearly every type of magical lodge equipment.

One critical element of the symbolism that will need to be created at this stage, or soon after, is the set of gestures, grips, passwords, and other symbolic triggers that will be central to the ritual work of the lodge. Here the great virtues are simplicity and consistency. As the basic symbolism of the lodge and the details of the rituals evolve, they will often suggest images and ideas that can be used. However, these should be tested by all the core group members to make sure they can be used and remembered easily.

In terms of magic, the lodge will need to settle on whatever specific set of magical approaches it will be using in its rituals, and—if its purpose includes teaching magic—in its curriculum as well. Like the constitution and bylaws, the magical system of a new lodge quite often evolves through several different forms, and this is a process that should not be hurried. Still, a basic framework and approach should be settled early on, so that members can begin focusing on the magical skills they will need for the lodge workings to come.

It's often wise to start some sort of basic magical practice with the first, informal organizational meetings of the core group. This serves partly to get the members used to working together as a magical team, and partly to begin the process of energizing the lodge's egregor as soon as possible.

It also serves the harsh but necessary purpose of chasing off those who may be thrilled by the idea of "being a magician" and belonging to a magical lodge, but who don't happen to be interested in actually practicing magic. People for whom magic is a fashion statement rather than a path to inner transformation are by no means rare in the magical community. The path of the poseur is, in a way, a discipline and an art all its own. It is not without its demands, or for that matter its rewards, but it is usually incompatible with serious magical work. (There are exceptions—Aleister Crowley, who was not only a capable magician but also a poseur of genius, comes to mind—but not many people can carry this off as effectively as the Beast.) The sooner everyone realizes that the new lodge will take its magical work seriously, and will expect members to participate in intensive magical workings, the less confusion and hard feelings there will be on all sides.

Almost any sort of magical practice could be used here, but there are three exercises in particular that are worth doing in the early phases of a magical lodge's formation. The first two require that the core public or semi-public emblem of the new lodge—the symbol that will represent it visually—has already been chosen.

The first exercise is done during meetings of the core group, preferably as a kind of opening ceremony before other work begins. This involves having the members build up the lodge's public emblem in the imagination and visualizing it in the air in some specific place in the meeting room. This should be done for perhaps five minutes at a stretch, with all the members concentrating in silence on the imagined emblem. This exercise has several advantages. On the one hand, it teaches the type of group visualization that is used in many kinds of lodge work. On the other, it speeds the formation of the new lodge's egregor by charging the most important single symbol of the lodge with the energies of focused consciousness.

A similar exercise is to be done by each member of the core group independently. Each day, at a specific time, each of the core group members takes a few moments to visualize the lodge's public emblem as clearly and intensely as possible. Common times for this exercise are noon and sunset, but any point in the daily cycle that is convenient and symbolically appropriate can be used. This is somewhat more difficult because there is no one cuing the members to begin at the proper time. Those who have little or no experience with this sort of time-focused awareness exercise will probably have trouble remembering the visualization for weeks or months, even if they work at it consistently. Still, shying away from an exercise because it may prove frustrating is a poor approach to magical training! Even if many of the members miss the visualization now and then, each one who succeeds helps charge the lodge egregor, and—not incidentally—works on his or her own awareness training as well.

One more set of magical exercises that can be of great importance at this point is the sort of guided meditation often (if inaccurately) called “pathworking” in modern magical parlance. In this sort of work, the members of the group use relaxation and rhythmic breathing to enter into a meditative state, and then visualize a sequence of events. This usually involves a narrative, based on the core lodge symbols, that one member reads from a prepared script. Guided meditation of this kind can be used to explore and energize a myth central to lodge symbolism, to help charge the lodge egregor, and to connect the members to it. It can be used to practice magical work, even lodge ritual itself. It also serves as one of the ways by which a lodge can begin the process of taking up an inner plane contact. Those who take part in this work should note down the events of such inner journeys carefully and discuss them with other members afterward. If any images from the meditation occur later in dreams or other visionary experiences, this should be noted and discussed as well.

Other exercises may be drawn from whatever magical system the lodge will be using for its rituals. Even if most members of the core group are experienced magicians, it's almost always a good idea to start with the basics and to work up from them step by step as a group. Including elements of the lodge's own ritual work (once

these have been put into final form) will begin the more demanding job of preparing the members to take part in lodge ritual.

The members of the core group should begin the practice of lodge secrecy as soon as the group itself moves from general talk to serious discussions on what the new lodge is to be. Many people in our present culture have little experience with the art of secrecy, so the transitional period between the decision to found a lodge and the first actual meetings of the new lodge is a good time to start learning the lessons of secrecy and putting them into practice. At the very least, the central non-public lodge symbols should be kept secret by all members of the core group, as should the time and place of group meetings and the names of other group members. The core group should also discuss, in detail, what is to be kept secret by members of the lodge and what is not.

Step Five: Considering Incorporation and Tax Exemption

The importance of fraternal lodge organizations in American culture is reflected in the laws and tax codes that govern them. State laws governing incorporation generally have a special category for lodges (or “fraternal societies,” as they are often called in legal jargon), often with special privileges and lower incorporation fees. Federal Internal Revenue laws have two special tax-exempt non-profit classifications for lodge organizations: the 501(c)8 classification, for lodges that offer significant financial benefits to members, and the 501(c)10 classification for those that do not. Many other countries have similar arrangements in their legal systems, although (for reasons of space and complexity) those will not be dealt with here.

Incorporation and tax exemption both have substantial advantages for lodges above a certain size. Incorporation provides legal protection for the individual members of the lodge, and in some states incorporation as a lodge brings with it an exemption from certain state taxes. Either of the two federal nonprofit categories for lodges makes the lodge completely exempt from federal income taxes. Both incorporation and tax exemption impose certain legal

requirements on a lodge, but in nearly every case a lodge that is behaving honestly will meet these requirements anyway. If your lodge is ever likely to have an income of more than \$10,000 a year, it may be worth taking the trouble to incorporate, apply for tax-exempt status, or both.

On the other hand, “trouble” is not a bad word for what is involved in these highly complicated processes. State laws vary widely, and you’ll need to go through your state’s legal code (most public libraries have copies) to find out the requirements and procedures for incorporation as a lodge. Forms will have to be prepared and submitted to the appropriate office with a filing fee, and if you make a mistake on the forms you may lose the fee and have to start over from the beginning. The Internal Revenue Service, in turn, has its own set of hoops through which a new lodge must jump. Most of these are in the application form for 501(c)8 or 501(c)10 status, which as of this writing is IRS Form 1024. This also has to be filled out and submitted to the right office, with a hefty filing fee (\$150 as of this writing).

It’s entirely possible to manage both of these without hiring a lawyer or jumping off a bridge, as long as you are patient, detail-oriented, and can learn to handle a certain amount of legal language. The office of your state’s Secretary of State will be able to provide you with some help on the incorporation process, although the quality of the advice you get may be highly variable. Very few people, in or out of the state bureaucracy, are likely to know much about a subject as obscure as the fraternal society laws, and you may need to do some prompting with the relevant sections of your state’s legal code. The IRS is a good deal more reliable, and has publications that lay out what you need to know. In both cases, though, it’s utterly crucial that you read everything a dozen times and follow the instructions to the letter in filling out the forms.

Appendix 2 of this book gives a sample set of articles of incorporation and an IRS Form 1024, from a magical lodge organization incorporated in the state of Washington that has received its federal tax exemption as a 501(c)10 non-beneficial fraternal society. A few details are missing or changed for reasons of secrecy, but nothing affecting the order’s legal status has been altered. These papers can be used as a model for those who want to tackle this process.

As suggested above, though, it's not always necessary for a lodge to take on these complicated tasks, and smaller lodges are usually better off avoiding them. Lodges that have no Grand Lodge or the equivalent—and many, perhaps most, magical lodges fall into this category—are not even eligible for them, since the definition of “lodge” in the lawbooks requires that they be chartered by some higher body. At the same time, under current (1997) tax law, any organization that has less than \$10,000 in gross yearly income doesn't even need to file a return, much less pay taxes. It's also entirely possible (and often a positive move) to skip the incorporation process altogether and operate a lodge as an unincorporated association, although you may need to shop around a little for a bank that will give you an account on that basis.

The decision whether to incorporate and seek tax exemption should be made—like all decisions affecting the future of the lodge—by the lodge as a whole. In most cases, if the lodge takes the time to clarify its purpose and to establish a common vision of what the lodge will be and how it will grow, decisions like these will essentially make themselves.

Step Six: Dealing With Group Process

The most critical factor in building a new lodge has to do not with these bureaucratic tangles, nor with the subtler factors of symbolism and magic, but with the simple business of teaching a group of magicians how to work together comfortably. This aspect of the process of lodge creation may well come up at a very early point—quite possibly when the core group is first being assembled—but it will certainly have become a factor by the time the lodge is this far along the process of taking shape.

Magicians have always tended to be an independent lot, and a range of forces at work in our present culture have amplified this tendency to extremes. The result is a magical community that often puts personal independence at the very top of its system of values. This is by no means a bad thing. It does mean, though, that members of a new magical lodge are likely to have to work, and work hard, at the process of building community within the lodge. It's

simply not possible for everyone in a lodge to have his or her own way any time a decision gets made, and if those members who are on the losing end of every vote walk out in a huff, the lodge will run out of members in very short order.

One of the crucial ingredients for the success of a new lodge, then, is a willingness on the part of all members to make use of compromise, consensus, and forbearance in the course of decision-making. The goal of every member (and especially of the presiding officer) during meetings should be to find a solution on which everyone can agree—even if it's one that no one particularly prefers.

The elements of lodge structure explored in Chapter Two (particularly the system of "lodge etiquette") will also help keep things on an even keel. Many of these elements were evolved for the specific purpose of handling disagreements in lodge in a productive way, and new lodges that learn and follow them are likely to have an easier time during the rough spots of the growth curve.

There will, nonetheless, be quarrels in the course of the lodge's development. Students of group psychology have noticed a four-stage pattern in the way groups develop over time: These stages have been termed "forming," "norming," "storming" and "performing." The first stage, that of forming, tends to be unfocused and uncertain, with discussions phrased in the most general terms and everything open to redefinition. In the second, or "norming" stage, the members of the group begin to focus on specifics. At this point the definition of rules, responsibilities, and powers are central to the group process. In the third stage, "storming," members define themselves in the context of group norms and in relation to each other. This process usually involves a certain amount of bickering and conflict. Finally, in the fourth or "performing" stage, the group has settled its internal arrangements and is ready to go to work on its real purpose. (Those readers who know something about the Cabala may notice a very familiar pattern in these four stages.) The stages happen as a group first forms, and they will repeat themselves on a smaller scale whenever the group changes significantly—for example, when taking in new members.

The third, or "storming" stage, is the stage where many groups tear themselves apart. Sometimes this happens because the norms

and rules that have been established in the stage just finished are too rigid, or because the structures of leadership are too top-heavy. Quite often, though, it happens because the rules and norms aren't rigid enough, or because leadership structures are too weak to handle the strains of ordinary decision-making. Like children who misbehave in order to discover the limits of acceptable behavior, group members in this stage will push the envelope to find its limits. If the envelope is too fragile, they will push themselves right through it and out of the group.

One way to help keep this from happening is to see to it that the new lodge spends the time it needs in each of the earlier stages, rather than rushing through in the hope of reaching the "performing" stage as soon as possible. In the "forming" stage, take the time to explore everyone's visions and ideals for the new lodge. When the members start turning their attention to specifics, work on those specifics until a solid framework has been established, and then stick with it.

The "storming" stage, too, needs a certain amount of time. What works best is to remember what is happening, and to see to it that the limits placed by lodge rules and leadership structures are kept flexible, but kept in place. One thing that, surprisingly, works well is to fine members a small sum—a dollar at most—for breaking any of the rules of lodge etiquette given in Chapter Two. Either the presiding officer or the second officer can be given the responsibility of charging these fines and seeing that they are paid. This is an old tactic of lodge management, and it works because it gives members a harmless way to "misbehave" and pay for it. There are other advantages, too: new lodges passing through the "storming" stage with this sort of rule in place can often make a good start on their incense-and-candles fund!

Central to the whole process of working through these four stages is the growth of community in the lodge. As members make the lodge a part of their lives and learn to relate to each other as allies in a common work, it's hard to keep a certain measure of friendship from developing. As this increases, it can provide a useful counter to the pressures of the "storming" stage and the disagreements that will inevitably come up later on.

There are books on group process available from many bookstores and most libraries, and it can be useful for group members to read them and think about their implications. A large proportion of the learning that makes a lodge work, though, takes place in the lodge room itself. It is one of the particular virtues of the lodge system that it encourages, even requires, this sort of education.

Step Seven: Formulating the Ritual Structure

While these issues of group process are being worked out, the core group of the lodge will need to get to work on the rituals. For most people who are interested in magical lodges, the ritual work that goes on behind closed doors is the subject of central interest. Accordingly, this part of the creation of a new lodge is likely to be a popular one, and many people may be tempted to jump ahead to this stage before dealing with the more basic elements of the lodge.

This is an easy mistake to make, but it's a mistake nonetheless. As we've seen, lodge rituals are based on a foundation made up of many other elements, and those other elements need to be understood clearly before the ritual work can be put together as they should be. Once that foundation has been laid, there's a much better chance that the rituals that emerge from the design process will further the lodge's purpose, appeal to its core group, and make constructive use of its symbolism—in other words, that they will do what they're supposed to in the context of the new lodge.

As mentioned before, lodge ritual design is an art, and like any other art its successes depend largely on a mix of technical skill, creative imagination, and the personal touch. There is no tried-and-true recipe for effective lodge rituals. There are, however, rules of thumb that have been tested down through the history of the lodge system, and there are tricks of the trade that are almost always worth using in one form or another. Many of those have been covered in previous chapters, and some that have not will be discussed in the next few sections of this chapter.

Among the first steps in ritual design is deciding what rituals your lodge will need and how these will relate to one another. The

Order of the Athanor, with its relatively simple set of rituals, is at the low end of a spectrum of complexity that can reach as far as lodge designers' imaginations will go (or at least as far as lodge members will tolerate!). Your lodge will need, at the very least, a ritual for opening and closing meetings, a ritual for initiation, and a ritual for installing officers. How far you go beyond this is up to you.

Much depends on whether the new lodge will have more than one degree of initiation. This depends, in turn, on the lodge's purpose and its symbolism. A lodge that exists primarily to teach magic will normally have an extended series of degrees, one for each stage of the training process or for each distinct body of teachings to be learned. A lodge that exists primarily for the purpose of practical magic or community will tend to have few degrees. A lodge focusing on some specific mythology or symbolism will usually take its degree structure from that source.

Each degree will need an opening, an initiation ritual, and a closing. As the number of degrees increase, then, the amount of work for the designer (and, later on, for the lodge that will perform them) goes up sharply.

It may be worth noting that a very large number of lodge organizations, fraternal and magical alike, have three degrees. This number seems to work well for nearly any kind of lodge. Still, it is by no means the only way to organize a degree system. Lodges with only one degree, like the Order of the Athanor, are relatively common. So are lodges with a much larger number. The extreme example, the nineteenth-century Masonic "Rite of Memphis and Mizraim," had no less than ninety-nine degrees, although this proved to be unworkable in practice. The present Scottish Rite of Masonry has twenty-nine, on the other hand, and seems to handle them quite well.

A related issue has to do with seasonal rituals, which may or may not be connected to the initiation of members or the installation of officers. The Order of the Athanor is at the low end of the complexity spectrum here, with one ritual that energizes the lodge egregor and installs the officers as well. The Golden Dawn's Equinox ritual is another example of this economical approach. On the other hand, there are lodge groups that celebrate a series of rituals linked

to the cycles of the year, over and above their other ritual work. Several of the Druid orders, for example, celebrate the eight annual festivals of the modern pagan year, and weave the rest of their ceremonies into this context. So long as the initiations are not linked too closely to specific festivals—thus requiring up to a year's delay in initiating a new member who applies at the wrong time—this works quite well. It might even be possible for a lodge with plenty of time and energy on its hands to carry out a full set of initiation, installation, and seasonal rituals that are separate ceremonies. This might prove highly demanding in practice, though.

Step Eight: Writing the Opening and Closing Rituals

The opening and closing rituals for ordinary business meetings are usually the first lodge rituals you will need to create, and should be prepared and put to use as soon as possible. The basic structure for these rituals is covered in Chapter Two and shown in action in Chapters Seven and Eleven. There are few variations from this pattern, for the simple reason that it works extremely well. The one variation that does occur fairly often, in fraternal and magical lodges alike, is that the phase in which the officers describe their duties may be shortened—for example, by having only the elective officers do so—or eliminated altogether. This saves time, although it weakens the effect of the ritual somewhat.

As you work on the opening and closing rituals, you'll want to consider the points raised in Chapter Seven about the relationship between ordinary business and magical ritual in lodge meetings. It's a good idea to settle how the lodge will handle these very different levels of work before the opening and closing rituals have been designed, or at least before they are put into their final form. Any one of the possibilities mentioned in Chapter Seven can handle this effectively, but each of them put specific demands on the ritual work and will need to be taken into account. You'll also want to begin thinking about how these and all other lodge rituals can be used as the basis for individual magical operations, in the way discussed in Chapter Ten.

With these and all other lodge rituals, it's likely that your new lodge will go through several different drafts before settling on one that works best, and the only way to tell whether a ritual will work or not is to actually perform it. As the opening and closing rituals are being drafted, therefore, the tentative versions should certainly be used to open and close meetings of the core group. Afterward, everyone present should be encouraged to talk about their responses to the different versions.

Step Nine: Writing the Initiation Rituals

These are generally the most demanding of lodge rituals to design as well as to perform. Part of the difficulty comes from the sheer importance of the work they are designed to do. As the portals through which new members enter the lodge and its egregor, these ceremonies must communicate the essence and direction of the lodge to an assortment of people who may have next to nothing in common with each other. Part of the difficulty in design, though, comes from the very high degree of flexibility built into this phase of the lodge system. While there are some constants of initiatory ritual, there are a great many factors which are left up to the lodge designer—and some of these play crucial parts in the success and failure of the ritual as a whole.

The constants may be worth reviewing first. The basic framework examined in Chapter Three is the most important of them. No matter what else happens, an initiation will begin with the opening of the lodge in the relevant degree (or its opening in a different degree and its raising or lowering to the appropriate one), move on to the introduction of the candidate, and pass through a series of carefully scripted events in which symbols are shown to the candidate by emblematic and/or dramatic methods. At some point in the process, the candidate will take an obligation of silence concerning the lodge's secrets and of friendship and mutual support toward its members. The ritual will finish with the presentation of the "secrets of the degree" and a series of lectures to the candidate. The lodge will then be raised or lowered as necessary, and closed.

Another constant is provided by the forms of symbolism used in the lodge system. The emblems and colors, gestures and grips, knocks and floor work central to so much of lodge activity are constant features of lodge initiations. So, too, is the role of secrecy and the particular approaches to it used in the lodge system. So, on a deeper level, is the use of ritual itself—symbolic action expressed and experienced by human beings in space and time.

The two approaches to ritual discussed in Chapter Three—the emblematic and the dramatic—form a constant factor as well. Different degree systems (and often different degrees within any given system) use different combinations of the two, but one or both will be found in any lodge initiation. As with so much else in the lodge system, the potential combinations of these two approaches form a spectrum, and any point on that spectrum can produce workable results.

Near one end of the spectrum, for example, is the Ritual of the Athanor, which uses a mostly emblematic approach. The symbols of the ceremony are set out on the altar, and the candidate sees them as symbolic images against a background of solid colors and shadows. The dramatic approach is used when the candidate is barred by the Guardian and entrusted to the Herald, and later, when he or she is challenged by the Guardian just before reaching the Past Magister. These events are designed to communicate important aspects of the initiation's meaning.

It would also be possible to construct an initiation near the other side of the spectrum. In this ceremony, the candidate might be bound and blindfolded, brought into the lodge room, and given the obligation. Thereafter, with the blindfold removed, he or she might look on as the members of the lodge enacted a mythic narrative. Different officers could play the parts of the characters in the tale, using costumes, props, and any other elements of the dramatist's art that would help to further the impact of the ceremony. Alternatively, the setting could be reduced to a narrow pool of light in the center of the darkened lodge, in which silent figures act out the events of the story while a single voice in darkness reads it aloud to the candidate. The candidate might watch from the sidelines, or might be brought into the story and moved through the events of the narrative. Either

one of these, or any of a number of other approaches, could produce a stunningly effective ceremony. After the performance is over, the candidate might be shown a small number of images linked to the tale as anchors to memory and primary symbols of the degree. He or she may then be entrusted with the sign, grip, password, and other secrets of the degree. Other combinations of these two approaches are also possible. In fact, many of these possibilities have been explored in great detail during the history of the lodge system.

Another factor that is nearly a constant is the shape and design of the lodge room itself. The vast majority of lodge initiations take place in a lodge room of standard form and use its main features as anchors for ritual action. On the other hand, there have been a number of successful experiments with different architectures of space in initiation. One example, a famous one in magical lodge circles, is the Vault of the Adepti in the Golden Dawn's Adeptus Minor degree. This is a small seven-sided room in which the most important events of the ritual take place. In other rituals, the candidate passes through a series of rooms, each with its own symbolic meaning and form. Far over on the dramatic end of the dramatic-emblematic spectrum, the ceremony is performed as a play with the candidates seated to one side, like spectators in a theater. The one drawback to these experiments is that the expense and annoyance of renting a special space for initiations, over and above the one for ordinary meetings, can become a burden.

There are a few other elements of initiatory ritual common enough to be listed here. The use of blindfolds and binding is one of these, though the particulars vary widely. Very commonly, the first initiation of a set of degrees will keep the candidate blindfolded most of the time, but higher degrees vary substantially. In some sequences, the blindfold is abandoned after the first initiation. In others, it is used in the higher initiations, but the candidate is blindfolded for shorter and shorter periods until in the highest degrees he or she is not blindfolded at all. In still others, it is used in some and left out in others according to a symbolic pattern, or no identifiable pattern at all. (This last choice has the useful feature of keeping the candidate uncertain about what will happen when he or she goes into the ante-room to be prepared for a new degree.)

An element that often shows up in effective initiations is a challenge. The candidate may suddenly encounter a threatening figure barring the way, for example, or may be required to come up with something—a password, for instance—that he or she does not have and cannot give. This very often happens near the beginning of an initiation, when an unexpected threat can do a great deal to put the candidate into a receptive state and help the rest of the ceremony to “take,” but it can be used at nearly any point. It can be done with the blindfold raised or left in place. If the blindfold stays down, it is often useful to have the challenging figure actually touch the candidate (as the Guardian does with the staff in the Ritual of the Athanor) to increase the impact of the experience. This has to be carefully controlled, though. The point is to startle the candidate and focus his or her attention, not to disrupt the subtle shaping processes of the ritual with brute force or pain.

Another very common element in initiatory ritual is a simulated journey. The blindfolded candidate can be told that he or she is about to travel to some symbolically relevant place, and placed under the guidance of an officer. He or she is then guided around the lodge room, often many times, encountering events, obstacles and persons appropriate to the symbolism of the ritual. Some initiations use this tactic as a small part of the total ritual; a way to get the candidate from one symbolic location to another. In other initiations the journey itself becomes the central experience, with a wide range of props and sound effects brought into play to simulate the landscapes that are crossed and the hazards of the trip. The blindfold is left down the whole time to help preserve the illusion of travel through a landscape.

Beyond these constants and semi-constants, the design of initiation rituals is up to the interests and abilities of the designers themselves, the symbolism of the lodge, and the resources that are available. There are very few limits to what can be done effectively in a lodge initiation, given the tools of the “standard kit” and an active imagination. The Ritual of the Athanor and the grade ceremonies of the Golden Dawn can be used as examples of what can be done, but they only sketch out a few of the outlines of a wide realm of possibilities.

Step Ten: Writing the Other Lodge Rituals

The work done in Step Eight, while outlining the new lodge's ritual system, will determine what needs to be done at this stage. At the least, a basic set of rituals will need to include a way to institute new lodges and install lodge officers. A more complex set may also include seasonal rituals and whatever other kinds of ritual work the purpose of the lodge will require.

In fraternal lodges, by and large, institution and installation rituals follow a fixed pattern, which is also the one used in the Order of the Athanor's ritual work. Some magical lodges have done the same, while others have used different patterns; this has had a good deal to do with different approaches to lodge magic, as well as with the theory of magical elitism—a magical lodge of the old style, in which one self-proclaimed adept makes all the decisions, is unlikely to use a ritual that transfers effective power to other members! The basic elements of the ceremonies given in Chapter Nine can be used as a framework for most institution and installation rituals, with specific factors required by the lodge symbolism and magical system incorporated as needed.

Seasonal rituals, and any other rituals you may wish to include in your lodge system, are another matter. These have been used so irregularly in the lodge system that there is no standard way to handle them. On the other hand, some extremely good work on seasonal rituals has been done by Wiccan and other pagan-revival groups in recent years, and much of this can be converted readily to a lodge setting. This represents one of the potential cutting edges of the magical lodge tradition, an area in which original work has a particularly large amount to contribute.

Step Eleven: Learning and Practicing the Rituals

It's at this step that the core group of members begins the transition to a full-scale magical lodge. If you've worked your way together through the earlier steps, this one should be well within

reach. It does present certain challenges, though, and the members of the group will need to put in a certain amount of work to accomplish it effectively.

The crucial factor in this phase is that the major lodge rituals can't be performed like recipes out of a cookbook. They need to be learned and memorized by the lodge officers, and the lodge itself needs to work with them until the various events of the rituals go smoothly. Regular practice and the patience necessary to work at something until it comes out right are the crucial factors in making lodge rituals work on all their various levels. The magical work of the opening and closing, in particular, needs to be memorized and practiced thoroughly so that the lodge can build its egregor effectively.

Anyone can learn to remember and perform a part in a lodge ritual, given a willingness to work at it, but different members of the core group will come to the work of lodge ritual with different levels of skill, and a talent for public speaking is not a common trait. One of the most common problems is the wooden monotone style of delivery that so many people fall into when embarrassed. This can be overcome by having the person in question practice reciting his or her part into a tape recorder, and then listen to the result. This is also a good cure for those who recite their parts too fast or too slow. Sheer practice will cure many problems as the speaker becomes more familiar with his or her part.

One practical step, which should be done as soon as the rituals have been put in final form, is to make ritual books for the members to use and study. With the advent of computerized desktop publishing equipment and cheap photocopying, this has become much simpler than it was in the days of letterpress printing! If no one in your core group has access to a computer, many copy shops will rent them for low rates, and the final result can be turned into a staple-bound booklet for a dollar or two per copy. In lodge or out of it, this is a good deal easier to handle than a stack of loose paper.

The first rituals to learn and put into practice, as mentioned above, are the opening and closing rituals for business meetings. If your lodge meets reasonably often, you will have plenty of chances to practice this ritual in the ordinary process of holding meetings. Once these rituals have been put in their final forms, they should be

committed to memory. This not only helps establish the habit of learning rituals by heart, it also makes the opening and closing go more smoothly and take less time.

The next major tasks will be the magical opening and closing for the first degree of initiation your lodge will offer, and then the degree ceremony itself. It's often a good idea to break these down into smaller pieces at first, and practice a portion of a ritual several times at one meeting. Another useful habit is to break the ritual apart into its different aspects—the words that are said, the actions and movements that take place in the physical lodge room, and the magical work of the ritual—and practice these separately. Have the officers recite the ritual's text from their seats at one meeting, walk silently through the ritual's movements at another, and practice the visualizations and other magical work without any of the rest of the ritual at a third. It may take a certain amount of practice for the members to learn how to carry on inner and outer work at the same time, but this is an essential skill, and well worth the effort. It's worth remembering, too, that members who have no assigned role in any given ritual should still take an active part in the inner work. Having several members working full time on the visualizations during a ritual can add a great deal to the effect.

Once all these parts are solidly learned, perform the magical opening and closing in their complete form until the lodge can summon and banish energies effectively, and then perform the first degree ceremony, with opening and closing, for each of the members of the core group, initiating them into the degree with full power. Different members of the core group will have to rotate through different offices so that everyone can be initiated. This will also help ensure that there is always someone ready to fill in for a member who is sick or out of town when an initiation is scheduled.

Another aspect of this phase of the work that is of particular importance in waking the magical energies of a lodge is the use of individual rituals based on the formula of the degree being studied. The approach outlined in Chapter Ten is the key to this process, and as one of the treasures of the magical lodge system it should never be neglected. All of the core group members who have enough magical background to do so should perform at least one

individual ritual based on the degree being learned during the time when it is being studied. In this way, some members will be able to practice the essential pattern of the degree outside of lodge hours. They will know the degree's magical work from the inside and gain a new perspective that can be brought to bear on the lodge work.

When the process of learning and initiation is complete, go on to the next degree of initiation in your lodge's system. Continue until the whole system of degrees has been practiced and learned, and all the members of the core group have been initiated into each degree the lodge has to offer.

Step Twelve: Founding the Lodge

At this point the members of the core group will be trained ritualists familiar with the demands of lodge ceremonies, and the additional tasks of learning the institution and installation ceremonies should be little trouble. Once these have been learned and practiced, the core group can formally institute itself as a magical lodge, install its first set of officers, and go on from there, initiating new members as they join. This is probably the best approach to getting a magical lodge under way.

It's sometimes necessary or useful, though, to take these last two steps in the opposite order and found the lodge before the members have been fully initiated. Either approach can result in a magical lodge capable of carrying out the full range of lodge work and exploring the magical potentials of the lodge system.

One reason to choose this latter approach might be if the major focus of the lodge is a set of seasonally based rituals, and the members of the core group consider it more important to get these up and running first. Another might be if the set of degrees the lodge will use is large enough that it would take some years to work through all of them as a group. In both these cases—and there may well be others, depending on the purpose and symbolism of the particular lodge in question—the lodge members will work on the installation and other rituals first, then turn attention to the initiations. Alternatively, the lodge can start the process of working its way up through the degrees as a group as soon as the lodge is insti-

tuted, and begin initiating new members in the usual way once this process is finished.

Teaching lodges, in which each member will work through the grades at his or her own pace, may require a combination of these two approaches. At least a few of the members need to have completed the entire curriculum before the lodge opens its doors for new members, and it's best if the full set of degrees is also in place by then. If the founding members of the lodge have sharply varied levels of experience, it may be necessary for the more advanced members to hold separate meetings of their own to prepare and perform the higher initiation rituals. This sort of thing can cause a good deal of strain, especially if it's introduced in the middle of the development process, and will have to be handled carefully. One workable approach is to have a separate "degree lodge" in which the higher grades are given, and which only members of the higher grades can attend. Another is to make it clear from the beginning that full involvement in the new lodge's work will be open only to those willing to pass through the full training process. There are people whose interest in belonging to a magical lodge stops just before the point of doing serious magical work, and it's best to be sure that necessary boundaries are drawn.

Going Onward

At the end of the process we've examined in this chapter, you and the other members of your core group have become initiated members of a new magical lodge, and will be ready to face the further challenges and lessons of lodge work. What those will be depends almost wholly on the purpose of the lodge and the personalities of its members. Every lodge, in the end, makes its own history.

Despite the fact that magical lodges have been in existence in the Western world for four hundred years, it's entirely accurate to say that their possibilities have barely been tapped. The magical traditions of the West spent most of those four centuries as the secret interest of a handful of people on the outer fringes of their culture. Only in recent years, as politicized religion and materialist science have lost much of their power to define reality for our culture, has

magic come surging out of its hiding place and caught the imaginations and hopes of a significant segment of our society.

It's impossible to know (and difficult even to imagine!) where the current renaissance of magic will lead as it becomes a cultural force in its own right, and begins to bring its own insights and imaginings to bear on the entrenched philosophical, religious, scientific, and political orthodoxies of the present age. As a tested and effective way of carrying out magical work in groups, of training and initiating new magicians, and of exploring new reaches of magical theory and practice, the lodge system has vast potentials if the struggle goes well—and its equally-proven approaches to secrecy and small-scale, grass-roots organization offer some hope of survival if things go badly.

At the same time, just as the traditions of the magical lodge system have much to offer the modern magical revival, the new insights and energies released by that revival have much to offer the lodge system. In the years to come, if the lodge system survives at all, there are likely to be any number of creative ventures combining old traditions with new innovations, pushing the lodge system in directions it has not yet explored. Some of these will fail; many experiments do. Others, if history is anything to go by, will add important new tools, understandings, and approaches to the existing body of lodge theory and practice.

Chapter Thirteen

Joining a Fraternal Lodge

The material provided in this book is meant to provide a thorough practical guide to the traditional lodge system. There is at least one way, though, to learn far more about lodges than can be included in this or any other book—a way that should certainly be considered by anyone who is thinking about founding or working with a magical lodge. This is to become a member of a fraternal lodge and learn about the lodge system from the inside.

Despite the stereotype, this isn't usually a difficult or expensive process. Many of the fraternal lodges that haven't simply collapsed in on themselves are eager for new members, and have made the admission process as simple as their bylaws will permit. There are also solid advantages to membership in fraternal orders. At the same time, there are certain problems that need to be faced, and certain limitations that deserve to be addressed.

The downside should probably be dealt with first. To begin with, joining a lodge involves specific commitments in terms of time and money. Anything from one evening a month to one evening a week will be taken up by lodge meetings. Dues are usually quite reasonable—\$20 per year is a common average—and initiation fees are most often in the same range, but there are a few orders where several hundred dollars may be needed to get through the door. If the lodge you join is involved in charitable projects in the community (most are), you can also plan on contributing weekends

for rummage sales and work parties, and pocket change for donations to your lodge's favorite cause.

Second, since most lodges have had very few new members in recent decades, the huge cultural transformations of the last thirty years have passed most of them by, and some of the prejudices of earlier generations remain solidly in place. Although there are some important exceptions, most of the largest fraternal orders restrict female members to special women's lodges, which may have more limited degree systems and little or no role in decision-making in the order. Some orders have also had persistent problems with racism, and other forms of prejudice are at least as common in lodges as they are in society as a whole. While nearly all orders bar religion and politics from the lodge room, a certain amount of unconscious Christianity shows up in many lodge activities and some lodge rituals, simply because this is the only approach to spirituality most lodge members have ever encountered firsthand. This can be irritating to those with a "Jesus allergy." The uniformed, quasi-military degrees in orders that use the imagery of war as a central symbolic structure can also clash with the common modern distrust of things military.

Third, for many of the same reasons, the lack of younger members in most lodges today often creates a yawning generation gap when someone below retirement age does join a lodge. People who reached maturity during World War II grew up, for all practical purposes, on a different planet from those who came of age during Watergate or the Reagan years. Some of the most basic elements of our cultural map have changed radically over the interval. Dealing with the resulting communication problems can be profoundly educational, but it can also be profoundly frustrating, and it sometimes takes a great deal of patience.

Finally, there are a handful of traditional conditions most lodge organizations place on membership. Typically, candidates must state that they believe in some sort of supreme being, and that they are loyal to their country. These limits are fairly broad, but they do exclude atheists, agnostics, some polytheists (those who don't see any one deity as supreme), and people who hold anarchist or internationalist political views.

So much for the downside. What are the advantages of joining a fraternal lodge and putting up with these difficulties? First of all, as mentioned before, there is the opportunity to get hands-on training in the traditional lodge system, to learn about initiation rituals by passing through them and then helping to stage them, and to encounter the different phases of lodge work in the most direct way possible. This is far and away the best training for any kind of lodge-related work, and no other kind of instruction—this book included—will provide as good a grounding in what a potential lodge designer needs to know.

There is also the experience of initiation itself, which has a value that is hard to define but equally hard to ignore. Even the most prosaic fraternal initiation has lessons to teach, and the extraordinary spread of occult thought in nineteenth-century America (a facet of our history that, like the lodge system itself, has been thoroughly ignored by modern historians) means that a startling number of the surviving fraternal lodges have initiation rituals with a significant magical dimension. Very often, the symbols and energies of these rituals are magical keys of no small power. These keys are rarely recognized for what they are by members of the orders themselves, but they remain fully functional, and can open unexpected doors.

On a more mundane level, membership in most fraternal orders brings with it a proud heritage of community service. In an age of faceless bureaucracies and mass culture, the intensely personal and local scale of fraternal lodges offers one of the few opportunities left to face community problems constructively on a grass-roots basis. A number of recent political and social thinkers have written about the role of small-scale, local institutions in constructing a “civil society” on a human scale. Lodges played a crucial role in this in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America, and even at the present—diminished as they are—the surviving fraternal lodges have a great deal to offer in this direction as well.

Finally, a lodge is a community, and nearly all fraternal lodges take this part of their activities very seriously indeed. Lodge members who need help generally get it if the need is real and the help is within the lodge’s power to provide. This reaches all the way from

helping members move furniture to raising funds for major financial emergencies. Most orders provide scholarships for the children of members, and many maintain private parks, campgrounds, and the like for members to use. In many cases, too, members of a lodge that owns its own building can use the building for private, non-commercial purposes.

In short, membership in the fraternal lodge system has its pros and cons. Which side of the balance weighs more will vary from person to person, and not everyone will find a comfortable place in a lodge. It's worth remembering that even in the heyday of the lodge system, only forty per cent of the population of America belonged to one. Still, for those who want to make use of the potentials of the lodge system and can handle the modest difficulties involved, joining an existing lodge is an option that should definitely be explored.

Types of Fraternal Lodges

Perhaps the best way to begin outlining the possibilities involved is to take a look at just what is out there in the little-known world of fraternal lodges. We'll be focusing on lodge organizations active in the United States, but most of what will be covered can be applied equally well anywhere in the English-speaking world.

There are essentially four types of lodges currently active in North America. We can call them insurance orders, social orders, ethnic orders, and initiatory orders. The last of these is the type with the most to offer the magician, but the others have their value and deserve at least a brief discussion.

Insurance orders such as the Foresters, the Royal Neighbors, and the various orders of Woodmen first emerged in the nineteenth century. These groups of people set out to adapt the lodge system's charitable traditions into the more up-to-date form of group insurance plans. Most insurance orders began with initiatory rituals, simply because that was part of the familiar lodge system structure. Some have kept fully functional initiations, while others have cut back on ritual or eliminated it altogether. A fair number have simply turned into ordinary insurance companies. Membership in an

insurance order usually involves purchasing one of the order's life insurance policies or annuities, although it's fair to mention that many of these are a good value for the money.

Most of the major initiatory orders of the late nineteenth century either banned alcohol (in many orders, a man who made his living selling alcohol was ineligible for membership) or placed strict (and strictly enforced) limits on when, where, and how much drinking was allowed at lodge functions. Groups of people who wanted a little more in the way of liquid refreshment accordingly formed lodges of their own, in the time-honored fashion, resulting in the advent of social orders such as the Elks, the Moose, and the Eagles. Most social orders have members-only bars and restaurants in their lodge buildings, and these and social functions generally play a larger role in their activities than the ritual and practical activities of initiatory orders. Admittedly, if you can handle the standard American menu, the food is usually pretty good.

Ethnic orders—most call themselves the Sons or Daughters of their country of origin—sprang up wherever large immigrant groups settled in North America. Many of them were partly modeled on the great initiatory orders, which attracted tens of thousands of immigrant members during the nineteenth century. The role of ritual and the traditional lodge system itself varied dramatically from one ethnic lodge to another. Some orders used the full toolkit of lodge methods while others made do with a few half-random borrowings. Most modern ethnic lodges function as social clubs for people whose ancestors came from some particular part of the world, but some retain broader charitable and initiatory functions.

The Initiatory Orders

It is in the initiatory orders that fraternal lodges come closest to the magical lodge system we've explored elsewhere in this book. Initiatory orders exist, first and foremost, to offer a specific system of initiations to candidates. Most have other functions—charitable, social, and in a few cases political and economic—but the ritual work occupies center stage. In many initiatory orders, in fact, the traditional rituals are defined as the supreme law of the organization.

Of the very large number of initiatory orders that once flourished in North America, the following six remain active in large parts of the continent.

Free and Accepted Masons

Freemasonry is the largest and most complicated of the surviving orders, with roots in North America dating back well into colonial times. Its origins, as discussed in Chapter One, can be traced back to English and Scottish stonemasons' guilds of the late Middle Ages. There are numerous Masonic lodges in every state and province, organized in a bewildering array of rites, orders, jurisdictions, and related bodies. Its ritual system draws on a vast range of sources, but the core material is based on the symbolism of the building trades and on a wide selection of legends concerning the building of Solomon's Temple.

Ordinary Masonic lodges ("blue lodges" in Masonic jargon) offer the three Craft Masonry degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. Above this are two additional systems, the York Rite of ten degrees and the Scottish Rite of twenty-nine, each with lodges of its own. The York Rite, which is explicitly Christian, includes uniformed quasi-military degrees based on the Knights Templar. The Scottish Rite, which is not, draws on a dizzying array of chivalric, esoteric and overtly magical traditions to fill out its system. A Mason can join either, both, or neither of these as he wishes.

There are also several dozen related lodge organizations connected to Masonry in one way or another. These include children's groups such as DeMolay and Job's Daughters, "party lodges" such as the Shriners, and women's lodge organizations such as the Order of the Eastern Star and the Order of the Amaranth. Unlike most other women's lodges, these latter only admit women who are related to Masons by birth or marriage, and require male Masons to be present in order to hold their meetings.

Adding to the complexity, there are at least two other completely separate Masonic systems active in North America. Both are descended from valid Masonic sources, but both of them are more or less at odds with mainstream Masonry. The first is the Prince Hall

Rite, established around the time of the Revolution by black Masons who were refused admittance to white lodges, and which still draws the vast majority of its members from the African-American community. The second is the Universal Rite of Co-Masonry, a rite founded in France in the nineteenth century that admits women as well as men to full membership. Both of these offer the three degrees of Craft masonry, plus an assortment of higher degrees. The status of Prince Hall Masons is a subject for hot debate among white Masons—problems with racism have been more extreme in Masonry than in many other orders—while none of the other branches of Masonry recognize Co-Masonic initiations as valid.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows

For most of the nineteenth century, the Odd Fellows were Masonry's great competition among North American lodge organizations, and for a few decades around 1900 the I.O.O.F. had more members than all Masonic bodies put together. Odd Fellow lodges can still be found all through the United States and Canada, as well as in a dozen other countries. Odd Fellowship was founded among working men in England sometime before 1537 (the date of the oldest surviving lodge charter) and came to this side of the Atlantic in 1819. Its exact origins, and the origin of its quirky name, remain a mystery to historians and Odd Fellows alike. Its rituals draw on a variety of different symbolic and mythical patterns, but many of them are based on stories borrowed from the Old Testament.

Three different levels make up the male side of Odd Fellowship. The Odd Fellows Lodge itself has four degrees: the Initiatory, First, Second, and Third. The Encampment has three: the Patriarchal, Golden Rule and Royal Purple degrees. The Canton has one: the uniformed quasi-military degree of Patriarch Militant. The same three levels are mirrored on the female side by the Rebekah Lodge, the Ladies' Encampment Auxiliary or Matriarchal branch, and the uniformed quasi-military Ladies' Auxiliary Patriarchs Militant, each with one degree. (As in nearly all one-degree lodges, these latter are simply named after the lodge itself, so that Rebekah lodges offer the Rebekah degree, Ladies' Encampment Auxiliaries

the L.E.A. degree, and so on.) There are also Junior Lodges and Theta Rho Clubs, which are children's groups.

Patrons of Husbandry

The Grange, as it's usually called, was founded in 1867 by a group of American Masons and Odd Fellows who wanted to create a fraternal order suited to rural farming families. The experiment succeeded, but the result was (and is) something of an anomaly among initiatory orders. In fact, the Grange is hard to fit into any fraternal category. It has always admitted men and women to membership on an equal basis. It has also been heavily involved in politics and cooperative economic schemes—something most orders have always avoided—and remains a political force to be reckoned with in some Western states. There are Granges in most states that still have any significant number of family farms.

The Grange rituals are based, reasonably enough, on the symbolism of agriculture. The First, Second, Third, and Fourth Degrees are performed in an ordinary Grange, and are based on the four seasons of the year. The Fifth Degree or Degree of Pomona is offered at the county level, the Sixth or Degree of Flora at the state level, while the Seventh, the Degree of Ceres—a full-blown reenactment of the Eleusinian Mysteries of ancient Greece—is offered at the national convention each year. There is also a Junior Grange organization for children.

Knights of Pythias

The Knights of Pythias were founded in 1864 in Washington, D.C., and grew to become the third largest fraternal order in North America by the end of the century. They remain active in most states, although they have not survived the hard years of the late twentieth century as well as the three orders covered above.

Their ritual is based on the story of Pythias and Damon, two members of the ancient Pythagorean Brotherhood whose willingness to sacrifice their lives for each other made them common and powerful symbols for fidelity. A substantial amount of the symbolism of medieval knighthood has also found its way into the Pythian system. The Knights of Pythias offer the three degrees of Page, Esquire, and

Knight, and there is also a quasi-military Uniformed Degree. The women's branch of the order, the Pythian Sisters, offers one degree.

Ancient United Order of Druids

There are a flurry of Druid orders in Britain, ranging from the fraternal to the out-and-out pagan, but the A.U.O.D. is the only one that established itself successfully on this side of the Atlantic before the beginning of the current magical revival. Like most of the British Druid orders, it traces its roots back to 1717, when a Druid lodge ("grove") was founded in London. The A.U.O.D. arrived in North America in 1839, and was the tenth-largest lodge organization in the United States by the turn of the century. At present it still has a sizable presence in the Midwest, on parts of the West Coast, and in a few other places. Overseas, it remains strong in Britain and in the Scandinavian countries.

The Druids' symbolism is based on the surviving fragments of ancient Druidic lore, as expanded by the enthusiastic Druid revivalists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Druid Groves offer the three degrees of Ovate, Bard, and Druid, while Circles (the women's lodges of the A.U.O.D.) offer one degree.

The Improved Order of Red Men

The Red Men were founded in 1832, making them the first fraternal order to be created on the North American continent. Their roots go back into a tangled American underworld of white men copying Native American ways for culturally and politically subversive purpose. In the nineteenth century, it was one among many medium-sized orders, and was involved in everything from the Sons of Liberty to the origins of New York's Tammany Hall political machine. It has survived recent decades in better shape than many once-larger lodge organizations, with lodges still active in about half the states of the Union.

The Red Men base their symbolism loosely on the traditions of the Leni Lenape tribe, who lived in what is now Delaware. Their men's lodges are called "tribes," and their officers ("chiefs") have titles such as Sachem, Sagamore and Sannap. They offer the three degrees of Adoption, Warrior, and Chief. The women's side of the

order is called the Daughters of Pocahontas. Their lodges are “councils,” and offer one degree. There are also children’s groups, called the Sons of Hiawatha and the Daughters of Anona. However politically incorrect all this may seem from a modern perspective, it may be worth noting that the Red Men were harshly criticized in the nineteenth century for portraying Native Americans in a positive light, and suggesting that white culture could learn things from the native peoples of the continent.

Finding a Lodge

Most communities in America and Canada have lodges of at least one of these orders, as well as a scattering of social, ethnic, and insurance lodges. Locating one of them, however, is not always an easy matter. Many Masonic lodges, Odd Fellows lodges, and Granges own their own buildings, and these can usually be found in the yellow pages under “Fraternal Organizations,” as can nearly all social lodges. Lodges that rent space from someone else rarely have a phone listing, though, and few lodges of any kind have found effective ways to publicize their existence. Finding them sometimes takes a fair amount of work.

Two approaches can make the hunt less trying. First of all, talk to your family and friends. A surprising number of people have a grandfather in the Masons or a great-aunt active in the Grange. If a connection of this sort can be found, follow up on it. If you make a tolerably good impression on the grandfather or great-aunt, you’ll probably be handed a membership application in short order, or at least be given the contact address for a local lodge.

If this turns up nothing, make use of all the information resources you can find. You should certainly visit the local public library and talk to the staff. Many libraries keep a list of community organizations, and some rent meeting space to lodge groups. Local historical societies, community centers, and the like can be another resource. The Masons, the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias, and the Grange have a presence on the Internet as of this writing. Other orders will no doubt follow suit, so if you have access to cyberspace this may be another resource to try.

While the initiatory orders have the most to offer the student of magical lodge technique, it's important not to rule out the other types of lodge organization. An insurance, social, or ethnic lodge that has kept its rituals intact can provide you with just as solid a grounding in the lodge system as an initiatory lodge.

Joining a Lodge

However you manage it, you're a step ahead if you can make direct contact with a lodge member. Otherwise, you'll need to write a letter to the lodge and ask for an application. Be polite, straightforward, and honest. Explain that you've heard about their lodge and that you are interested in joining. It may be most unwise to mention magic, though, unless you are certain the lodge members can handle the idea.

The response may be anything from no answer at all to a deputation of lodge members on your doorstep. Some lodges close in on themselves and treat any contact from the outside as an invasion to be repelled. Others are so desperate for new members that the first reply you'll get is a phone call asking if you can come to the next meeting to be initiated. Most often, though, you'll get a letter and application form in the mail. Once you fill out the application and return it, some variant of the lodge membership process will start.

Most lodges still handle that process in the traditional way discussed in Chapter Two. You will probably be interviewed by a committee of lodge members, who will most likely either come to your home, have you come to their lodge hall before or after a meeting, or meet you at a local café or diner. This interview is the lodge's chance to sound you out, but equally it's your chance to sound out the lodge. Ask about the lodge's activities, its dues and fees, and its expectations in terms of dress—some lodges meet in blue jeans, others in tuxedos and evening gowns, and it's a good idea to know which is which before you go in. Expect to be asked why you want to join and what you expect to get out of lodge membership.

After the interview, the committee will report back to the lodge, and the lodge will vote on your application. If the vote goes

in your favor, you're in, and the next step will be your initiation. If the vote goes against you, you have at least two options. First of all, you can apply to a different lodge and take your chances again. In this case, it's best to try a lodge of a different order, since news gets around, and the fact that you have been rejected for membership may hurt your chances with other lodges of the same order. Second, you can wait for six months or a year—different orders require different minimum times—and apply again to the same lodge, asking them to reconsider. This doesn't always work, of course, but it's often worth trying.

Belonging to a Lodge

Your initiation into the lodge marks the most important step in the process of entering the lodge, but the process doesn't end there. In an initiatory order, there will be other degrees ahead, and you will often have to qualify for them—in most orders, by memorizing a certain amount of symbolism. In any order, initiatory or not, there will also be the task of learning the habits, traditions, and teachings of the lodge you've joined, as well as finding your place within its egregor and its culture.

This will take time and a certain amount of patience. It will also take regular attendance. This last, simple as it sounds, is the real secret of getting the most out of lodge membership. If you attend every lodge meeting you possibly can, pay attention to what's going on, and learn as much as possible about the lodge and its activities, you'll guarantee yourself a solid education in lodge work. You'll also be much more likely to win the respect and confidence of the other members of the lodge.

You'll also want to consider asking other people you know if they would be interested in joining the lodge. Different lodges have different customs here. Some will expect you to wait until you've been a member for some time or reached some specific point in the ladder of degrees before you propose a new member, while others (these days, the majority) will sit you down right after your initiation and ask you if you know anyone else who might be interested. Either way, it's a rare lodge that isn't interested in bringing in more

people. In most fraternal lodges, any new member who attends regularly and brings in a couple of friends will be more or less elevated to sainthood in the eyes of the older members.

It's also wise, for the first six months or more, to listen and learn rather than trying to push through changes in the way the lodge operates—even if the changes are desperately needed. You need to prove yourself in the eyes of the members of the lodge, to show that you understand the lodge's teachings and its take on the world, and to make members comfortable with the idea of change. The lodge can no doubt survive doing things the old way for six months or a year until you have established enough credibility to make a solid case for the change you have in mind. Patience and perseverance are the keys to success in an adventure of this kind. As most of the great magicians have pointed out, they are also the essentials of magical training and the foundations of magical power. Put to effective use, they will bring you step by step to a mastery of the traditional lodge system and a grasp of the potentials of the specific tradition you join.

Sample Incorporation and Tax Exemption Papers

The documents that follow are the articles of incorporation and tax exemption application of a magical lodge that was successfully organized in Washington State in 1993. While the fraternal societies laws in each state are slightly different and the details of tax law change, these documents can be used as examples by other magical lodges that wish to incorporate and file for tax-exempt status in the United States. Please note these four points:

1.) You will need to change the articles of incorporation to fit the specific details of the lodge you are organizing, and the terms of the fraternal societies laws in the state where you will be filing incorporation papers. You can find the details in your state's law code, which is available at most public libraries.

2.) The federal Internal Revenue laws governing fraternal societies may have changed by the time you read this. Contact the IRS for publications on current laws, regulations and fees.

3.) I am not a lawyer, and the material in this appendix should not be taken as legal advice. In particular, it's impossible to guarantee that an application based on these examples will work in any other case, since so much depends on details and on the actions of people in state and federal bureaucracies. All I can say is that they worked once, and that the order founded by means of these documents retains its corporate and tax-exempt status as of this writing.

4.) Incorporating as a fraternal societies corporation under state law and/or receiving tax exempt status from the IRS will obligate your lodge to behave according to specific regulations, which will vary

depending on current state and federal laws. You will need to look these up and follow them to the letter or you will be risking a range of legal penalties and fines. Again, your local library and IRS office will be able to give you the information you need.

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF <name of order deleted>

We the undersigned, acting as the incorporators of a fraternal societies corporation under the provisions of Chapter 24.20 of the Revised Code of Washington, hereby sign and verify the following articles of incorporation for said fraternal societies corporation.

Article I: Name

The name of the Corporation shall be the Grand Lodge of <name of order deleted>, hereinafter referred to as "the Corporation."

Article II: Duration

The Corporation shall have perpetual existence.

Article III: Authority

The Corporation shall be the grand body governing all subordinate lodges of a fraternal society known as <name of order deleted>, and is formed for the purpose of so being, in accordance with the decision of the membership of <name of order deleted> meeting in extraordinary session in Seattle, Washington, on <date deleted>. This decision, authorizing the formation of the Corporation, shall be considered the source of the Corporation's powers.

Article IV: Purposes

The Corporation shall have the following purposes:

- A. To serve as the governing grand body of a fraternal society known as <name of order deleted>, having sole right to issue, suspend or withdraw charters for subordinate lodges of, and to enact rules and regulations for, such fraternal society.
- B. To foster and promote the spread of the principles and teachings of <name of order deleted>, both within the membership of the corporation and of bodies governed by the corporation, and in the world at large.
- C. To do any and all lawful activities which may be necessary, useful or desirable for the furtherance or accomplishment of the

foregoing purposes, either directly or indirectly and either alone or in conjunction or cooperation with others, whether such others be persons or organizations of any kind.

Article V: Powers

In general, and subject to such limitations and conditions as may be prescribed by law, or by the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws, the Corporation shall have all powers which now or hereafter are conferred by law upon a corporation organized for the purposes set forth above, or are necessary or incidental to the powers so conferred, or are conducive to the attainment of the Corporation's purposes.

Article VI: Limitations

All of the purposes and powers of the Corporation shall be exercised in such manner that the Corporation shall qualify as an exempt organization under section 501(c)10 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law. The net earnings of the Corporation shall be devoted exclusively to religious, charitable, scientific, literary, educational and fraternal purposes. The Corporation shall not carry on propaganda, or otherwise attempt to influence legislation, nor shall it participate in or in any way intervene in any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these Articles, the Corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(c)10 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law.

No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, directors, officers or other private persons, except that the Corporation is authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered, and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of its purposes.

Article VII: Dissolution

Upon the winding up and dissolution of the Corporation, the assets of the Corporation remaining after payment of all debts and liabilities of the Corporation (or provision for the same) shall be distributed to an organization or organizations recognized as exempt under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law, and used exclusively to accomplish the purposes for which the Corporation is organized.

Article VIII: Members

The qualifications of members of the Corporation, their rights, their liability for dues and assessments, and the method of collection thereof, shall be as set forth in the Bylaws of the Corporation.

Article IX: Directors

The powers and duties, qualifications, manner of election, and criteria for removal of the directors of the Corporation shall be as set forth in the Bylaws of the Corporation. The initial board of directors of the corporation comprises three (3) persons. The names and addresses of those persons who are to serve as the initial directors of the Corporation are as follows:

Name:	Address:
<deleted>	<deleted>
<deleted>	<deleted>
<deleted>	<deleted>

Article X: Officers

The Corporation shall select from among its members a Grand Master, a Deputy Grand Master, and a Secretary. The powers and duties, qualifications, terms of office, manner of election, and criteria for removal of such officers shall be as set forth in the Bylaws of the Corporation. Any two of these three officers shall join in the execution of any contract by the Corporation to give such contract force and effect. Any such contract shall bear the signatures of two of the aforesaid officers, and the impression of the seal of the Corporation, which seal shall be in the custody of the Secretary as provided in the Bylaws of the Corporation.

The names and addresses of the persons who are to serve as the initial officers of the Corporation are as follows:

Name:	Address:	Title:
<deleted>	<deleted>	Grand Master
<deleted>	<deleted>	Deputy G.M.
<deleted>	<deleted>	Secretary

The Corporation shall also have the power to establish other offices, as provided in the Bylaws of the Corporation, provided that no such officer may join in the execution of any contract by the Corporation.

Article XI: Bylaws

Bylaws of the Corporation may be adopted by the members of the Corporation meeting in any regular or extraordinary session by a vote of two-thirds of the members present. In the event of conflict between the Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation, the Articles shall govern.

Article XII: Meetings

Members of the Corporation shall meet in regular session once each calendar year. The dates, times, places, purposes, procedures and functions of such meetings shall be as set forth in the Bylaws of the Corporation.

Members of the Corporation may also meet in extraordinary session one or more times each calendar year. The purposes, procedures, functions, and manner of calling such meetings shall be as set forth in the Bylaws of the Corporation.

Article XIII: Registered Office And Agent

The function of Registered Agent of the Corporation shall be vested in the office of Secretary, as provided in Article X of these Articles. The address of the initial Registered Agent of the Corporation shall be <address deleted>. The name of the initial Registered Agent of the Corporation at such address shall be <name deleted>.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned have signed these Articles of Incorporation this <deleted> day of <deleted>, 1993.

<signature>

Grand Master

<signature>

Secretary

<seal of Grand Lodge>

Consent To Appointment As Registered Agent

I, the undersigned, hereby consent to serve as Registered Agent in the State of Washington for the Grand Lodge of <name of order deleted>, at the address given above. I understand that as agent for the Corporation, it will be my responsibility to accept Service of Process in the name of the Corporation; to forward all mail to the Corporation; and to immediately notify the Office of the Secretary of State in the event of my resignation or of any change in the Registered Office address of the Corporation.

<date> <signature>

Form **1024**
(Rev. April 1996)
Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

**Application for Recognition of Exemption
Under Section 501(a)**

OMB No. 1545-0067

If exempt status is approved,
the application will be open
for public inspection.

Read the instructions for each Part carefully.
A User Fee must be attached to this application.

If the required information and appropriate documents are not submitted along with Form 8718 (with payment of the appropriate user fee), the application may be returned to the organization.

Complete the Procedural Checklist on page 5 of the instructions.

**Part I. Identification of Applicant (Must be completed by all applicants; also complete appropriate schedule.)
Submit only the schedule that applies to your organization. Do not submit blank schedules.**

Check the appropriate box below to indicate the section under which the organization is applying:

- a Section 501(c)(2)—Title holding corporations (Schedule A, page 7)
- b Section 501(c)(4)—Civic leagues, social welfare organizations (including certain war veterans' organizations), or local associations of employees (Schedule B, page 8)
- c Section 501(c)(5)—Labor, agricultural, or horticultural organizations (Schedule C, page 9)
- d Section 501(c)(6)—Business leagues, chambers of commerce, etc. (Schedule C, page 9)
- e Section 501(c)(7)—Social clubs (Schedule D, page 11)
- f Section 501(c)(8)—Fraternal beneficiary societies, etc., providing life, sick, accident, or other benefits to members (Schedule E, page 13)
- g Section 501(c)(9)—Voluntary employees' beneficiary associations (Parts I through IV and Schedule F, page 14)
- h Section 501(c)(10)—Domestic fraternal societies, orders, etc., not providing life, sick, accident, or other benefits (Schedule E, page 13)
- i Section 501(c)(12)—Beneficial life insurance associations, mutual ditch or irrigation companies, mutual or cooperative telephone companies, or like organizations (Schedule G, page 15)
- j Section 501(c)(13)—Cemeteries, crematoria, and like corporations (Schedule H, page 16)
- k Section 501(c)(15)—Mutual insurance companies or associations, other than life or marine (Schedule I, page 17)
- l Section 501(c)(17)—Trusts providing for the payment of supplemental unemployment compensation benefits (Parts I through IV and Schedule J, page 18)
- m Section 501(c)(19)—A post, organization, auxiliary unit, etc., of past or present members of the Armed Forces of the United States (Schedule K, page 19)
- n Section 501(c)(25)—Title holding corporations or trusts (Schedule A, page 7)

1a Full name of organization (as shown in organizing document) <deleted>		2 Employer identification number (EIN) (if none, see Specific Instructions on page 2) <deleted>	
1b c/o Name (if applicable)		3 Name and telephone number of person to be contacted if additional information is needed <deleted> ()	
1c Address (number and street) <deleted>	Room/Suite		
1d City or town, state, and ZIP code <deleted>			
4 Month the annual accounting period ends December	5 Date incorporated or formed 8/26/93	6 Activity codes (see back cover) 149 319 124	

7 Did the organization previously apply for recognition of exemption under the Code section or under any other section of the Code? Yes No
If "Yes," attach an explanation.

8 Has the organization filed Federal income tax returns or exempt organization information returns? Yes No
If "Yes," state the form numbers, years filed, and Internal Revenue office where filed.

9 Check the box for the type of organization. ATTACH A CONFORMED COPY OF THE CORRESPONDING ORGANIZING DOCUMENTS TO THE APPLICATION BEFORE MAILING.

- a Corporation— Attach a copy of the Articles of Incorporation (including amendments and restatements) showing approval by the appropriate state official; also attach a copy of the bylaws.
- b Trust— Attach a copy of the Trust Indenture or Agreement, including all appropriate signatures and dates.
- c Association— Attach a copy of the Articles of Association, Constitution, or other creating document, with a declaration (see instructions) or other evidence that the organization was formed by adoption of the document by more than one person. Also include a copy of the bylaws.

If this is a corporation or an unincorporated association that has not yet adopted bylaws, check here

I declare under the penalties of perjury that I am authorized to sign this application on behalf of the above organization, and that I have examined this application, including the accompanying schedules and attachments, and to the best of my knowledge it is true, correct, and complete.

PLEASE
SIGN
HERE

<deleted>

(Signature)

(Title or authority of signer)

(Date)

Part II. Activities and Operational Information (Must be completed by all applicants)

- 1 Provide a detailed narrative description of all the activities of the organization—past, present, and planned. Do not merely refer to or repeat the language in the organizational document. List each activity separately in the order of importance based on the relative time and other resources devoted to the activity. Indicate the percentage of time for each activity. Each description should include, as a minimum, the following: (a) a detailed description of the activity including its purpose and how each activity furthers your exempt purpose; (b) when the activity was or will be initiated; and (c) where and by whom the activity will be conducted.

The Grand Lodge is the parent body of <name of order deleted>, a newly formed fraternal order. Its activities are as follows:

- a) Issuing charters for subordinate lodges of the Order. This activity was initiated on incorporation, and is conducted by the membership of the Grand Lodge in periodic meetings.
- b) Supervising subordinate lodges of the Order. This activity was initiated upon the issuing of our first provisional charter on 14 January 1994, and is conducted by a committee of the Grand Lodge in periodic meetings.
- c) Establishing a course of instruction in the philosophy of our Order, to be distributed free of charge to new members. This activity was initiated upon incorporation; however, the course is still being developed and is expected to be ready for general use by September 1994. This activity is conducted by a committee of the Grand Lodge in periodic meetings.
- d) Supervising the studies of new members and admitting them, when ready, to higher grades of membership in the Order. This activity was initiated on incorporation and is conducted by a committee of the Grand Lodge in periodic meetings.
- e) Managing the financial and other affairs of the Grand Lodge itself. This activity was initiated on incorporation, and is conducted by a committee of the Grand Lodge in periodic meetings.

Note that all meetings referred to above take place in Seattle, WA; due to the small size of our organization at present, most take place in member's homes.

- 2 List the organization's present and future sources of financial support, beginning with the largest source first.

- a) Membership dues
- b) Financial and in-kind donations from members -- this is currently a very large part of our support, but it is expected to decrease as the membership base grows.

Part II. Activities and Operational Information (continued)**3 Give the following information about the organization's governing body:**

a Names, addresses, and titles of officers, directors, trustees, etc.	b Annual compensation
<name and address deleted>, Grand Master	\$0
<name and address deleted>, Deputy Grand Master	\$0
<name and address deleted>, Secretary	\$0

- 4 If the organization is the outgrowth or continuation of any form of predecessor, state the name of each predecessor, the period during which it was in existence, and the reasons for its termination. Submit copies of all papers by which any transfer of assets was effected.

N/A

- 5 If the applicant organization is now, or plans to be, connected in any way with any other organization, describe the other organization and explain the relationship (e.g., financial support on a continuing basis; shared facilities or employees; same officers, directors, or trustees).

As the parent body of all subordinate lodges of the Order, we are connected with such lodges, will receive a portion of dues from them, and will share some facilities (such as meeting space). We are not connected with any other organizations.

- 6 If the organization has capital stock issued and outstanding, state: (1) class or classes of the stock; (2) number and par value of the shares; (3) consideration for which they were issued; and (4) if any dividends have been paid or whether your organization's creating instrument authorizes dividend payments on any class of capital stock.

N/A

- 7 State the qualifications necessary for membership in the organization; the classes of membership (with the number of members in each class); and the voting rights and privileges received. If any group or class of persons is required to join, describe the requirement and explain the relationship between those members and members who join voluntarily. Submit copies of any membership solicitation material. Attach sample copies of all types of membership certificates issued.

See Attachment 1

- 8 Explain how your organization's assets will be distributed on dissolution.

On dissolution, all assets will be distributed (after payment of debts and liabilities) to one or more organizations having 501(c)3 exemptions and used to further the purposes of the Order.

Part II. Activities and Operational Information (continued)

- 9 Has the organization made or does it plan to make any distribution of its property or surplus funds to shareholders or members? Yes No
If "Yes," state the full details, including: (1) amounts or value; (2) source of funds or property distributed or to be distributed; and (3) basis of, and authority for, distribution or planned distribution.
- 10 Does, or will, any part of your organization's receipts represent payments for services performed or to be performed? Yes No
If "Yes," state in detail the amount received and the character of the services performed or to be performed.
- 11 Has the organization made, or does it plan to make, any payments to members or shareholders for services performed or to be performed? Yes No
If "Yes," state in detail the amount paid, the character of the services, and to whom the payments have been, or will be, made.
- 12 Does the organization have any arrangement to provide insurance for members, their dependents, or others (including provisions for the payment of sick or death benefits, pensions, or annuities)? Yes No
If "Yes," describe and explain the arrangement's eligibility rules and attach a sample copy of each plan document and each type of policy issued.
- 13 Is the organization under the supervisory jurisdiction of any public regulatory body, such as a social welfare agency, etc.? Yes No
If "Yes," submit copies of all administrative opinions or court decisions regarding this supervision, as well as copies of applications or requests for the opinions or decisions.
- 14 Does the organization now lease or does it plan to lease any property? Yes No
If "Yes," explain in detail. Include the amount of rent, a description of the property, and any relationship between the applicant organization and the other party. Also, attach a copy of any rental or lease agreement. (If the organization is a party, as a lessor, to multiple leases of rental real property under similar lease agreements, please attach a single, representative copy of the leases.)
- 15 Has the organization spent or does it plan to spend any money attempting to influence the selection, nomination, election, or appointment of any person to any Federal, state, or local public office or to an office in a political organization? Yes No
If "Yes," explain in detail and list the amounts spent or to be spent in each case.
- 16 Does the organization publish pamphlets, brochures, newsletters, journals, or similar printed material? Yes No
If "Yes," attach a recent copy of each.

Form 1024 (Rev. 4-96)

Page 5

Part III. Financial Data (Must be completed by all applicants)

Complete the financial statements for the current year and for each of the 3 years immediately before it. If in existence less than 4 years, complete the statements for each year in existence. If in existence less than 1 year, also provide *proposed budgets* for the 2 years following the current year.

A. Statement of Revenue and Expenses

	3 Prior Tax Years or Proposed Budget for Next 2 Years				(h) Total
	(a) Current Tax Year	(b) 19__	(c) 19__	(d) 19__	
Revenue	From 9/17/93 To 12/31/93	(b) 19__ 94	(c) 19__ 95	(d) 19__	
1 Gross dues and assessments of members	220.00	672.00	1172.00		2014.00
2 Gross contributions, gifts, etc.	103.52	500.00	500.00		1103.52
3 Gross amounts derived from activities related to the organization's exempt purpose (attach schedule) (Include related cost of sales on line 9.)					0
4 Gross amounts from unrelated business activities (attach schedule)					0
5 Gain from sale of assets, excluding inventory items (attach schedule)					0
6 Investment income (see page 3 of the instructions)					0
7 Other revenue (attach schedule)					0
8 Total revenue (add lines 1 through 7)	323.52	1172.00	1672.00		3117.52
Expenses					
9 Expenses attributable to activities related to the organization's exempt purposes.	126.37	710.00	1266.00		2102.37
10 Expenses attributable to unrelated business activities					0
11 Contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts paid (attach schedule)					0
12 Disbursements to or for the benefit of members (attach schedule)					0
13 Compensation of officers, directors, and trustees (attach schedule)					0
14 Other salaries and wages.					0
15 Interest					0
16 Occupancy					0
17 Depreciation and depletion					0
18 Other expenses (attach schedule)					0
19 Total expenses (add lines 9 through 18)	126.37	710.00	1266.00		2102.37
20 Excess of revenue over expenses (line 8 minus line 19)	196.65	412.00	406.00		1014.65

B. Balance Sheet (at the end of the period shown)

		Current Tax Year as of 12/31/97
Assets		
1	Cash	196.65
2	Accounts receivable, net	0
3	Inventories	0
4	Bonds and notes receivable (attach schedule)	0
5	Corporate stocks (attach schedule)	0
6	Mortgage loans (attach schedule)	0
7	Other investments (attach schedule)	0
8	Depreciable and depletable assets (attach schedule)	0
9	Land	0
10	Other assets (attach schedule)	0
11	Total assets	196.65
Liabilities		
12	Accounts payable	0
13	Contributions, gifts, grants, etc., payable	0
14	Mortgages and notes payable (attach schedule)	0
15	Other liabilities (attach schedule)	0
16	Total liabilities	0
Fund Balances or Net Assets		
17	Total fund balances or net assets	196.65
18	Total liabilities and fund balances or net assets (add line 16 and line 17)	196.65

If there has been any substantial change in any aspect of the organization's financial activities since the end of the period shown above, check the box and attach a detailed explanation.

Schedule E Organizations described in section 501(c)(8) or 501(c)(10) (Fraternal societies, orders, or associations)

- 1 Is the organization a college fraternity or sorority, or chapter of a college fraternity or sorority? Yes No
If "Yes," read the instructions for Line 1, below, before completing this schedule.
- 2 Does or will your organization operate under the lodge system? Yes No
If "No," does or will it operate for the exclusive benefit of the members of an organization operating under the lodge system? Yes No
- 3 Is the organization a subordinate or local lodge, etc.? Yes No
If "Yes," attach a certificate signed by the secretary of the parent organization, under the seal of the organization, certifying that the subordinate lodge is a duly constituted body operating under the jurisdiction of the parent body.
- 4 Is the organization a parent or grand lodge? Yes No
If "Yes," attach a schedule for each subordinate lodge in active operation showing: (a) its name and address; (b) the number of members in it; and (c) how often it holds periodic meetings.

Instructions

Line 1.—To the extent that they qualify for exemption from Federal income tax, college fraternities and sororities generally qualify as organizations described in section 501(c)(7). Therefore, if the organization is a college fraternity or sorority, refer to the discussion of section 501(c)(7) organizations in Pub. 557. If section 501(c)(7) appears to apply to your organization, complete Schedule D instead of this schedule.

Line 2.—Operating under the lodge system means carrying on activities under a form of organization that is composed of local branches, chartered by a parent organization, largely self-governing, and called lodges, chapters, or the like.

Form 1024: Attachment 1

Membership

All persons who have been exalted to the Third Degree of the Order, and who are members in good standing of a subordinate lodge of the Order, are members of the Grand Lodge. All members have one vote in decisions of the Grand Lodge. There are presently three members.

We have not yet created solicitation materials or membership certificates.

Form 1024: Attachment 2

Projected Budget for Expenses, 1994-5

	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>
Office expenses, bank and postal fees, and other miscellaneous expenses	\$250	\$250
Operation of study course in philosophy of our Order (free to members)	\$210	\$416
Expenses for annual meeting of Grand Lodge	\$100	\$100
Filing fees for IRS tax exemption form (1994) and group exemption letter (1995)	\$150	\$500
<hr/>		
Total	\$710	\$1266

Form 1024: Attachment 3

Schedule of Currently Active Subordinate Lodges

<name of order deleted> currently has one subordinate lodge in active operation:

Name: <deleted>

Location of Meetings: <deleted>

Mailing Address: <deleted>

Number of Members: 5

Date and Time of Meetings: twice monthly, on the second and fourth Fridays of each month

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