

# MEZLIM

An Independent Journal for the Working Magus

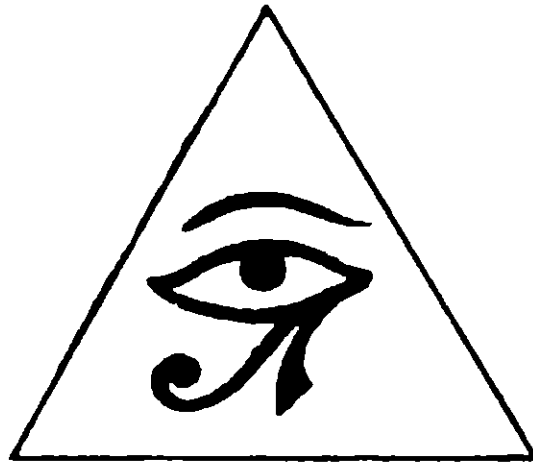
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MAGICKAL BODY ART ISSUE



L.V.X.

# MEZLIM STAFF

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N'Chi and **MEZLIM** subscribe to the premise that we are entering a new aeon - a new age - which is bringing and will continue to bring many changes in the way we see ourselves and the world around us. We are dedicated to presenting information, views, images and ideas concerned with our transition into this new world which we are creating. Our editorial policy is androgynous, egalitarian and eclectic, supporting all growth oriented, magickal movements.

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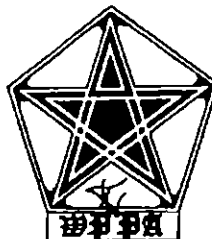
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# EDITOR'S FORUM

With this issue, Mezzim begins its third year of publication. I just want to take this opportunity to say, "thank you" for all the support from you, our readers.

A lot has changed in the last two years. Mezzim is slicker, more colorful and has a much wider distribution now—but one thing has not changed, and will not change. That is our commitment to the Work of this Aeon.

In real terms, this means putting out a publication that speaks of the Work that needs to be done - to those who are doing it. Whether you call yourself Magus, Witch, Druid, Psychotherapist, Shaman, Sheya or Student...the future of our world is up to you.

We are the people who are willing to take responsibility for who and what we are - and how we want our world to be. And we are the ones who are actively involved in maintaining, resurrecting, refurbishing, and - in many cases - creating the "technology" of transformation that may help us to bring our world safely into the next millennium.

This is by no means an easy task.

Often it means feeling alienated and alone. It's difficult enough to communicate with those who are of like mind, much less the great majority of people - those with more traditional perspectives - without being misunderstood and rejected.

Because of this, we seek solace in a sense of community. Many a Coven and Esoteric Order has arisen from our basic needs to have someone to talk to; to share our beliefs and our visions; and, to celebrate our Awakening.

One of the roles played by Mezzim, and other similar publications, is to bring our diverse communities together in an open forum—a conceptual space—where we can "gather" together to share the wealth of Tradition, Knowledge, Wisdom and Lore that abounds in our widespread community.

These first two years have been a beginning. I invite you—all of you—to join with us in making this next year—and all the years to come—the most fruitful yet.

Blessed Be!

  
Kenneth Deigh

▶ A New Twist on an Old Rite

by Beer Kayam Ben Barak



There are many traditions which make use to some degree of the practice of ritual body painting or decoration. The basic reasons range from devotional decoration and identification with a particular ideal or archetype to elemental attribution and submergence into the group mind.

The approach which we use in the following ritual draws on a number of these diverse traditions.

The subtle body - or aura - which coexists with and surrounds the physical form is a wonderful window to the conscious and unconscious state of a person's emotions, thoughts and energies. If you are sensitive to such energies, you might be able to perceive colors or patterns of light radiating from the body.

These same subtle energies can be directed by patterns placed upon the body to bring about changes in consciousness. In the case of this ritual, the patterns painted on each person's body where intended to bring about an awakening of the Archetype

corresponding with the deity being invoked.

I have been working with both the body painting techniques and the Ritual of Descent (patterned after the Descent of Innana) for several years, but until this point had never used the two in conjunction. It was my intention (with this ritual) to bring about a clear polarization of the qualities of Innana, Queen of Heaven and Ereshkigal, Queen of the Underworld; and, to then bring these polar opposites together to exchange their energies - each becoming whole.

In order to accomplish this, I used three separate rooms for the working space, with the middle room containing the gates through which Innana must pass in Her journey into the lower kingdom.

The first chamber - the throne of Heaven - was equipped with a throne and altar; complete with incense and candles.

The second chamber - the Gates - was left as clear as possible, providing the Gatekeeper with room to maneuver in and a simple altar on which to place the various sacrifices of Innana.

The third chamber - the Throne of the Underworld - was equipped with four altars; candles and an oil lamp (no other light); cushions; and, a black fishing net hung from the ceiling to act as the "meathook" on which Innana's rotting corpse was to be suspended.

The preparation for the ritual consisted of setting up the chambers; escorting each of the participants to their respective chambers; and, discussing with each of them their respective roles in the Myth of Descent. There was no prepared script to work from. We did not even use a

translation of the Descent of Innana, which I had used in earlier rituals. All dialogue was to be spontaneous, and it was up to each participant to invoke the Deity according to HIR understanding of it.

## The Descent of Innana

### The participants

Innana - Diane Tabor  
Ereshkigal - Keter Elan  
The Gatekeeper - Julia Yarden  
Enki - B. K. Ben Barak

### The Ritual

What follows is drawn from the subjective experience of each of the participants.

## Innana

I am alone in the space I have been given to create the Throne of Heaven. Enki has reminded me of the different parts of myself as Innana, and now I seek to draw these pieces together, to awaken Innana within me. I invoke silently, though the voice within me grows like thunder, and I can feel Her enter me.

I AM Innana - Queen of Heaven;  
Goddess of all who dwell in the Upper World; I am Strong in passion - both in Love and in War. I AM Beauty and Goodness. My words form the world as it should be. From my body flow the stars which light the Heavens. There is no part of me that is not Beautiful and Strong and Right.

I have been given seven symbols of my

Power and have been asked to name them. I consider each one carefully; searching for the reflection of my power within its form. I name them "Body of the Goddess" (robe); "She Walks in Grace" (shoes); "Charms All Who See Her" (ear rings); "Knowledge of Heaven and Earth" (headdress); "Stands in Beauty" (necklace); "Key to the Power of Will" (golden ankh); and, "Strong Before Her Enemies" (sash). Into each of these objects, I place a part of myself.

As I sit upon my throne, Enki comes before me once again. He places runes and lines of power upon my body, that my beauty may be known to all. He calls me by many names and binds me to this body by the virtue of His Art. I am Innana. I sit in Stillness upon the Throne of Heaven.

Somewhere deep within me there stirs a murmur of discontent. It is as if a voice whispers to me, "but you are not Queen of *all*. There is yet that which lies beyond your knowledge."

"What?!" I scream into the Stillness. "What is it that is beyond the power of my knowledge? What is there within Heaven or earth which I do not know?"

And the voice answers: "That which is beyond Heaven and beneath the Earth. Surely there you cannot go, for you are a Goddess of Life, and Death bars its doors to such as you."

I will not have it! Surely I must also hold the Knowledge of the Underworld as well. As I sit and fume at the unfairness of my plight, Enki returns yet again and offers - in a strangely familiar voice - to guide me down to my sister's realm - into the Land of the Dead.

I prepare myself. Taking on all my

Powers, I clothe myself in the symbols of my Power. I AM Beauty; Knowledge; Grace; Charm; Wisdom; Strength; and, Will - personified. When I speak, every ear delights in my voice. When I move, my body speaks with ancient wisdom.

I descend to the gate into the Underworld. There, Enki pounds on the door to summon the Gatekeeper. After a time, the gate opens a bit and a face, painted in spirals and lit by the flash of far off lightning, peers out at me.

"Who is it that seeks entry into the Land of the Dead?" The voice surrounds me, and suddenly I am chilled. I call upon my courage in Battle and speak into the darkness.

"It is Innana, Queen of Heaven, who would visit Her sister, Ereshkigal. Let me pass."

"But you are not dead. Surely you, who are Knowledge itself, must know that only the dead may enter here."

Enki intercedes for me, saying that there must be some way that I can be given passage to see my sister. Finally the Gatekeeper relents and tells me that I must make a sacrifice of something dear to me in order for me to pass. I offer her my headdress. As she takes it, I can feel myself begin to shrink, my knowledge is no longer all encompassing. I feel much less powerful as I step through the gate and continue down.

At each successive gate, I sacrifice another of my parts, until at last I am completely emptied. I come before my sister naked and powerless, barely able to comprehend my situation. She screams at me. She demands to know why I have



come to her. All I can answer is that I seek knowledge. Though I no longer even know what that means.

My sister hates me. I don't think that I knew this before. I surely had no idea how much she loathes my very name. It is true that I had forgotten her, that I never had time for her, that I made no effort to comfort her or offer her relief from her suffering. Until now, I did not know what suffering was. It was not a part of me.

Still she pounds me with her words, but I cannot answer her. I have no words to fight back with. I am defenseless before her accusations. With a dagger - no less sharp than her tongue - she slays me, and hangs my body upon the wall.

Enki comes into the dark chamber and speaks to her. I can hear the words, but they make little sense to me in my stupor of death.

I am brought down from the wall and Enki sends his breath into me and I awaken, only to find myself lying beside Ereshkigal, my sister. I can feel what little warmth remains in me being drawn from me in this strange embrace. I lose myself in the darkness and in the cold that rises within me. There is no longer a warm body surrounding me. I am alone - as always. I am in the dark place. I am forgotten. I can no longer walk in the world above. I rule only over the dead. I had no idea how horrible it could be.

Into my perpetual night comes Enki. He raises me to my feet and leads me along the secret ways that he knows, returning to the Throne of Heaven. There sits Innana in Her/my glory. As I approach, she embraces me and returns to me the symbols of my power. I feel myself whole again - and more.

## Ereshkigal

I enter the space set aside for the dark realm and am told by Enki to make it my own. I fashion a horseshoe of cushions, defining the center of this dark place. I create for myself a cave of shadows and ashes, where small candle flames emit a pale light which flickers with changes in the unseen breeze.

Herein is death and beyond death to the realm of the forgotten, the forbidden, the denied. Herein resides the rage and the pain and the jealousy of the Dark Goddess, Queen of the Underworld, Ereshkigal.

With my space created, I invoke the Goddess, assuming the dark mantle of Her office and the various facets of Her Self. I AM the Devouring Mother who eats Her own young; I AM the brutal force of death who denies all pleas from the living, who rends life from the earth above me; I AM the self-centered Child, caring nothing but for my own needs and desires; I AM the totality of my own dark potential, fierce, foul and bursting with raw emotion - dark passions unchained.

Enki returns and draws upon my flesh with the ashes of my abode. He places my names upon me, and calls them aloud, as if I could ever forget what I am.

I sit in Darkness, mulling over my fate. There is no past nor future here - only the perpetual present, which is a torture of longing for what I cannot - by my very nature - be.

Into my dull agony there comes a knock and my sister, Innana, enters. I am shocked, dumfounded. Why has she descended to me? She who reigns above and beyond all that I can ever be. She, whom I adore.

Continued on page 32

# Healing Tattoo

by Crow

Bekki and I often refer to the tattooing we do as “magical”, “transformative”, and healing. One reason for this, of course, is that we consider ourselves to be pagans and magical folk, so that most anything we do is magical. Beyond this, however, is the deeper quality of the art itself.\*

Tattoo has an ancient history and a wide ethnographic spread. There are actual preserved tattooed skins from early Egypt, Switzerland and Scythia. The Scythian one is perhaps the best known and most amazing: A tribal chief had received highly elaborate Scythian animal-style tattoos over much of his body before he was frozen in ice. The oldest of these skins is from no more than 1000 BCE, not truly ancient, but there are paintings on pottery from 3000 BCE and cave paintings from earlier than 10,000 BCE which give strong evidence that tattoo was quite advanced early in human development.

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The very act of tattooing may be done for its healing effect.

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There is almost nowhere in the world that tattooing (or scarifying, often used for skin marking where intense pigmentation makes ink-under-the-skin less visible) has not been practiced. Even where the written ethnographies are vague on the subject,

incidental drawings and photographs usually reveal permanent skin markings done in the style of other local art forms. Tattoo, like other forms of magic, became unpopular in Europe with the rise of medieval Christianity. It was rediscovered among the Polynesians (who gave us the name *tatau*, to drum or beat) by the 17th and 18th Century South Seas explorers. Electric tattoo machines and other Western ideas began transforming the art technically in the late 1800's; still, the original techniques have survived to this day, not just in isolated Borneo, but also in tourist rich and overrun Polynesia.

It is thus possible to speak with some conviction not just about tattoo's origins, but about its original and ongoing significance throughout its history right up to contemporary practice.\*\* When considering its healing qualities, it is not only the age but the correlation of tattoo with another ancient healing practice, shamanism, which is fascinating. Up to the modern era, tattooing and shamanism are found together in almost every case. More than that, outside the contemporary West, tattooing has usually been done either by a shaman or under a shaman's direction and supervision, and the designs chosen have significance beyond the mundane.

The very act of tattooing may be done for its healing effect, but not all tattoos are done to heal simple health problems. Shamanic healing is not that limited either; it may also deal with emotional, relational and social problems. Tattoos often identify the wearer with specific spirits, higher

beings, or social groups. The identification may, in itself, be healing and/or one may join a group to mark the healing. Tattoos are often done as acts of worship, praise and thanks to celebrate healing on one level or another. Or, they may be done as an offering in expectation of benefits received from the spirits: A statement of earnestness in advance of the healing taking place.

If this seems a round about route to talking about how tattoo can heal you, it is. I have led you through it because healing tattooing is sometimes met with scepticism and I wish to raise the notion that the healing is not incidental, accidental or a neo-pagan dream, but is part of the original and ancient magic of the practice. Those of you who already have tattoos will easily recognize what is being discussed here: The transformative quality of the experience and how the transformation is healing in the widest, deepest sense of the word. If history and ethnography haven't convinced those of you with virgin skin, let's consider the ritual aspect of tattoo. That is easy to imagine in a Samoan context, but at your neighborhood tattoo parlor? Yes, even there, there is ritual.

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tattoo is magic...often undertaken for healing in the widest sense.

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The tattoo parlor is a space set aside from ordinary reality - your first visit there will convince you of that. Excepting plastic surgery, there is no place else in this world where you can go to intentionally receive a permanent change in the surface of your body which will change the way you view yourself and the way the rest of the world views you. Because of the activities done

there, the time spent at the tattoo parlor does have an "out of time" quality too. And, the activities are done in a ritual, structured way, especially the actual tattooing. Each step must be done in a special way and in the correct order or the tattoo will not work. *Hygeia* may be the only deity invoked by most tattoo artists, but she is invoked to begin the ritual and throughout its passage. Of course, the ritual also has a middle (the actual doing of the tattoo) and an end - the exchange of money, final handshakes and farewells.

We have learned that intention is a major quality of magic. Is there magical intention behind the ritual of tattooing? It would be extravagant to claim that every tattoo was so performed by either artist or wearer. The major conscious intent of the artist may be nothing more than to do a well crafted tattoo, yet that alone requires an awareness of the dream which the tattoo will manifest for the wearer. Helping to manifest that dream must involve magical intention. In my experience, the vast majority of persons seeking a tattoo do so with the very conscious intention of changing themselves. They enter into the process, a truly symbiotic joining of the energies of artist and wearer, consciously seeking to manifest a chosen vision of themselves.

So, tattoo is magic and throughout much of its history, often undertaken for healing in the widest sense. Can it be healing for you? Purely on the basis of observation (Yes! Case Histories!), I believe that it can be. Neither Bekki nor I have done a tattoo with the intention that it heal someone of a simple physical illness. I believe it would be effective in that context, say, relief of migraine or arthritis, but have not tested it. Both of us have done many tattoos, especially cover-up pieces and first tattoos in which there was a marked change in the

behavior, demeanor, one could even go so far as to say personality, of the client. Obviously, replacing a Nazi swastika with a pot of gold can cheer up the wearer, and a discreetly feminine butterfly or rose has improved many a woman's self image and belief in her own attractiveness.

We have also observed healing on a subtle-energetic level. Take the case of an ultra-marathon runner with an energy blockage in his lower spine which was so severe that it hindered his training and running capacity. The blockage was observable/diagnosed by chiropractic and ordinary medical personnel and, while they achieved temporary relief, they could not correct the condition. The client himself conceived of the idea of bridging the blockage with a bold Celtic knotwork tattoo directly over the spine linking the areas in which the energy flow was "normal". (I had discussed healing tattoo with him prior to his condition occurring, but had not been involved in the original diagnosis nor did I suggest the treatment. The client has no other tattoos.)

After I confirmed the location of the blockage with a manual energy scan, we proceeded with the tattoo. The spine is an especially sensitive area to work on, but the tremendous jolts of energy released by the tattoo needle wracked the client's body and caused continuous heavy involuntary movement far greater than any I have previously observed. In spite of the intensity of the sensations involved, the client declared that his whole spine felt better during and immediately after the tattooing. He consulted his usual medical advisors within a week of the completion of the tattoo and they, and he, declared virtually complete relief of the condition.

I am sure that this is the time for the

usual panicky disclaimers stating that tattoo artists are not medical professionals (indeed, few of us are) and that you should consult a medical professional for diagnosis and treatment of anything which ails you (and you should). However, much of my life is devoted to alternative forms of healing (see my column "The Newtonian Physician" in *Pagans In Recovery Quarterly*), especially those of a shamanic nature. Neither shamanism nor its extension into tattooing is a cure-all, but both are very powerful adjuncts and compliments to other forms of healing. Tattoo and other forms of shamanic healing have the advantage that they are much more in the control of the person seeking help than most other forms of healing. I do not suggest a visit to your local tattoo parlor for treatment of any illness. I do hope, however, that you now have a wider conception of what tattoo has been and what it can be.

© The Church of Earth Healing, 1991.

\*It is quite amazing how widely recognized tattoo magic is within the profession. *Outlaw Biker Tattoo Review* regularly publishes articles relating magic and tattoo (and just incidentally, folks, I would be willing to wager that there are some Pagans - not just the Biker kind, either - involved in that publication). There has even been an issue of *Tattoo Time* called "Tattoo Magic" (Winter 1983).

\*\*And one can not fail to be amazed at the survival throughout the millennia and into the current era of such a primitive activity.



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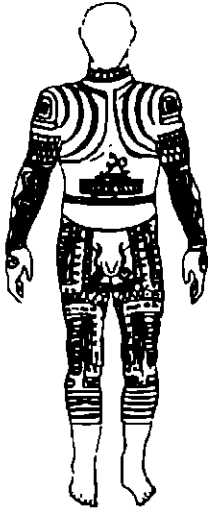
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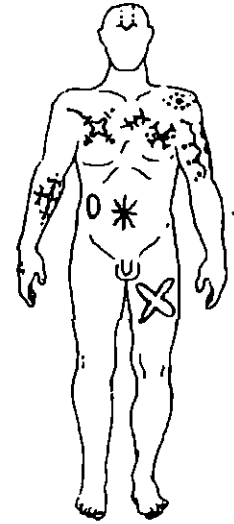
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# Why We Mark Our Bodies

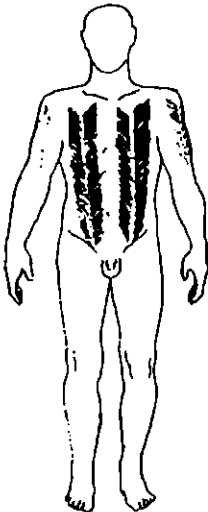
by Tath Zal



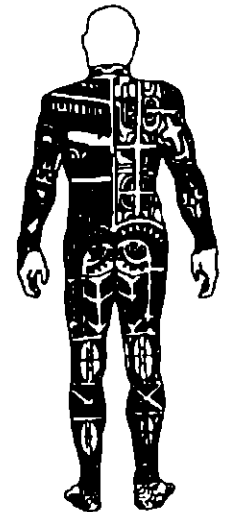
The practice of indelibly marking ourselves may be almost as old as the human race itself. However, the earliest firm evidence for tattooing that has yet been discovered consists of patterns of dots and lines on the body of a priestess of Hathor from the XIth Dynasty of ancient Egypt (circa 2200 B.C.).



The earliest appearances of ear, nose, and lip piercing; skull modelling; and/or deliberately altered dental structures have not yet been noted in archaeological literature. In addition, the practice of scarification (typical of the dark-skinned peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, south Asia, Melanesia and Australia where tattooing was not used because the pigment would not show) has existed for so long that no reliable evidence of historical inception is currently known.

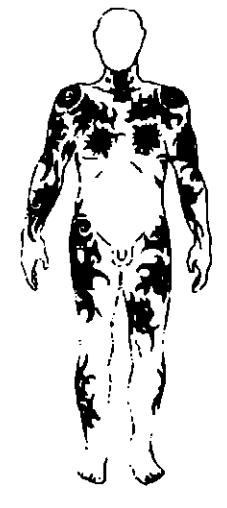


The historical record of irreversible forms of body art is incomplete since skin does not ordinarily survive in archaeological contexts (except in ancient Egypt, Pre-Columbian Peru, and parts of the Arctic, Central Asia and Indonesia where intentional or accidental mummification of human remains took place). Nevertheless, in view of the wide cultural, geographical and temporal distribution of body art practices, it would appear that such practices are, indeed, very old.



The decision to mark ourselves is based on a variety of reasons, most of which can be divided into five discrete categories. These are:

1) *Symbolization of an Interpersonal Relationship* - markings (tattoos, scarifications and/or piercings) which identify the recipient with a loved one (lover, spouse, family member); enhance a love/sexual relationship; or, which are taken on as proof of fidelity and/or commitment to a specific individual.

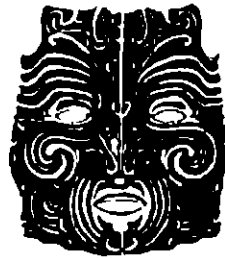
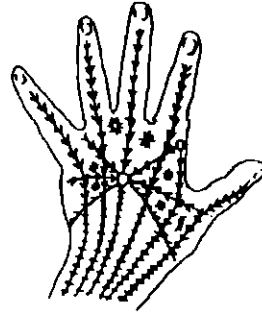
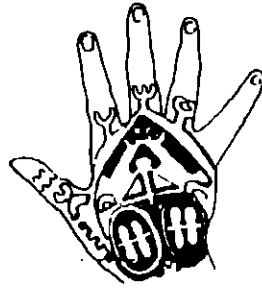


Yoruba women's tattoos, Tabwa, Ga'anda and Nuba scarification, various Tiv forms, and some early Edo tattoos were specific examples of an individual's willingness to endure pain in order to please a lover. In addition, practically all studies of African women's programs of body scarification have indicated the explicitly erogenous content and placement of such scarification (largely in tactile terms).

2) *Participation in a Group -* markings, often tattoos or scarifications, which identify the recipient as a member of a specific group (military, social, religious, economic) and which represent that individual's irreversible commitment to that group and to the identity and social experience that it provides.

Historically, examples of such markings have included caste marks among the tribal peoples of western India; tribal scarifications among the Yoruba and other African peoples; nobility among the Ga'anda and their neighbors of northeastern Nigeria; and, marital status among Ainu women of northern Japan.

3) *Representation of Key Interests and Activities -* markings which identify a process of personal importance to the recipient (religious beliefs, magical initiations, occupations, hobbies, etc.). Religious associations, for example, have included the idea that one's



tattoos, inalienable in this life, can be bartered to accomplish a successful transition to the afterlife.

Related traditions have encompassed the idea that specific tattoo designs can protect against illness or other misfortune; ward off the evil eye (widely practiced in the Islamic world); and/or, protect against bodily harm (e.g., Hawaiian warriors wore tattoos to protect them in battle).

4) *Self-Identity -* markings which represent an aspect of the recipient's personal identity and/or an emblem of accomplishment. A tattoo may represent a picture of this aspect (astrological signs, nicknames, personal strengths/weaknesses of an influential nature), while a piercing can convey a sense of ownership over one's own body and the related pains and pleasures derived therefrom.

Self-identity and individual status (both high and low) were conveyed by markings such as a Maori moko (full face tattoo), an Inuit whaling captain's labrets (lip piercing with inserts), a Marquesan chief's full body tattoo, the pictorial tattoos of a Japanese gangster (yakuza), and/or the markings of a slave or habitual criminal in various cultures.

5) *Decorative/Aesthetic Statement -* markings which are selected by the recipient because of their perceived beauty and/or

artistic quality. Markings of this type represent the most intimate art form available to humans and have been practiced by most cultures throughout history. For example, while tattoos, scarifications and piercings represent the more historical (and current Western culture “fringe” element) examples of body art, current “mainstream” irreversible body art practices in the United States include orthodontia, hair implants, silicone breast enlargements, nose jobs, liposuction and face-lifts.

In Western culture, body art in the form of tattoos, scarifications and/or piercings is generally considered to be socially stigmatic. This is primarily due to the Judeo-Christian precept that body marking is sinful and, therefore, forbidden. This judgment comes specifically from the Bible itself, i.e., Leviticus 19:28: “You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh on account of the dead or tattoo any marks upon you.”

Nevertheless, in other traditions, permanent and temporary body art practices are often seen in a sacred or magickal context, and are almost always of a social orientation. It is the view of many that an unmarked body is an inarticulate form, separated from its social/cultural identity; and, that only when the body acquires the “marks of civilization” does it begin to communicate and become an active part of the greater social experience.

Among the “fringe” elements of Western culture, the tattoo is the most popular form of body art, probably because it is the only such form that actually rewards melanin deficiency. Tattoos are as unique as the individuals who receive them. However,

many interpretive differences can be observed within Western culture as to why we mark our bodies. These differences can be broken into several broad categories; two of which are differentiation by gender and by sociological/psychological considerations.

To briefly address gender differences in selected body art forms, it should be noted that women, in the majority, tend to select small, delicate tattoos as aesthetic body decorations intended for personal pleasure and/or sharing with more intimate acquaintances. They generally select placements on the breast, shoulder, or hip. Prevailing attitudes towards tattoos as indicative of deviant behavior may dictate this placement for women as the privacy of these areas assures that strangers or casual associates will not form undesirable personal judgments (i.e., the women will not be defined as deviant).

Men, on the other hand, generally choose larger designs and have them located in more visible body areas such as on their arms and/or on their chests. For men, tattoos appear to function as public assertions of masculinity, proof of a relationship, or visible and indelible statements regarding personal identification.

Sociological/psychological differences revolve around the significance to the individual of placing an irreversible mark upon their own bodies. Some see tattoos or piercings as clear statements regarding the individual's perception of cultural homogeneity as undesirable. This line of thought takes exception to the current definition of “progress” which includes an inherent condemnation of cultural diversity



as regressive and advocates uniformity and standardization as “normal” and desirable societal goals.

This particular line of thought seems to be prevalent among both the upper and lower strata of society, where aristocrats, tycoons, politicians, rock musicians, primitives, criminals and members of other marginal subcultures come together in asserting their nonconformity to conventional attitudes and values.

In “Marks of Civilization: Artistic Transformation of the Human Body,” Arnold Rubin, ed., 1988, Governor Jerry Brown of California is quoted as including the following remarks in his welcoming address to the Tattoo Expo on November 12, 1982:

*“In decadent phases, the tattoo became associated with the criminal - literally the outlaw - and the power of the tattoo became intertwined with the power of those who chose to live beyond the norms of society. Today, the realm of the outlaw has been redefined: The wild places which excite the most profound thinkers are conceptual.”*

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## The nature of the act...is...ours and ours alone.

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However, tattoo, as an acceptable form of body art, has been expanding to include greater numbers of conventional middle-class clients. This may be interpreted as an expansion (to middle class society) of the previously outlined unconventional, individualistic values; and/or, as a reflection of that same middle class societal layer's attainment of better education, improved economic security and greater accessibility

to a wider range of experiences related to other cultures and subcultures (through travel, literature, food, dress, adornment, etc.). No clear preponderance of evidence supports either premise; and, the most likely explanation of the increasing acceptability of various forms of body art within the middle class is a mixture of these and other factors.

While tattoo is one way of reassuring, or reinforcing, the ego under pressure, some individuals assert that for an individual to get a tattoo does not constitute, by the nature of the act alone, a revolutionary statement. Tattoos would appear to have much broader meaning than to be interpreted as solely representative of statements about a specific system.

As in all cultures, meanings and implications are more reasonably derived from the attitudes, motivations and intentions of the specific individuals receiving the markings. Any interpretations of these acts are often more dependent upon the nature, size, and placement of the design itself. In fact, for many individuals, a tattoo or other form of body marking is no more than another method of artistic expression such as music or painting.

In the final analysis, the specific reasons that we mark ourselves can only be truly known by those of us who have done so. The nature of the act, this statement, is, like our bodies, ours and ours alone.





# The Other Alternative

## Piercing As Art

by Cain Berlinger

"She stood naked and alone in the cornfield, basking in the golden light of the sun. Her corn-yellow hair glowed with radiance. The golden studs attached to her breasts reflected radiant beams of light upward, toward the sky, toward her gods." Radical, bizarre, bucking the system, freaks - all terms used to describe the phenomenon of piercing. Piercing was usually seen as a practice of those "bad girls" with shady pasts, a wild present and a bad future. For men, well.....they were just "queer" and that's all there was to that. Now, "the times, they are a'changing" and even the cutest of toddlers - boy and girl - are sporting enviable bejeweled studs.

In the racy 70's, young people were rebelling against the staid, white bread culture of America. They began to embrace other cultures of indigenous peoples. Native American, African, and Indian were the cultures of choice. Young hip whites were wearing black, green and red tams. And hip young babes were sporting the sexy, culturally correct Indian nose rings, an exotic type of cultural piercing that India and Africa both lay claim to.

Both darker cultures were coming into their own and recognizing their cultural beauty. Young white people and their sympathizers did not want to be left behind, so they rushed to share in the newness and exotica that pitted their cool, white sensuality against a darker, more primitive passion. Many found the combination irresistible; many more found it threatening

- which, in turn, made it all the more desirable.

For men, it became part of the dressier-shirt-men's-cologne-syndrome. Men recognized that they too could adorn themselves as their ancestors had; that they too could be beautiful, primitive and sexual - all made possible by attaching a few metal studs.

As the trends spread through the hip clubs, into the streets and suburbia, youth took to the ear salons and parents took to valium. Of course, by now junior executives were sporting the little tell-tale holes and the ear bob was on its way (if not already) out.

With the idea of more being better, the more hip inner city kids were now sporting one, three, six and more dazzling gold loops and studs along the outside of one ear. The effect was radical, dazzling and made just the kind of fashion up-yours-in-your-face statement that, although middle America was loathe to imitate, it couldn't ignore. The results were creative and colorful, and as beautiful as the people who wore them.

More and more creative adornments began to turn up. The ear to nose ring via gold chain began making the rounds. Celebrities were now proudly sporting their tattoos, and four in a row earring spreads were showing up (where else?) on that mass arbiter of fashion - MTV.

But, by now piercing enthusiasts were coming out of the closets and showing off their gold. Wherever there was flesh, there

was a place for a piercing. These people had long since discovered the beauty of their own bodies. Cheryl Tieg and Carl Weathers were not the epitome of beauty to them. Older bodies, overweight bodies, amputees, and the physically challenged had long believed in their own brand of beauty, sexuality and worth. Tattoos and piercings, for them, are creative art; their bodies are their canvases.

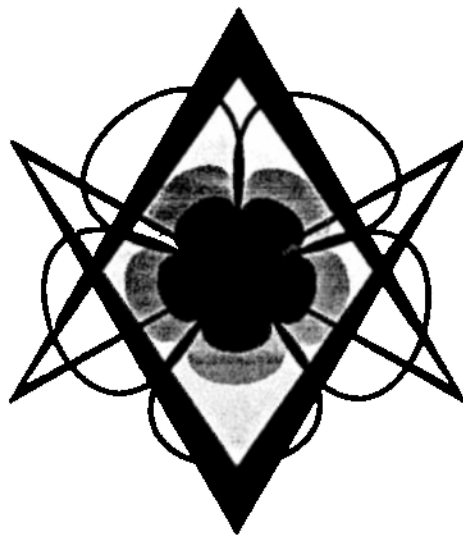
Piercing, and attendant modifications, has been practiced in the old world since before Christ. For many cultures, piercing was often an important mark of passage. It often denoted rank in tribal cultures, much like facial scars in the Dark Continent.

In some Arab Nations, penile and anal piercings were often used to heighten and control sexual desires. From the medical standpoint, gold rings or bars were often used to keep the foreskin away from the glans, since circumcision was undesirable.

Women were not immune. Two rings placed close enough around the vagina and then locked into place, served as a very effective chastity guard. While the men were away fighting Holy Wars, they didn't have to worry about bald intruders on the "little woman."

As made popular in "A Man Called Horse," the spiritual aspect of body modification was also a force to be dealt with. Often Shamans subjected themselves to such mind over pain experiences as part of their ascension into spiritual realms.

During the Victorian era, even the ever-conservative royal crown found a use for piercing. The very handsome consort of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, also enjoyed a reputation as being quite a well endowed cocksman. To minimize his embarrassment



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(pity the poor guy!) and smooth the cut of his trousers, the court jeweler invented what is still known as the (guess) "Prince Albert." This consisted of a gold ring which enters through the head of the glans and exits under it. By attaching a thong through the opening, it could then be tied to the Prince's leg. Through this clever invention, the Prince was able to hang gallantly, yet unobtrusively.

Unfortunately, in most cases, the ritual and ceremony that usually accompanied piercing in the past are rarely practiced nowadays. However, there is no arguing that the magic is still there and exists for anyone who has enjoyed exotic multiple piercings. Highest on the list for men are nipple piercings. It is fair to add that many women are also enjoying nipple endowments.

I had my nipples done years ago. There is a certain joy in dealing with straight Mundanes in the office place, wearing your rings proudly, with them never suspecting. Another benefit of any piercing of any erogenous zone is the constant stimulation and reminder of the existence of that part of your body.

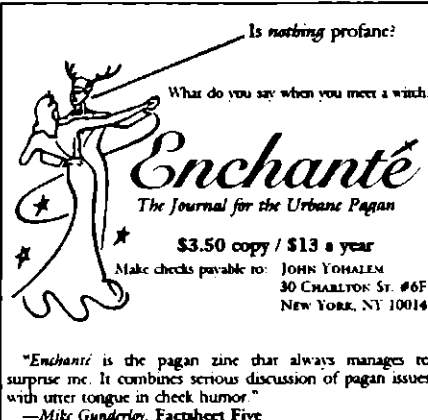
Piercings seem to lend themselves to all sorts of activities. When you are lucky enough to have a matched partner, you can play tug of war games. There are many

creative things to do with body piercings that are as visually exciting and beautiful as they can often be functional. All piercings are both subject to and the subject of wonderful fantasy.

As I stated earlier, any place can be pierced, although there are varying times for healing, depending on the difficulty of the area. For example, nipples usually take two to three months to heal. Most penile and scrotum piercings heal relatively fast, usually about a month. My personal favorite is a piercing under my lip, directly over my chin. It is rarely seen on others and it gets comments from everyone. It took a month to heal, but was worth the slight discomfort. The most difficult area is around the navel, as I am told that it is as tough as elephant hide and takes a long time to heal.

A word about my liprette (the proper name for my lip piercing) - it was only with some difficulty that I found a jeweler who would make a stud with a flat screw backing, so as not to annoy the gums or teeth. It raised lots of eyebrows and has given me lots of compliments. I have received much pleasure from all of my piercings.

Another group of people discovering piercing are bikers, who are now getting as



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heavily pierced as they are tattooed. One Bro had his tongue pierced with a large stud. His girlfriend swears by it.

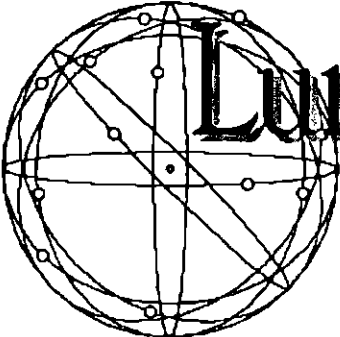
The popularity of tattooing and piercing is growing every year. There are even conventions held yearly across America and Europe. In addition, there are at least ten magazines that cater exclusively to body modifiers. It is a legitimate alternative lifestyle.

Segments of society are drawn to the exotic, refusing to admit to arousal and maybe even jealousy. But, like the saying goes, "Beauty is in the eyes of the Beholder." And Beauty in any form is a blessing to behold.





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# On Hebrew Paganism

## An Interview With Sabra



Graphic © Sabra, 1971

**Mezlim:** We've been hearing more and more lately about the Hebrew Goddess Tradition, Jewish Paganism, Hebrew Paganism and so on. It seems like you use a number of names interchangeably. Is this true?

**Sabra:** (Smiles)...Hebrew Folkway, Neo-Hebrew Tradition, New Elohim and I've lost track of what else. (Shrugs) All facets of the same thing, as far as I'm concerned. Though there does seem to be something of a split between those of us who define ourselves as Hebrew and those calling themselves Jewish. Jewish-Paganism is more of a theological identification, while Hebrew-Paganism is more a primitive, tribal sense of identity.

**Mezlim:** Then let's start with some basics. Do you perform magickal or religious rituals with the Pantheons of Sumer, Akkad, Babylon or Egypt?

**Sabra:** (Laughs) They always ask me that. No. We have little or no need to go borrowing from our Egyptian, Iraqi or Syrian neighbors. They had wonderful Pantheons, mind; but we have plenty of Greater and Lesser Hebrew Deities (or archetypes, if your temperament does not run to religion in that sense)—not to mention an abundance of mythopoetic material.

**Mezlim:** Could you define what you personally mean by Hebrew Paganism, and give us a bit of your background pertaining to it?

**Sabra:** To me, Hebrew Paganism is a partially mythopoetic restoration of the ancient Way or Tradition of the Hebrews from which all the Patriarchal, (and Yahweh-dominated) elements have been removed. We also dispose of lots of medievalist thinking which we find constrictive and unappealing - too European rabbinical and diasporic to suit our temperamental mid-easterners. (Smiles) We leave that heritage to our brothers and sisters: The Judeo-Pagans. As to us, we reach back to reconnect ourselves with the more primitive, pastoral, nature oriented, tribal warrior character of the Ancient Tradition of our Land and people. Those of us currently on the Hebrew Path are more at home with that anyway.

**Mezlim:** Because it harmonizes in turn with your personal backgrounds?

**Sabra:** Right. We were farmers and, more importantly, shepherds who lived in a voluntary collective agricultural community (*Kibbutz*), which was located right on the border. That is, we grew up in a world that was constantly at war.

**Mezlim:** How does this background affect

your tradition?

**Sabra:** Let's see...Our vision of Creation starts with ADAMAH, ("Earth" in Hebrew) who is the living Mother Earth - not the same as an agriculturalists' Earth Mother, mind.

**Mezlim:** More like Gaea or Gaia in the West?

**Sabra:** Yes, Earth as a living, breathing complex organism. Out of Adamah's very substance, the First Man was made. The perpetrator of this is the Entity we call the Great One - or simply "the One." (Grins) Let me point out, lest your pagan readers clutch their hearts and keel over in shock, that S/He who we call "the One" is not, to us the only one.

**Mezlim:** (Laughs). Yes, I think we've got that. I'd like to point out though that even the fact that there is such a thing as Hebrew-Paganism may come as a surprise to many of our readers.

**Sabra:** And yet, there seems to be a wealth of archeological and historical evidence. Besides tribal YHWH, there were other Hebrew Gods and Goddesses. Abraham came and found Him whose altar stood in Beth-El; and the Bible often mentions sacred High Places on hilltops and in sacred groves. The Tree of the Goddess (*Pistacia Palestina*, a Terebinth Oak) bears Her name to this day. I believe that modern archeologists and historians have found evidence of at least two Greater Hebrew Goddesses.

**Mezlim:** The Lady Asherah and the Elah. Interesting. One hears of Lilith, who walked out on Adam over an issue of male-female supremacy. And about Lesser Asheroth and Elot—goddesses or genii of hearth and luck and fertility, statuettes with the usual pointed feet...Can you explain something about this design?

**Sabra:** Right. This was so they could be

"planted" in the soil - like Elah's Terebinth tree, because the Lesser Asheroth (plural of Asherah) were often identified with Lesser Elot (plural of Elah). Then there were also the Teraphim, little hearth gods and goddesses and spirits that the Matriarchs were fond of...

**Mezlim:** About the Great Ones: What about Asherah?

**Sabra:** Asherah is the Hebrew Goddess of Love and War, who to us also symbolizes all spiritual opposites, especially those within us.

**Mezlim:** She corresponds to our own Dark and Light sides?

**Sabra:** (Nods) Exactly. In working with Her, you work with that which, hidden within, must be acknowledged, retrieved and accepted before we can properly center and balance. Some of us, when doing Warrior work, call on her as Anath: As the Cananeans did. Then She is strictly the Lady of War, Sorrow and Dread.

**Mezlim:** And Elah?

**Sabra:** (Smiling) Ah, yes. The Lesser Elah (although Elah is really a continuum, which we experience as greater or lesser; spiritual or physically manifested) is our very own "green" Goddess. The Lady of the Terebinth Tree. Gazelle and leopard are Her symbols. Her groves, you see, shelter both herbivore and predator. She symbolizes, not so much agriculture, with cultivation and planting and seeding and birth, as Nature in toto: Ecology, the natural laws of Life and survival. Not a dainty Goddess, but an unbelievably powerful one.

**Mezlim:** And the Greater Elah?

**Sabra:** She is part of the One. I'll go into that more in a minute. Because of the Unity concept, I prefer to not call upon Her as a separate entity except in the gravest cases.

**Mezlim:** Would you explain?

**Sabra:** This concept is not a modern recreation, believe it or not. It is a very ancient Pagan concept, found in the Talmud: It is a belief that there is a Great Deity, the Creator, whose Essence is, at the same time, both male and female. Yet so inseparable are the two, that they can neither be separated nor told apart; and hence this Deity is to be called The One. The famous "hear oh Israel, the God is One" we believe, was originally meant to stress not that there were no other Gods or Goddesses, but that one is not ever to attempt to separate the One into the Two.

**Mezlim:** Go on.

**Sabra:** Come to think of it, this is a recurrent concept. We have a number of other, lesser Deities (or Archetypes) who are at once Gods and Goddesses, as well as some with sexual attributes opposite to the ones of European Old Religions.

**Mezlim:** So how else does your tradition differ?

**Sabra:** Well, *Shemesh*, is the Sun Goddess, for example, while the Moon is Male as *Yareach*; female as *Levana*. And as *Sin*, the Moon is both - a Moon God/dess.

Another difference between our Tradition and aspects of Western Pagan traditions is that we have no Stag-God consort to a Goddess. In fact, there is no male-female polarity at all. On the contrary, because of the Great One, we hold that there is a fundamental spiritual oneness, a spiritual androgeny in all human and divine, both males and females. It is our belief that the basic Oneness Within far outweighs the differences between the sexes. One of the difficulties faced by newcomers to our tradition - from different cultures - is that they must learn to awaken the dormant other Self that culture has suppressed in a complementary way in both males and females. We see this as essential to

achieving spiritual Balance. (Pauses)

**Mezlim:** Obviously, your Tradition has very little in common with what is usually referred to as the Judeo-Christian heritage. Yet while telling us about your Tradition, you frequently refer to Biblical Scriptures. What sort of reaction does your use of scriptural material elicit from other pagans?

**Sabra:** (Laughs) They always do a double take about that. (Smiling)

**Mezlim:** Even Judeo-Pagans?

**Sabra:** (Smiling) Particularly Judeo-Pagans or Pagans of any Tradition who are of Jewish ancestry. The Children of the Jewish Diaspora are more in touch with their European, rabbinical past than with the middle eastern roots which we relate to.

**Mezlim:** So how would you explain the radical difference between your Tradition's view of the Scriptures and that of other Pagan Traditions?

**Sabra:** For most other Pagans, the Bible is a book of religion. For us, the Hebrew Bible and Scriptures are key sources to a tribal Tradition. They are our own cultural heritage, affecting us in much the same way as the New Testament has shaped Western culture - even more so. To put it simply, when it comes to Hebrew Scriptures, we retrieve what we want of the old ways and discard the rest. Primarily the Yahwist stuff.

**Mezlim:** Seem like quite a difficult house cleaning.

**Sabra:** (Smiles ) Not in the least. Our Scriptures, once rid of patriarchal elements, preserve evidence of an ancient, specifically Hebrew Pagan reality. It actually leaps at you from all over, at almost every page. The Prophets -Yahwists - and their spiritual descendants - synagogue and church - tried with various techniques to obscure that fact through the use of censorship and slander. So it's become difficult indeed for most Westerners to extricate pro-YHWH bias

from the pages and retrieve the Pagan elements. For those of us who came from over there and share my kind of background, it is easier by far.

**Mezlim:** I imagine it's very difficult for a Westerner to get the original flavor of the Scriptures from reading a christianized English translation.

**Sabra:** Yes, this leads to a lot of misunderstanding, for example, much has been said in the Pagan community about the supposedly anti-ecological/exploitative "Judeo-Christian" attitude toward nature. Yet we read the Scriptures totally otherwise.

We hold that, in the beginning, humans were asked to name the creatures. And naming, in the middle east as elsewhere, is something a parent does. So that, when humans agreed to name all things, they took the responsibility of nurturing and fostering the growth and existence of all creation.

**Mezlim:** So it never occurred to you to read "dominion over" as some sort of license to destructively exploit and exhaust Earth's resources?

**Sabra:** Certainly not. How the Scriptures could be read like that is beyond me. We certainly were NOT raised that way. You do that in a desert landscape with its fragile ecology and how long before you starve?

**Mezlim:** How does your tradition view YHWH?

**Sabra:** As Scriptures will tell you, YHWH was a "jealous" God. His Prophets waged bitter and relentless war with "Other Beliefs"; took it to the villages, the towns, even to the Hebrew court. (Pauses) Tell me, would they have bothered, had he truly been supreme in his day? Had the Other Beliefs not been so powerfully pervasive? What the Prophets wanted, was to have YHWH as the supreme deity, but the reality of the situation was actually quite the opposite. Yet people today overlook this. And they have forgotten how the Hebrews

loved the Old Goddesses and Gods.

(Grins) By the way, as it often happens, it is thanks to the very hatred by the followers of YHWH, who just could not shut up about it and let other beliefs alone, that we even know as much about the Gods and Goddesses as we do today! So you see, when we read the Books in non-Yahwist light, it is amazing how Pagan the Biblical world suddenly appears.

**Mezlim:** A strange view.

**Sabra:** Not at all. Not from where we were standing, culturally speaking. Besides, this view sprang naturally from what we saw and heard growing up in the middle east.

As you know, the Old Hebrews were farmers, shepherds and warriors—much the same as the founders of this modern Hebrew Path. So I think our present interpretation was inevitable, due to the physical, cultural and linguistic proximity alone. Due to actually living in the Land where it all happened.

**Mezlim:** And I imagine it helps that you can very easily read—and catch the flavor and intent—of the Hebrew texts?

**Sabra:** Sure. That too. It's amazing how much gets lost in even the best translation, when the translator lacks the local cultural underpinning.

**Mezlim:** All of this connection to the Land must give you a terrific sense of grounding, or being rooted in your heritage.

**Sabra:** Ah yes. In fact, when I first arrived here I used to find it hard to understand what being rooted even meant; we took it so much for granted.

**Mezlim:** So the contemporary middle eastern warrior and farming roots are an essential element coloring your tradition?

**Sabra:** Absolutely. The first of us who I would say were on the Hebrew Goddess Path didn't even use that label—but that is definitely what it was. Over there, they



wrote songs to the Earth - fifty years ago. They still do. Songs like: "We will heal the Land and, through Her, we will be healed." Worries about our fragile ecological balance; dances around bonfires to give thanks when earthworms got back into the Earth, proving She was recuperating from two millennia of neglect. All that was part of it...

**Mezlim:** How would you say that your re-linkage with pre-diaspora culture, as well as the current middle eastern culture, affects the nature of your Hebrew God/dess work?

**Sabra:** We are drawn to whatever system - religion, if you will - harmonizes with our own personal experiences. We were raised as farmers, working the land on the border of an actively hostile country. We were drafted young and became professional soldiers. So, inevitably, as combatants, much of our focus is on warrior's issues.

**Mezlim:** How do you mean?

**Sabra:** Having lived all my life in a country which has to go to war every six years or so has left its mark. In our tradition, we have many techniques for confronting the violence which we've experienced. We learn to heal the deep warrior's scars. And we learn to live in balance with what we cannot heal.

**Mezlim:** That's a tall order.

**Sabra:** ...it is. We had much—too much—experience with armed conflict. In our daily life we had war, which people here don't have to deal with. So we have to confront the reality of violence in people; in the desert environment. Also, we found that in war, men and woman are not as different from each other as people here believe. This, incidentally, accounts for one more reason why in this Tradition of ours, there are no lovely ethereal Goddesses in gauzy robes. (Grins) They'd burn to a crisp in the desert sun. Just think of Anat, who is the One of War, and of Death; Anat of the

towering murderous rages. And there are no unicorns, alas, in Elah's groves. No gentle mists of Avalon either.

**Mezlim:** You sound like you—almost—miss them.

**Sabra:** Well, warriors know that unicorns are nice. Rainbows are nice too. So is Avalon. Only, we never had the option. What I am trying to express here is that, by necessity, Hebrew God/dess work—in my own experience—is usually heavily oriented toward healing the scars of warriors; pretty heavy shamanic work.

**Mezlim:** Does that isolate you from other Pagans?

**Sabra:** (Shrugs) Well, yes and no. Warrior Work is, by nature, solo work in many ways. Yet it can be communal and tribal too. (Smiles) At festivals it is often the drumming of other Pagans around the bonfire which supports us, carries us inwards; gives us tribal support while, as individuals, we go inwards to face ourselves head on.

Trance drumming, trance dancing, meditative states—all these help to overcome the fear of looking inwards. Whatever centers - heals, and aids in the recovery of the inner self from too many close encounters with...survival issues.

(Pauses) Not everybody who is white, suburban and middle class is always comfortable with this kind of work, I think.

**Mezlim:** It takes a warrior's courage to heal a warrior's scars.

**Sabra:** I suppose it does. I know we get intense sometimes in our trance dancing and drumming. (Grins) Call it our middle eastern temperament. (Pauses) But seriously. All that fierceness—that reaching inward to connect with the primeval energies—is not something everybody likes to handle...and it does keep a lot of people at a distance.

**Mezlim:** Still, from everything I've heard, your Path does not feel all that different from other Earth-linked Traditions.

**Sabra:** Because it actually isn't. Elah work is heavily involved with the broader issues of nature; the natural cycles; seasonal fertility in nature. In Asherah Work, we deal with the complexities and conflicts within the spirit.

**Mezlim:** Then you are really not that much different from any other committed Earth Tradition—and no less accessible?

**Sabra:** Right. We are open to all. As to being accessible, well, working with the higher self requires study, almost inevitably; some effort; some commitment. That, in a sense, limits accessibility. But I think this is the same in any tradition which requires knowledge and growth from its members.

Also, we have put YHWH back where he belongs: As a lesser tribal divinity, just one more lesser godling. This still seems to be an amazingly hard obstacle for Western Pagans to overcome.

**Mezlim:** Harder than the warrior work?

**Sabra:** Much. They are angry and afraid of Him. Understandably.

**Mezlim:** Do you feel that the Western Pagan community is missing something by not being able to "let go" of YHWH?

**Sabra:** (Pauses) Look, our Tradition holds that all Paths are equally valid. Ours is no better or worse than any other. But whenever the existence—the potential—of any Path is forgotten, all Seekers, shamans, and followers of Paths are impoverished by it. So, in this sense, I would say that the Modern Pagan movement is missing something - something of their own cultural heritage.


**Mezlim:** Do you seek to reconstruct the Old Ways of the Hebrews as they were at the time of the Scriptures?

**Sabra:** Well, we are fortunate. Much is left

of the Hebrew God/dess. But truthfully, mythopoetry aside, who today REALLY understands fully the substance of Old Ways? Once upon a time, millennia ago, it might have been all right to sacrifice children—Baal got lots of those—but obviously no sane Neo-Pagan today would even think of going back to that type of Old Ways. We believe in working only with what makes sense to us, today. The essence of our new Hebrew Tradition is to keep what works for us and reject what doesn't. Where gaps need filling, we add some new mythology. Why not? All Paths, no matter how old, no matter where they lead, are about going forward. Like other Paths, we seek to heal, nurture, center and anchor. Our work—our Magick—is about defining yourself, ultimately. We reject any judgmental narrowness - like sexism or racism; we are all alike, all blood and guts and heart beneath the skin. We are also all unique; and that has value. We set great store by Warrior's Friendship, Loyalty, Commitment, comradeship and brotherhood. In the end—what else matters?

*For those interested in Hebrew-Paganism, you may write to Sabra in care of Mezlim. Also, watch for further articles by Sabra in the pages of future issues of Mezlim.*





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# Mnemonomagick: An Introduction

by John Graywood

The practice of magick requires continual innovation, and computer-age religion encourages sharp, crisp rites. But it is first essential to reconfigure Thelema, and these hasty notes attempt an updating of ceremony.

1) The process of converting wish into memory is a way of forcing realization. Only by making a "future-hope" into an "already-happened" can yearning quicken into attainment. This time loop exerts sufficient energy to coax a manifestation.

2) The flavor of initiation can be savored by rearranging the ingredients of the brain. Necromancy is an alteration in mental programming, but each change in the style of thought production deposits an exterior residue. A "miracle" is just the outer-world condensation of a new way of thinking.

3) Any reconsideration of worship demands peculiar caution. Each occult working results in a transmutation of personality. Every spiritual experiment inflicts stern psychological consequences upon the believer.

4) In traditional mnemonics, an unfamiliar idea is connected into an artificial whole, and wizardry is merely an obstinate redesign of grey matter. Thaumaturgy is only a shuffling of the fittings of the mind; and through cerebral furniture shifting, you might achieve the benefits of ritual. By wrenching context and soldering neurons, it is possible to manufacture gnosis.

5) The most efficient way of repatterning is strategic fantasy—and, for the Westerner, the most emotionally-charged unit of visualization is the recollection: Memories are customarily regarded as the armor plating of the ego. If an adept were consigned to prison,\* the only self-defense is found in the leftovers packed in the cranium. If you were locked in a "black room"—sheared of sensory contact—the first instinct would be to endlessly replay antique impressions; lacking a sexual partner, you might perpetually reinvestigate bygone erotic escapades. Because these skull-wrapped accretions are traditionally reckoned as sacrosanct, it is vital for the diabolist to have the talent to snoop through these brain-covered goodies.

6) Mnemonomagick is composed of three key episodes, and each "left-hand" aspiration must be given a triple-chambered distillation. In the beginning stage, a heightened imagining is necessary to capture desire—not all that different from pagan spellcraft, but the beholding must be done the way you remember, with an excruciating attention to particular details. Instance: Suppose you were undertaking the "favors" of a specified woman; it would be profitable to envision not only her absolute face, but also the bad tooth and the strand of hair protruding from the nipple. In the middle stage, each impulse must be coerced into the network of "true" previous experiences. Such wedging exercises might include: Alteration of the way that reminiscences are attached to location; ordering of thoughts into a geometric shape; an editing of the verbiage of hoarded readings; the transposing of acquaintances

at favorite occasions. This cerebral refashioning can only be accomplished by changing the very habit of recollection; these renewed proclivities ought to be inserted into situations of bracing emotion, into moments of accomplishment or embarrassment. In the final stage, the whole invention should be charged with orgasm or fear or deep aesthetic affection in order to heighten the staying power of the synthetic memory.

7) Surmising that you have an appetite, perhaps, for money—the most certain way of fulfillment is to perceive the want as if it had just happened, as if the hundred-dollar bills already jangle in your well-used wallet. In this sorcerous reverie, the future hope must directly impact the concrete past.

8) The staple technique of Crowleyite experiment is the magickal record, but this methodology cannot terminate in a static text. Rather, you transmute mystic sensitivity by rewriting diary entries—vision arises out of revision. Words foreshadow future awareness; your typeface molds perception.

9) The implicit schematic of these memoried [sic] connections forms a sort of instinctive sigil. The relationship between tradition and expectation could be sketched into a kind of flowchart, and this tacit diagram satisfies the same psychic cravings as the creations of Austin Osman Spare.

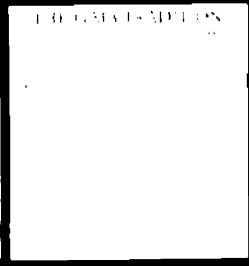
10) Converting a longing into a recollection helps to pass the mental "swallowing reflex". This mnemonic circle allows a way of escalating Nuitian potentials.

\*Witness the career moves of a couple of Crowley's German disciples.

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# Playing With Fire

## The Training of Babylon

by Mishlin

Fear is the result of attachment. We are only afraid of the things we might or might not lose. The greatest fear is that of Chaos, the uncontrollable force outside ourselves. The entire universe is composed of Chaos, that dark primeval froth of life.

The way in which we hold back this terrifying knowledge is through our mind. In fact, the main function of the intellect is to hold back this knowledge. Everything we think is an attempt to put an image of patterning over that which has no pattern.

When seen in this light, the mind becomes less important—that is, it has a place in the scheme of awareness, and is no longer the controller.

The Priestess of Babylon must see beyond her mind's sterility and connect directly with the infinity of Chaos with which she is a part. It is the place from which she derives her power.

Forget all the tantric positions you've been told about, for the moment. They are the overlying of pattern, a play of the mind. They are artifices, built in an attempt to understand and make known the power of the irrational. The only thing that matters is the ability to bring down the power of Chaos into yourself, and to share that with your partner. It is then that all positions become sacred. In order to do this, *ALL patterns must be renounced.*

The cup of Babylon is never filled—in order to receive current, it must be allowed to flow out in the same amount that it is flowing in. Conversely, if one empties oneself, something will flow into that space. If you are in the presence of a godform, it is the god that will fill you. (If you are in the presence of a bowl of ice cream, you'll gain weight!)

Now, a god can be seen as a particular "tint" of the initial light, that light being Chaos. As you empty yourself, the Light will flow into you, and you will be re-created as a god(dess). But that supposes that your partner has already made a successful invocation of the godform. In such an act, you are dependent upon your Other. It is, however, the simplest act of tantra you can perform. So, if you have an advanced partner to work with, you're in luck.

Most people, however, don't have trained partners.

In the order from simplest to most complex, the next type of ritual would be the one in which both partners become empty together. Two mirrors facing one another, reflect infinity. This will not call forth any particular godform, but rather, the generalized Chaos from which they emerge. Therefore, it is useful for making direct contact with Chaos. When desired, you can make links within it, bringing them back with you for use at a future time. This can be considered a type of spell-casting.

The most difficult type of tantra is the

ritual in which both partners simultaneously invoke and absorb current from each other. Tantra is the only ritual I've seen where this is possible. (In ceremonial magick, participants take either an "active", current generator role, or a "passive" visionary role. These roles may change within the context of the ritual, but are never performed at the same time.)

The following instructions are meant to prepare you for performing any one of these three types of tantra. It is the practice, not the knowledge, which has value. An "expert" is a closed system. It is one of the ways in which we prevent further learning. Guard against it. We are children of infinity, and our eyes must remain open. How else can we touch Mystery?

## KNOW YOUR BODY

Up until now, I have been speaking of the most well-known aspects of tantra, that which involves the externalization of godforms by seeing the god in the Other—a process evoking him/her using your partner's body as a Spirit House.

But it is not necessary to create this externalization once your initial contact with a godform has been established. Each chakra of your body is a "path" into another world, and each of these worlds is peopled with its own godforms. A Scarlet Woman should not be dependent upon having a physical partner for the reification of her powers.

It is possible, through an energy loop, to move one's attention into one of your various chakras, and to travel that path to the god/dess, alone. One does this by focusing attention in the palm of your hand, laying that hand upon the chosen chakra, and then moving one's attention into that

chakra. You are then able to tread a path into the other realms of existence, and meet the gods on their own territory, rather than calling them down into our own.

These techniques for com-union are necessary parts of the Babylon's tools. Our bodies are the places where these paths meet. We are a living crossroads, and the keys are within us: We only need to turn our eyes inward to reach the deepest caverns, or the highest star-filled heaven. We create the question—but we are the answer. Questions imply a separation, and the Answer is always Unity.

Our Western culture divides the concepts of spiritual and physical. It is up to the Babylon to realize, in a way which encompasses all the planes, that there is no difference between the two. When one has learned how to channel power, all positions become sacred. The power is a physical thing. The power is a spiritual thing. Perhaps the single greatest knowledge that a Babylon has to offer is this. The very concept of transcendence infers a division that does not exist. As Babylon, *you are transcendence itself.*

## ON INITIATION

The magickan puts himself in the path of power. He learns how to access that power. In order to grow, the Initiate learns how to empty the Self into that stream, becoming a channel for more and more power.

But herein lies an Achilles heel. As the power grows, and the channeler becomes more and more a vessel for that power, the magickan becomes more and more dependent upon maintaining his connection to the Current. A clear channel without current flowing through it is an empty one. The emptiness necessary

to facilitate the flow of power becomes a positive detriment when that power is impeded in any way. Ironically then, the more powerful the magickan grows, the greater is this weakness. Power can be as addictive as drugs, and while we can control our drug intake, it is not possible to control the use of our power, for in dwelling within it, we are it. We reach for it and we take it. There is no time between the two.

So how do we deal with this natural law? If one never loses the connection to the current, this problem does not arise. But most of us do have our "off" days, when we are sick, sluggish, uninspired. And, as we grow in power, these "off" days become more and more painful.

The Word is the ground upon which the magickan walks. By the Word were we created, and by the Word are we maintained. When we have nothing else, we have our Word. (This is true in the smaller as well as the larger sense. If we speak the truth always, what we say becomes true.) How do we continue to exist during those times when we are separated from our Current? It is by our Word.

One of the masks danced by the Babylon is that of the erotic. Another is that of a more spiritual Beloved. What does it mean when we fall in love? What attracts us? Why do so many of us become "love junkies"? Being in love is a spiritual phenomena formed by the desire for union. "Opposites attract" arises from the desire to balance oneself with attributes formerly lacking in one's own nature. Another impetus for falling in love is created when one finds someone of a more spiritual nature than your own. One worships that other, and in the worshipping, an image of him/her is created in one's heart chakra.

This image can be talked with much the same way as one speaks to one's Holy Guardian Angel; but the virtues learned from such a one will be the virtues yearned for from the other.

A Babylon finds herself generally in the presence of those less developed than herself. It is up to her to place her image into the heart of her partner. In this way, she can be in more than one place at one time, and accomplish far more than the lone physical body is capable of. This is one very important way in which the Babylon can hasten the spiritual development of others. She must, of course, be able to recognize the others' stages of development in order to know which of the various methods to utilize.

The Babylon re-creates love and uses it for the mystical or magickal initiation of man (or woman). As the Word, brought down into Malkuth, she is Chaos, personified.

Chaos contains no patterns. Patterns are created by boundaries, by limitations of the primordial force. There are infinite varieties of limitations, and infinite patterns formed therein. The Babylon's Work is to create within—the ability to see those patterns, to break these patterns up, and reform them into larger ones. This is initiation.

There are three degrees to Babylon Adeptship, corresponding to the three cross paths of the Tree of Life. They are:

Peh—from Netzach to Hod— The Tower—Creates the ability to see patterns.

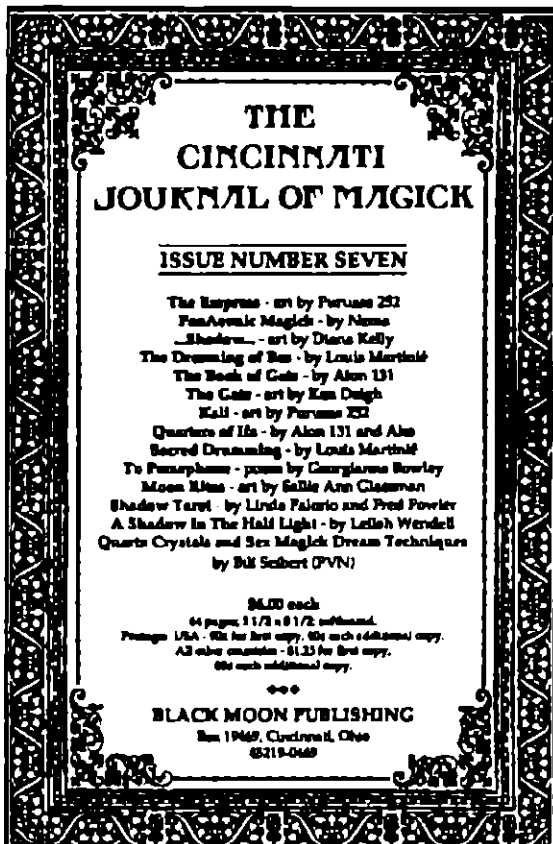
Teth—from Geburah to Chesed— Lust—Patterns become re-formed into larger patterns.

Daleth—from Binah to Chokmah—  
Empress—Patterns dissolve into Chaos.

Each of these contains their own  
magickal formulas.

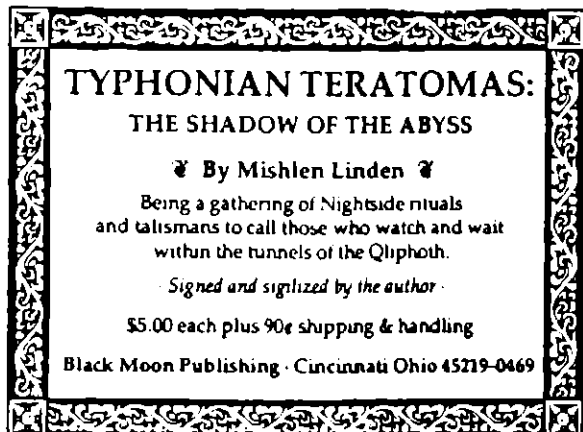
Obviously, before initiating others, one  
must have the sense of one's own power,  
and the ability to communicate at will with  
one's HGA. This power can be seen as an  
emanation from Geburah. You must  
become the Warrior Maiden; strong of Will,  
yet open to others, and above all, respecting  
of another's Will.

Never abuse your powers by domination.  
Such is the result of seeing one's own Will,  
alone. You will not only hurt others, but  
lose the ability to learn more yourself. We  
must at all times remain permeable. This is  
the meaning to the saying "Bend like a reed  
in the Wind." Be gentle, yet strong.

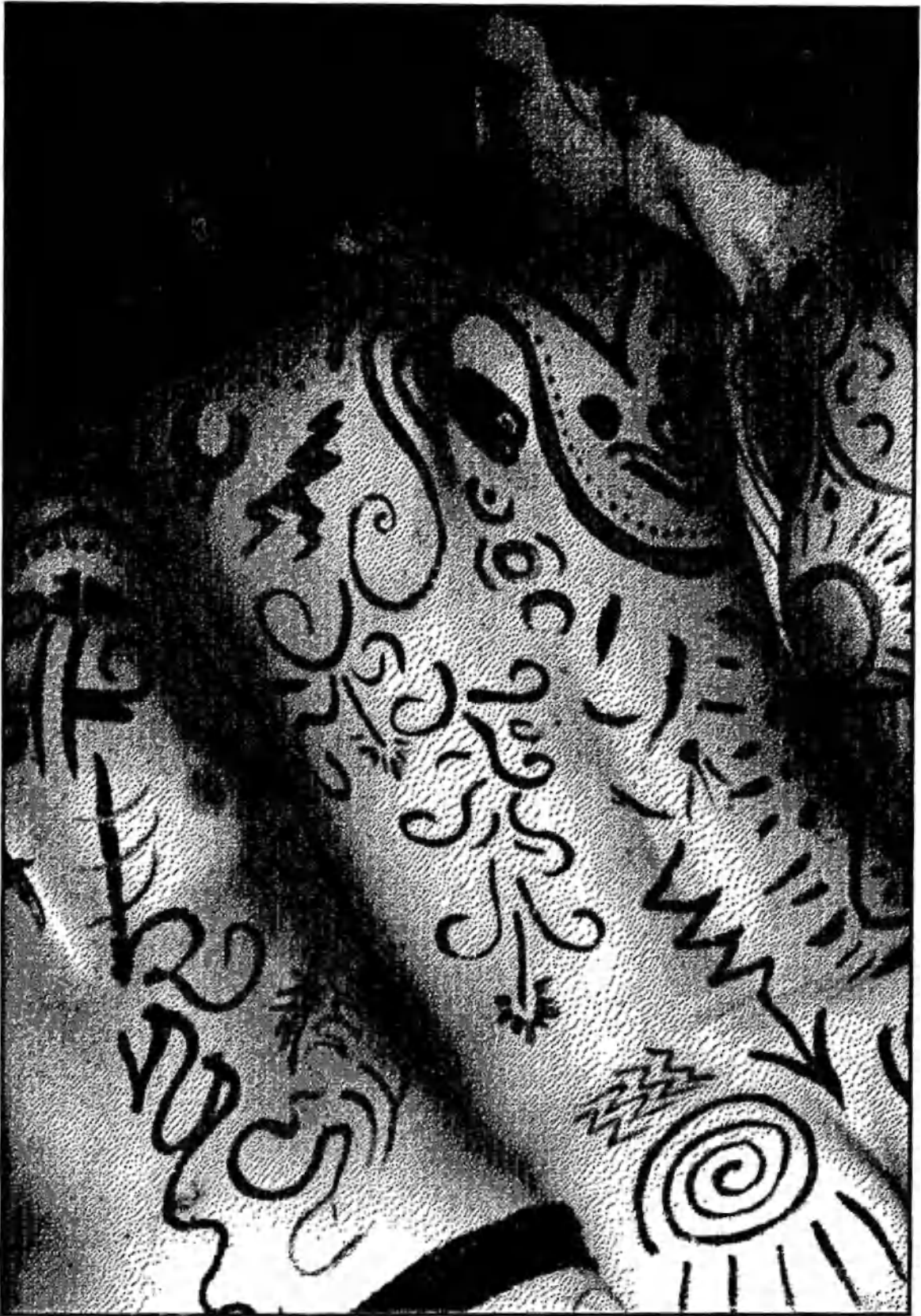


## About our cover artist:

Jennifer Moore, artist, priestess,  
teacher and daughter of the Tarot, has  
been loving, living and reading Tarot  
since 1981. Her life's focus is to use  
the Tarot and magic as a tool for  
healing and transformation. On April  
Fool's Day in 1989, the process of  
creating her photographic Tarot deck,  
The Healing Tarot, began. Since then,  
Jennifer has completed the Major  
Arcana, and has created a significant  
number of the Minor Arcana. Jennifer  
lives in Massachusetts and is currently  
creating this tarot deck based on her  
intense interaction with the "Great  
Ones of the Tarot". By using ritual,  
and creating masks, body decoration,  
set design and artwork, Jennifer works  
to manifest true archetypal images of  
the Tarot. The deck was featured at  
the 1991 San Francisco Tarot  
Symposium, where Jennifer discussed  
the process of this creation, and its  
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# Magickal Body Art

Continued from page 6.

She, whom I detest. She tells me that she has come seeking Knowledge.

I rail at her for daring to enter my realm. Is she so foolish? Can she not know of my hatred for her?

Why now, I ask her. Why now after aeons of denial and condemnation? Why does the Queen of the Upper World seek True Knowledge now?

She has no answer. She stands before me, her head bowed to her breast, and makes no answer to my questions or my accusations. I grow enraged with her, and bored at her submissive silence. Where is the Power and Beauty which I have so long feared? In my rage, I plunge a dagger into her breast and watch as she falls to her knees before me. Still I feel empty.

I take her body and hang it from a meathook in the wall, leaving her corpse to rot among the many corpses here.

Enki, the God who calls himself my Uncle, enters. Impertinent God. He points out to me that I am no better off with Innana rotting on a hook than I was with her reigning in the Upper World. I still feel the bile of bitter defeat within me. I ache with self-hatred, and I know of no way to freedom.

Enki suggests that - if this corpse were

alive - I might take her place and arise to the Upper World - to become Beauty, Power and Goodness. His words torment me. I feel that he is right, but what can I do? She is clearly dead, and I have not the power to give life - only to withdraw it.

As I watch, Enki goes to the corpse of Innana and, gently taking her from the hook, lowers her to the floor beside me. He leans over and breathes the life back into her. She awakens. We embrace, lying on the floor together as Enki treads a quiet circle about us, extinguishing what little light there was.

I can feel her energies begin to mingle with mine. I feel myself becoming lighter, more open, larger, more joyous.... The exchange is complete and I arise, ready to leave this dark place and return to my abode high above. I now have the knowledge that I came for.

I ascend with Enki, through seven gates, reclaiming the Powers of the Queen of the Upper World. As I enter the Upper World, I find a place has been prepared for me with

oils, incense and golden light. It is good and I am pleased, basking in this sense of wellbeing that feels at once foreign and familiar.

At last my sister arrives. We are balanced now, and can move between the Upper and Lower realms at will. The ritual is complete - as am I.



# The Gatekeeper

I dwell in the space between the worlds above and the worlds below. I construct my gates from the angles and lines which I summon from the air. I frame each gate to fit the one who will pass through.

Innana comes to my place - and I allow her through - for a price. She pays the price and descends, one gate after the next, until most of what she is lies upon the altar of the gates. Then, naked, she passes from my place.

When She returns, she wears a different face, yet I recognize the Goddess within Her, and I return to Her the fragments of Her Self.

## Enki

I invoke, as I have so often before, the familiar form of Enki. I feel Him dancing to me from His stone door, filling me, becoming me. It is strange this time. I feel that this rite, instead of being an experiment - something new - is instead a thing done many times, like the turning of the seasons.

My journey takes me to the Thrones of Life and of Death. There I find my spiritual daughters. The twins of Light and Dark.

It seems I am a Trickster of sorts. I must persuade the inevitable to occur. I go to each of the Priestesses in turn. I draw upon their bodies the Runes and Sigils of their nature. I look into their eyes, and call forth the Goddess in each of them, binding it to their mortal frames. I speak to them of their greatness, for each of them is magnificent in Her way. And I plant the seed of discontent

in the Heart of Innana, so that she will go Under to Her sister - so that they may both become whole.

I can feel the charge build as I travel between the upper and lower worlds. Innana has forgotten Her Darker Aspect. Ereshkigal hates and fears Her Self Above. They each pull away from the whole.

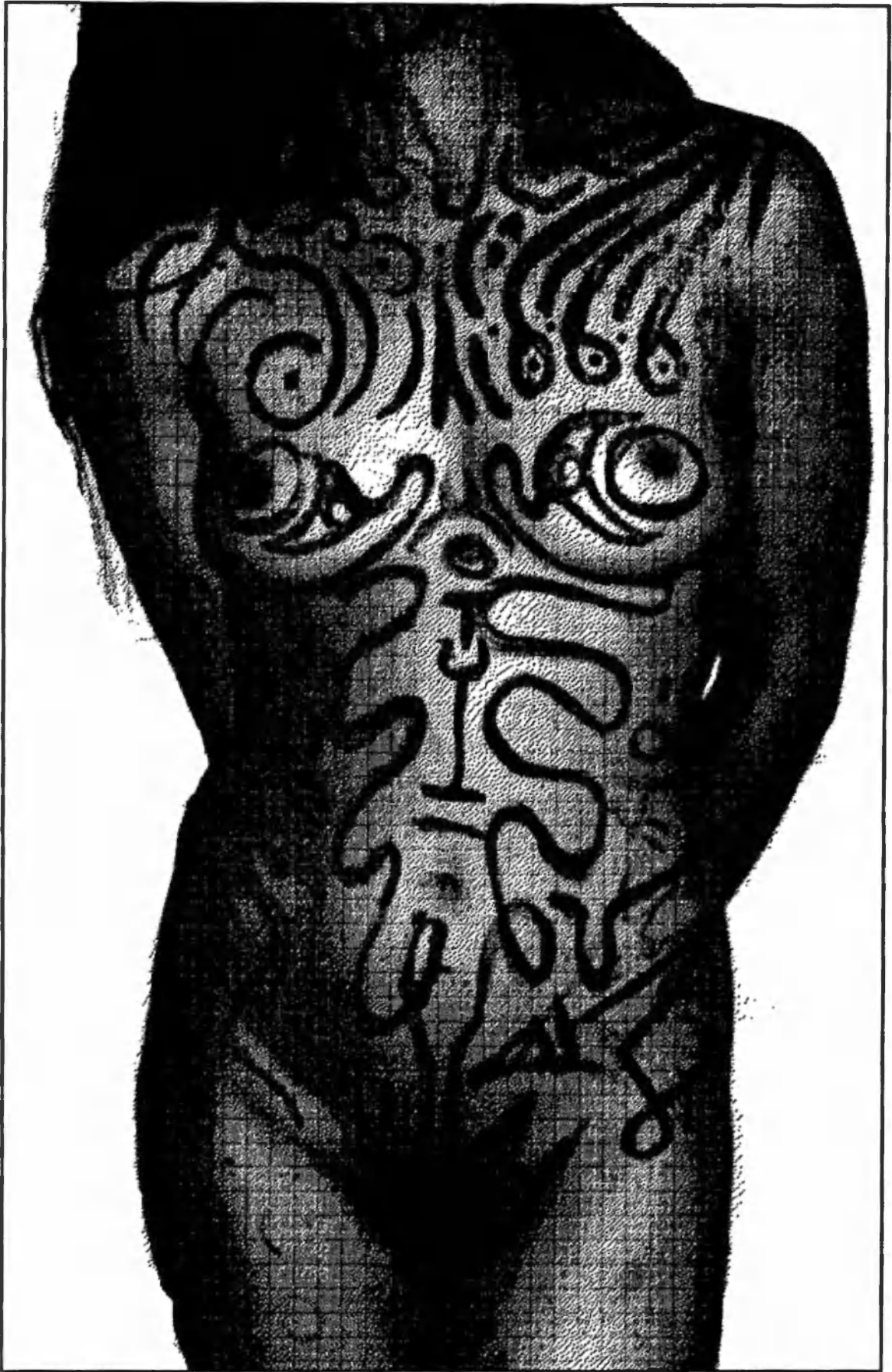
It is my purpose and my intent to unite them once again. And so I lead Innana down through the gates, where she discards Her Powers one by one. I watch as she disappears into the gloom which holds Her sister, and I hear the screams of rage with which She is met.

In time I myself enter, to find Innana hanging - once again - as a rotting corpse upon the wall.

Ereshkigal is still in pain. All that this murder of Her sister has given Her is an empty revenge. I suggest another - more fulfilling - path, and she agrees. I retrieve the body of Innana from the wall, and place Her beside Her sister. I have held some of Innana's life within me and now I return it to Her with my breath. Filling Her with the Will to Live.

Then, as the two embrace, I blow out the candles, submerging them in the unity of darkness. From these depths, I call forth the new Innana, and escort Her through the gates. The cycle is complete once more, but I also know that I can't leave the forgotten priestess to languish in the Underworld, so I return for her and bring them both to the Upper World, where together they assume the whole that is both Dark and Light.

My work is done, and so - with a laugh - I depart.



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# A Society of Liminists

## An Invitation to Create Liminal Space

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As a society and as a planet we are on the **threshold of vast change**. We have come to the **limits** of the old ways of life and new ones have not emerged into clear view. Who will guide us through this transition? Who will help us come to grips with **the death of the old and the birth of the new?**

We, the undersigned, have chosen to address this challenge, and we invite you to join with us. There are many among us who have the ability to guide those who are seeking through the changes of life and learning. They are magick users of all varieties: Witches, magi, and shamans. These would call this process **Initiation**.

**But**, there are also **healers**, like depth psychologists; and there are **artists**, such as performing artists and graphic artists, that consciously wield the transformative power of their art.

**What** they all have in common is the ability to move themselves and others into the space between spaces wherein change is possible, to guide them through the change, and then enable them to return to ordinary space. When folk go through this process, they are able to live more richly, to be more whole. This transitional space has been called a threshold or limin, dwelling on the

boundary between the settled and the known; and so, any who have this ability, whether **magick user, psychotherapist or artist**, can be called a **Liminist**.

**To these** we address this invitation, this call: **If** you would join with others who share your skill, to learn how we can manifest this process of Initiation better and more broadly; **if** you would commit yourself to the **healing of this world** by guiding it through this era of vast change, **respond to this call!**

We have resolved to form a **Society of Liminists** whose purpose is to begin the conversation and do the research and experimentation to develop the art of Initiation in the current era. Our aim, overall, is to effect Societal Healing. Our hope is to develop a conceptual structure, a language, with which to design new initiatory rituals and better understand existing rites.

We will establish a **forum** in which to have a conversation about what is initiation, asking how does it work, and how can we do it better. As a **Society**, we will carry on research projects dedicated to addressing these issues. The object is to document the projects and the processes, and to share what is learned among the members and with the larger community for the benefit of all.

We extend this invitation to individuals who are capable of and have experience in initiating themselves and others, either by traditional or non-traditional means. We seek those who are willing to actively engage in projects to further the understanding and practice of initiation; and, who are capable of working in a collegial manner with other practitioners, celebrating diversity and communicating openly.

**Our method** will be to establish working groups that will do the research and experimentation, and report regularly on their findings and progress to the Society as a whole by means of a **bi-annual newsletter**. All members will be required to be a member of a **working group**. The size of a working group can range from a single member to the entire Society, and each group is entirely self-governing. The principle responsibility of each group will be to **engage in the study of its choice**; and, to report in writing in time for publication deadlines.

**Publication, and other projects** to be undertaken by the Society at large, will be paid for by annual dues here set at \$25.

**Membership obligations will be:** To be an active member of a working group and to pay dues.

**Membership prerogatives** will be to receive the Society publication "Threshold," published bi-annually at the equinoxes, which will report on the

progress of the working groups and the activities of the Society at large; and, to receive a member contact list and an invitation to the Annual Society Conference, this year to be held at LumensGate.

**Administration** of the Society will be by a Council of Trustees. It will oversee project coordination, publications, the collection of dues, organization of conferences, and the application of new members. Its structure is subject to change with the growth of the Society.

If you are interested in joining the Society and feel that you meet the criteria given above, please request a membership application by writing to the Society in care of MEZLIM. You will be requested to express your experience with initiation, your interests related to working groups and projects, and to provide other general background information.

L.V.X!

Sam Webster  
Tara Wittaker Webster  
ΔKTR  
Kenn Deigh

# Letters

10 November 1991

To the Editor:

Donald Michael Kraig's "How To Be A Rotten Teacher" was probably, to me, the most unintentionally self-aggrandizing and misrepresented article I've ever read on the "teaching process." Kraig's intentions are earnest; his heart's in the right place; yet I believe his head's clearly up a dark hole. I think it is a naive assumption that people should already have their "parent/child neurosis" solved before entering any kind of work with a teacher; Kraig, himself, sounds more like the hurt, misunderstood child than the so-called "rotten teacher" status he aspires to.

I know enough about teaching to realize one thing: It's not what the teacher knows that's so important, but the bias he or she comes from that conveys the imminent value of the information. Kraig's bias seems to shy away from the responsibility of "positive fathering", that is to say, responding creatively to the dependencies in others. Instead, at least from this article, I see a "negative father" avoiding, resisting and otherwise judging the neediness so apparent in those of us still honestly struggling with our self-responsibility, our life initiations.

Teaching almost always provokes ethical quandaries, where tough decisions determine one's very karmic and dharmic character. As Kraig suggested indirectly, teaching involves some knowledge of good and evil. More to the point, it demands of the teacher his/her own need to define these terms to consolidate the particular morality which attracts students in the first

place. I believe people seek teachers when their own ethics and beliefs are unformed or in high flux and, to be so, is to be very vulnerable. The vulnerability of "not knowing what to believe in" or "not knowing the difference between right and wrong" is a highly impressionable state and absolutely necessary for real learning, for seeing beyond past beliefs and, for entering fresh realities. Yet, life is rarely black and white. This "imprint vulnerability" is also a very dangerous state; picture a baby chewing on a stick of dynamite. A solitary quandary, one demanding moral fiber to bear up to the experience itself, "without having a clue."

Undergoing such trials provides us with the difficult opportunity to respond and thus, begin defining our own beliefs about what happens to us. By his own account, Donald Michael Kraig did the responsible thing as "Nat" by choosing to follow his own personal responses to the situation; this did not make him any smarter or better off, but it did begin an important initiation.

I do thank Donald Michael Kraig for warning us — Watch out, there's dangerous teachers and cults out there! — but it was his genuine innocence that really touched me, an innocence pure enough to walk straight into trouble and be surprised by the shock of real life. To me, Kraig is undergoing real initiation and for that he gains my respect. I don't mean the initiation from any outside shocks, for any fool can be jolted. I mean the way he continues to respond in his own Kraig-like personal way to these initial shocks, by the articles he writes and the things he says. (My own bias around "initiation" is that we are responsible for it. Initiation, to me, grows consistent in life as soon as we are ready to keep responding to the outside shocks real life invariably delivers by



surprise, without our knowing when, where or why. Initiation is, like the batteries and instructions enclosed in a toy robot, inside the package of our personal responses and “response ability.”)

This letter is as long-winded as I'm going to get, yet I believe in MEZLIM and the need to respond to my own shocks. In this case, my shock was felt from the appalling misrepresentation of the teaching process written by Mr. Donald Michael “the misunderstood magus warning the masses” Kraig. Donald: I'm not out to get you; I'm out to encourage you to share even more of yourself — your most personal fears, wishes and dreams — so that we can come to know you more profoundly. Why else write?

Sincerely,

Antero Alli  
P.O. Box 45758  
Seattle, WA 98145

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## A REPLY TO ANTERO ALLI

*From Donald Michael Kraig ©1991*

Many people I know have been reading Antero Alli's books for some time and have a great deal of respect for Mr. Alli's paradigms—interpretations of others' ideas in a present-day context. It is therefore all the more lamentable that rather than merely writing, “I disagree and here is what I believe...” he chose to attack me. The paternalistic, condescending and sometimes insulting attitude which runs through his letter is not only unfortunate but also a rather Old Aeon attitude. This certainly cannot help his reputation for being on the leading edge, but that was his decision and his Will. He does bring up some interesting

points which do deserve comment.

His first sentence, which sets the tone of his letter, is one of the most insulting, claiming that my article is “unintentionally self-aggrandizing and misrepresented.” Unfortunately, he never describes how it was self-aggrandizing. If I misrepresented anything it was his point of view, which I was not trying to represent anyway.

I agree with Mr. Alli that it would be “a naive assumption that people should already have their 'parent/child neurosis' solved before entering any kind of work with a teacher.” I also agree with Mr. Alli that my “bias [as a teacher] seems to shy away from...that of 'positive fathering'.”

Unfortunately, it is unresolved issues of parent/child relations which may result in ego inflation on the part of the teacher and dependency on the part of the student. Therefore, I choose to be a teacher rather than a daddy. I do not naively assume that people should have resolved this problem, but I do believe that it should be dealt with in a therapeutic setting, not in a teacher/student setting. This is especially true since many teachers may have little or no *practical* therapeutic training. Regardie recognized this when he insisted that people get into therapy (he told me that any type of therapy was of value to a student) before getting involved in magickal work. Crowley had much the same attitude (at least he felt he did) when he said that people came to visit the Master Therion [to get what they wanted], but were disappointed when they met the Demon Crowley [who gave them what they needed]. No, I do not assume that people have worked out this problem, nor would I insist that it be resolved before a person enters into a study of magick, but as a teacher I refuse to pander to it.

Again I agree with Mr. Alli that people “seek teachers when their own ethics and beliefs are unformed or in high flux and...[they] are very vulnerable.” But only *some* people fall into this category. I believe that most people seek teachers to get information and insight which they currently do not possess. Mr. Alli is a respected astrologer. I am beginning to study this subject and want information, not a parent. It has been my experience that most people are on this level.

Mr. Alli uses the word “initiation” to describe my action of realizing my failure as a teacher for a particular group many years ago. I prefer to use the term “realization.” Mr. Alli defines initiation as a “creative response to the shock of the unknown” (*AngelTech*, Page 127) which completely ignores the possibility of initiation into a group wherein the creative response must not be individual but *directed*. In my opinion, this shows a lack of understanding that there are different types of initiation, much as his statement (and I forget where I read it, but it certainly shocked me) that the only real magick was changing your mind.

Contrary to his claim, I did not make an “appalling misrepresentation of the teaching process.” I presented my experience of the process, where a teacher shares with (and, I should add, learns from) his or her students. When this process becomes a working out of parent/child neuroses, the relationship becomes a co-dependent therapist/client relationship. Mr. Alli may choose to be involved in such a relationship with his students—I do not.

I’m sorry, Mr. Alli, but I do not feel that giving examples of ideas by sharing my personal experiences constitutes “the misunderstood magus warning the masses.”

Nor do I even claim to be a “magus.” I’m just a student who is learning, too. If my experiences can help others, then I share them. On the other hand, I distinctly remember your being described as “the official astrologer of the Golden Dawn.” I believe that the description also gave you a high degree in that order, although you admitted to a friend of mine that you had never been initiated into that order (at that time). I wonder why you did not, and to my knowledge have not, publicly denounced this false information about yourself? What sort of “morality” does this “imprint” on your “vulnerable” students who may “not know...the difference between right and wrong?”

In your final paragraph you seem to give me parental permission to continue writing. Thanks, but no thanks. I already have parents and I do not need their or your permission to continue writing. *You* may have no other reason to write than to “share even more of yourself—your most personal fears, wishes and dreams—so that we can come to know you more profoundly.” I write to share ideas. Whether people agree with them or not is up to each reader. I choose to be a teacher, not a daddy; an explainer of the mysteries, not an exploiter of them.

Curiously, my denunciation of encouraging a co-dependent relationship in teacher/student situations seems to have struck a nerve in you. Perhaps, as the metalanguage of your letter implies, the “shock” of reading an alternate interpretation of the teacher/student relationship has been an “initiation” for you. You may wish to objectively examine *why* it was such a shock, however, as I’m sure you realize, you will need to temporarily supercede your current ideas of the teacher/student and therapist/client relationships with no predisposed opinions

in order to do so.

Finally, although I have great respect for you, you are neither my teacher, my parent nor my therapist. I have given no permission for this. Unfortunately, your parental, condescending attitude seems to imply that you have taken on this role. I wondered what might have caused you to think that you had the right to do so and came across this quote: "The ego puffs up by merging with something more powerful than its secretly helpless self in order to create the illusion of its omnipotence by association." For those who are not familiar with the quote, which comes under the heading of "Ego Inflation," you will find it on page 112 of *All Rites Reversed?!...by Antero Alli*.

---

Box 371  
Lyons, IL 60534  
Sol in 17° Libra 47' 59"  
Luna in 2° Sagittarius 36' 26"  
aDN. IV

Mr. Kenneth Deigh,  
93!

Having just read your editorial in the Beltane issue of MEZLIM, I find myself deeply at odds with the "overly simplistic" position that you expressed there.

I grant that the terror and violence in the Gulf are a part of the advent of the Aeon of Horus. But the events are not the joyful birth of the new; they are the painful death of the old.

The martial aspect of Horus refers to war in the classical sense, in which matters are addressed by contest of arms. The term "contest", with its agonistic [sic] game-playing connotation is key. War is

conducted by and directed at its players, who pit their own lives against each other. This is in contradistinction to the "modern" concept of war in this century, as exemplified by Dresden, Hiroshima, Cambodia, etc., which is really an exercise in terror on a global scale—a game in which people are pieces instead of players.

"Love is the law, love under will." Love is consensus in its deepest sense, not that of mere agreement, but of shared reality. The Will demands to be exercised in the interaction with other Wills, synergetically producing and seducing realities. This situation is the antithesis of the alienation found in modern Western society, which bears its most grisly fruit in the form of a "war" in which hundreds of thousands of stars are cast from the body of Nuit (AL I:3) as meaningless abstractions, "collateral damage", and video blips. Classical war is composed of ferocity; modern war is composed of fear.

Saddam Hussein was not attempting to return to the past relative to the US. The Bathist government of Hussein is not run on traditional Arabic or Islamic lines. It is a regime informed by the secular management of power in the West. The US government long supported Hussein's regime in order to promote regional "stability". Free human wills are dynamic and unstable.

As conscious participants in the New Aeon, we must fight against all sources of Osirian "stability", whether we find them demonized as the Iraqi government or lionized as the American "democracy". The "New World Order" belongs to the Old Aeon. The "family of nations" is a father whipping his son for pulling his younger brother's hair.

I feel that you have done an injustice to

the magickal community by parsing the Bush administration's propaganda line in Thelemic terms, and I urge you to a personal reconsideration of Thelema in the social context.

Will/Love

E.V.P.  
Grand Exquisitor  
of the Ragnarok Lumberjacks

---

Dear E.V.P.:

While I would agree with some of what you have to say in your letter, I would also say that you are in danger of trading reality - such as it is - for Political Correctness. There can be no separation between the painful death and the joyful birth. How we *experience* it personally depends on whether we are riding the current of change or clinging to the "stability" of the old. You might want to stop and consider that the very sort of social consciousness which you seem to hold to is, in itself, another form of "stability" which may yet need to be released into the maelstrom of change.

It is not my opinion that the "New World Order" is anything more than a rhetorical pseudopod put forth by Bush's political machine. I believe that this machine - and the rest of our Western society - is also going through the process of transformation as well. However, just as the body uses certain organisms to breakdown toxins, and then breaks those same organisms down in turn, the Current of the New Aeon is - in my opinion - perfectly capable of using whatever tools are at hand, and then dropping them into the soup as well.

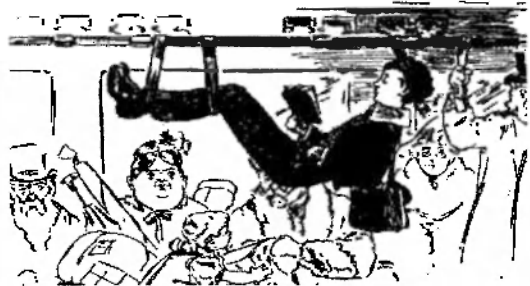
I respect your opinions, and see that you are obviously well informed about the *stated* agenda of the Bathist Party. However, it might help to do some more research on how the political agendas which are offered for public/international consumption are applied "back home".

Finally, I do not feel that the Archon (Will) of the Aeon is or can be Politically Correct. I also do not feel that Thelema can be shoved into the narrow confines of Social Consciousness - no matter how much lubricant is applied. And I find myself wondering how you were able to see my editorial as spouting Bush's rhetoric in Thelemic terms. The terms predate Bush. Synchronicity abounds.

L.V.X.  
N.O.X.

Kenneth Deigh

# Enjoy your reading!



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# WISE GUY ASTROLOGY

A lot of people believe in astrology; unfortunately, too many are astrologers. I don't believe in astrology. I don't have to; it works. Why ruin your day with one more dogma? I don't know about you, but I'm noticing some big waves coming in, especially around March, April and May of 1992. If you know your Moon Sign, you get two readings; if you know your rising sign, you get three. I'm from the mix'n'match, shake'n'bake school of astrology. It goes like this:

## ARIES:

Just when you thought you had attained that degree of mastery, all of a sudden you're the new kid on the block, having to prove yourself all over again. That's not your fault; it's gods' oversight. Every top comes equipped with its own bottom, just in case somebody forgets who's really calling the shots around here. It ain't me; and if it ain't you, who's it going to be?

## TAURUS:

Nobody's born a Taurus unless they're ready to be stubborn; with you, it's an imperative now. Hold your ground with the best of them and the satisfaction of earned status is yours. If you're confused about your real power elite group, it is my astrological duty to inform you that your esoteric dreambody has just started "Earth-diving" while holding secret council with the dreambodies of CEOs running World Banking Conglomerates, inside the core of this planet.

## GEMINI:

The Compact Disc Multi-Tracking System of the Universe informs me that you're about to change jobs or, at the very least, get a job that works. This translates loosely as the job that is

a medium for "the work", if you catch my gist, and not just another temp agency rerun, unless your job is mingling with fringe-dwelling marginal men and women preparing for the revolution. Either way, any job that's "just a job" is a spiritual impediment to your real work right now.

## CANCER:

Bored? Imagine yourself as the Mother Goddess on her way down to Christian Hell to make a house call on a certain horny devil who's ready for some late night action. What to wear? S/he who hesitates is lost, yet S/he who leaps into fires without an asbestos suit, gets burnt. There are at least three levels of initiation to stay aware of on your way down to the most misunderstood region of the universe: Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced Fun.

## LEO:

Decision Time: You're either going to have kids or be one or both...unless, of course, you're practicing advanced sex magick while planning the birth of a magical child. Then, I see no reason why you should not be propagating like albino ethiopian jackbunnies in the dead of winter. If you get your chores done and tie up all those loose ends, there is this distinct possibility of having your cake and smearing it all over your bodies, too.

## VIRGO:

Welcome to the Information Wars! You've just been assigned to the front lines as an Info-Warrior with total access to all the misinformation missiles and propaganda bombs you care to handle. Camouflage tactics include never having to explain yourself again while bench pressing your imagination until your psychic definitions are as firm as your dreams.

In case you haven't figured it out by now: Real money is a fluid entity demanding ever-increasing fluidity of outlets.

### LIBRA:

You're free to soar as soon as your homework is done. Whether this means spending more time at home or rebuilding your temple, it's cocooning time; time for upgrading/updating the womb environment to coincide more with your world views. Subscribe to "WOMB WITH A VIEW" magazine or take a few tips from the excellent nature programs on television or visit the zoo and watch the animals perform hibernation rituals in public.

### SCORPIO:

Finally, the world looks like it's coming to an end, burning from the core outwards, consuming priceless cultures along its pulsating lava-like pathways. What are you waiting for?! Now's your chance to put your cards on the table and show us what you've seen and known all these years. Go ahead, everybody's too busy hoarding or panicking to notice. Expose yourself. Work the magic of vulnerability, and the world is yours. Warning: Remain grateful.

### SAGITTARIUS:

With people scrambling for the last vestiges of orientation amidst the rapidly encroaching socio-economic chaos, your chiseled perspective turns into gold. A little bit of certainty goes a long, long way during times of massive uncertainty. As you learn to value yours more, you'll be ready to share it with those who are ready to pay for it. You have been granted the exalted spiritual position of getting paid for blowing people's minds; use it or lose it.

### CAPRICORN:

Chaos Management has been sending me several customer complaints lately about those heels of yours, you know...the way they're

digging into the ground when they could be clicking in mid air. You're no aging hippy, yet an aging hippy once told me "the Nineties are the Sixties turned upside down." Central Casting tells me you've been recruited to orchestrate the future. They're looking for someone without an attitude to do it invisibly and without selling out.

### AQUARIUS:

If people mistrust you, it's only because they can't control you. If they call you cold and detached, it's probably just your own healthy distance from their unmet infantile needs. Who needs the needy? Their mothers do, that's who. You, on the other hand, are on the prowl for an equalizer who is smarter, sexier and funnier than you'll ever be by yourself. It takes two to form a group.

### PISCES:

In a world without love, compassion never goes out of style. Your flash and your charm are two-fisted love bombs for conquering thee of little faith. No matter what anyone says about your reckless spaciness, you and me know it's a necessary side-effect of the big winds now blowing your mind; turn around and blow a little on me and then, a little on everyone you meet. For moral support, scream out the Discordian Battle Cry: "Tis an ill wind that blows no mind!"

Antero Alli is the author of *ASTROLOGIK* plus four other books updating archaic mystical systems; and, the editor of *TALKING RAVEN QUARTERLY*. For his extended 1992 Katalog of books, tapes and services, please send \$1 to: Antero Alli, PO Box 45758, Seattle WA 98145.

# VOICE OF THE SHEYA

## An Interactive Magickal Forum

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The pursuit of self knowledge through magick is often a painful endeavor, and yet the rewards are unmistakable. We can all use all the help we can get on this perilous path, and thus I feel compelled to share certain profound experiences I've had while working the Sheya system in the hope that others may find something in them that may be helpful in their own work.

A large portion of my work in the Sheya system has consisted of trying to understand and assimilate a confusing montage of beliefs about men and the relationships between men and women. Since many women are dealing with similar issues, I present the following in "perfect love and perfect trust."

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### I could not get much beyond self criticism

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My childhood relationships with father figures were quite dysfunctional, unfavorably influencing my perceptions, and thus my relationships with men. A strict fundamentalist Christian upbringing added to the confusion surrounding sexual relationships, and the stage was set for some quite miserable life situations.

In fact, every love situation I found myself in, even those which began with every promise of success, quickly degenerated into hell under the duress of daily interaction. This being a totally unacceptable state of affairs, it has been the focus of much of my magical work to locate and repair the damaging beliefs.

Much work toward this goal had been accomplished. I had, for example, discovered that, while I have a rather strong sex drive, I also had a profound and disabling fear of intimacy, especially the combination of sexual and emotional intimacy. In fact, the more feelings I developed toward a man, the more anxiety I experienced around sex. I would have feelings of helplessness, of being trapped, of being used, which would quickly turn to anger directed toward the very person whom I felt most tenderly toward. This confusion quickly led to emotional and physical withdrawal from the relationship.

At the time the visions recorded below occurred, I had been working extensively on accessing the masculine energies, but had encountered difficulties and resistance to the work. My efforts had turned up some childhood memories that had been totally repressed. Needless to say, such clarity was very disturbing and I withdrew from doing temple work for some time while I processed the new information.

However I searched for the answer to my troubles, I could not get much beyond self-criticism for the fatal flaws which I was sure lurked in my character like gremlins ready to sabotage any chance at happiness I might have. There was a gremlin indeed, but its nature was very different than I had supposed.

The two visions presented here occurred spontaneously immediately upon reestablishing contact with the aspect, a day apart. They are recorded here almost intact from journal entries, and represent the characteristic mode of my internal workings

in the Sheya system...that is, almost all my "revelations" occur in the form of visions.

## 7-13 Evocation of Maggah through internal temple.

*Maggah stood before me and touched my hand. As he did, I found myself surrounded by men who began to caress my body. Some of the faces seemed familiar to me...others were strangers. Their caress caused me pleasure at first, but soon I began to experience a profound anxiety at their touch. One man, a betrayer of children, stood behind me and began to rock back and forth, stroking my buttocks with his penis.*

Soon He began to press it hard into my back at the end of my spine. It became cold and sharp...it had become a knife. He pressed harder and harder till the tip of it entered my spine. Blood ran from the wound and I felt intense agony. I wanted to run away, but the others were all around me and I knew I could not escape.

Lifting up my eyes, I saw Maggah standing on his mountain, his arms folded. He gazed upon the scene mildly, seemingly unaffected by my plight. I was pulled to the ground then, and all the men began running their penis/knives over my body, cutting me in many places until I was a mass of bleeding wounds. The pain was not sharp, but a deep aching agony to my soul. They licked the blood from my body with long sinuous tongues, drawing nourishment from it.

Finally, as I lay in my pain, seeing Maggah gaze upon me with passive compassion, I reached out to him. "Help me to escape this Pain," I implored. At this, he immediately bounded toward me like a lion, roaring a mighty battle cry. One by one, he hurled my tormenters from me. They lay where they fell, littering the ground like corpses on a battlefield. I saw that they too were wounded and bleeding, cut by their own knives.

I asked, "Has it been thus with all my lovers?" He replied, "You have never had a lover, only these." He took out the heart of one of the men, and it was full of worms and decay.

He took me in his arms then. I hung there limply, feeling near death. He held me...healed me. I remained for some time, healing under his gentle, non-demanding touch.

## 7-14 Invocation of Maggah.

I begin by visualizing his splendid, radiant energy. I felt very calm, powerful, noble. I could feel the fiery energy flow in my body. I closed my eyes.

Immediately a scene appears before me. I can see my daughter standing at the foot of the mountain. She calls to me, yet as I descend toward her, I can sense her reluctance, her distrust of my energy...my motives. I see around her the spectres of masculinity which she has constructed and drawn to her. They are a loathsome, hungry throng. I understand her fear...these are mirrors of her pain, feelings of guilt and betrayal...of powerlessness. She does not know they are her own creation. She believes they are her punishment, her "just deserts". I touch the hand she tentatively extends, and with my touch, I give her the power to see the pain.

The spectres appear around her, touching, giving her pleasure. Though she fears their touch, she does nothing to escape their caress. All of these spectres have weapons in their sex...the instrument of pleasure transformed to a giver of pain.

She cries out, then silent and passive, allows herself to be pulled down among them. She writhes in her ecstasy and her pain. Finally, she looks to me with longing, "Help me escape this pain," she begs. I see that she does at last long to escape their grasp. At her call, I am freed to protect her.



*In mighty bounds, and roaring a battle cry,  
I rush to her aid. The spectres are as dry leaves  
to my touch and I fling them effortlessly away.  
She has reclaimed the power she had given  
them, and they are lifeless, bleeding from many  
wounds.*

*I take her in my arms, lifting her limp form  
like a child. She asks wonderingly, "Has it  
been thus with all my lovers?" I shake my  
head, "you have never had a lover...only these  
spectres of pleasure and pain...your own  
creation." I remove the heart of one of the  
creatures and show her the decay.*

*This has been a shock for her. She does not  
yet understand the meaning of these things.  
Rather than a celebration of life, pleasure, a  
sharing of divine energy, sex has been for her  
each time a little death, pain, a relinquishment  
of power.*

*Yet she knows me better now, trusts me  
more. I feel her gratitude. There is much  
healing to be done. Rest and heal my daughter,  
you have done well.*

*My reaction to these visions was at first  
to be appalled and disgusted by their violent  
nature. I had never considered myself to be  
person who enjoys pain, and yet the  
message seemed to be that I had been  
allowing, even creating and enjoying the  
situations which were agony to me. I felt  
deeply ashamed. Nevertheless, eventually I  
began to think out the potent symbolism  
and deeper meanings of this healing  
knowledge from the depths of my  
unconscious mind.*

*It is impractical here to go into an in-  
depth analysis of the contents of these  
visions, and probably unnecessary. The  
critical point, which I wish to make, is the  
value of stepping outside one's subjective  
consciousness in order to observe one's self  
and behavior from a more objective stance.  
This is perhaps the most difficult and  
dangerous aspect of the Great Work.*

*We are often blind to the nuances of our  
characters and personalities, not only out of  
ignorance, but as a survival mechanism.  
The guilt and pain of seeing ourselves as we  
truly are, can be devastating; and, if we  
become lost in self-recrimination, only  
harm can result.*

*Thankfully, in my case, I continued to  
turn to my inner guides, and, in conclusion,  
I offer these final words of wisdom from  
Maggah...*

## 7-15 Invocation of Maggah.

*"Daughter, there is no shame in  
healing...the only danger lies in refusing to  
admit you have been wounded. It is a similar  
situation to that which occurred this summer,  
when you drove the thorn into your foot.  
There was sharp pain when it entered your  
body...then the dull ache which was with you  
always and pain at every step. If your body  
had remained unaware of the thorn which was  
causing the problem, you would have been  
crippled by it, though it was a small thing.*

*Becoming aware, the body rejected the  
object, though awareness was accompanied by  
more pain, swelling and impairment. Finally,  
the thorn rose to the surface...you could touch  
it, see it, and remove it. Now after much  
healing, you can walk without pain.*

*The 'thorn' that was driven into your heart  
has been hurting you for many years. It has  
made it impossible for you to love...it has made  
the act of love a painful thing. Finally, you  
have become aware of it...you have begun the  
process of rejecting it. As in the body, this is  
accompanied by increased pain. As you  
continue your work, you will be able to remove  
the source of the impairment and heal."*

*Maggah, Ehya!*

*Diane Tabor*

# Reviews

## **The Sun At Midnight**

**Roger Williamson**

\$6.95 (Paperback) from

The Vann Press

18305, 20th. Avenue North

Plymouth, MN 55447

Here's one for you readers who are always looking for some fiction in a Magickal vein, by someone who seems to have a glimmer of what the world of Magick is *really* about.

The stress and strain of the new novelist is only somewhat apparent in the well mannered dialogue and in-depth detail of his story. Set in the sort of England that makes you feel like the author has always wanted to go there someday, the story is all about this young man who has a vague interest in Magick, due perhaps to the stories that his mother used to tell him about a Magickal Lodge called "Morning Star".

While browsing through the stacks in an old used bookstore, he finds a strange book; meets an odd man; and, finds himself drawn into a world much more bizarre than he is prepared for. I won't go into detail concerning the plot, since there are a number of twists and turns that make it quite a fun read. Suffice it to say that it's somewhat reminiscent of "The Magus" by John Fowles.

This is Williamson's first novel, and, if he keeps up like this, we will probably see a lot more of him. It's a well written and ambitious story. His style is very readable and consistent, and he doesn't pound you

over the head too hard with the foreshadowing - well, not *too* hard. Definitely recommended and well worth the cover price.

The rather high price, by the way, is probably due to the fact that it is independently produced, which makes it a much more expensive proposition. They have done a fine job with that as well. The text appears to have been set on Macintosh (so they can't be all bad) and the quality of the printing and binding is first rate.

## **Typhonian Teratomas**

**The Shadow of The Abyss**

**Mishlen Linden**

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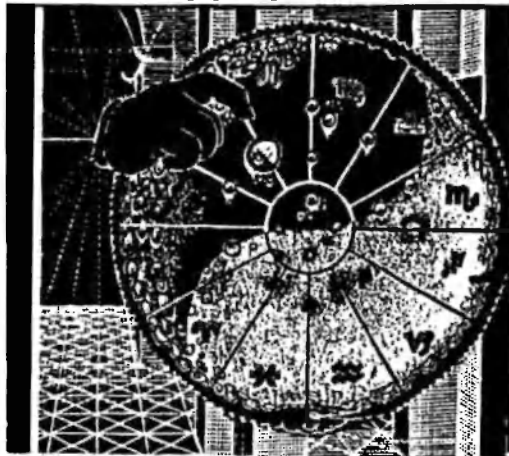
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