Witcha

A Book of Cunning

by Nathaniel J Harris

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"The first edition of 'Witcha, a Book of Cunning' was self published in 2001. More than anything it was created as a gift for my family as a 'thank you' for introducing me to the path of the witch, and for my daughter Rose Wyrd, who has witchcraft of one sort or another in both sides of her family. It was also for all those witches who have walked before us, all those yet to be born or made, for our friends, many of whom have worked alongside us 'in circle', and especially all those I have learnt from either directly or indirectly over the years. The original volume was, like all the best works of sorcery, composed largely under the direction of 'the spirits'. A total of nine years passed between its original conception and the finished composition, being a good number for magic. It was hand bound in wood and goat skin leather according to medieval style, like any 'real' grimoire should be. Several people helped with this momentous task, and thanks are thus also due to all of them. Finally, each individual copy was consecrated in ritual and the spirit bound within it 'awakened'.

Since I (and all those I enchanted into helping me) had gone to such efforts, it seemed a great shame not to make 'Witcha, a Book of Cunning' available to the wider public. I therefore give thanks to Mandrake of Oxford for having the good taste and daring to make this somewhat more accessable edition possible. This edition is also a gift to all those listed above, also to my Deville, for her continued support in everything, and for loving me as no mere mortal ever has.

Chapter 1
WITCHCRAFT

"Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.."
I Samuel 15:23

This is a book about witchcraft, known sometimes as the Old Ways, the cunning craft, or the craft of the wise, and its practice in England in history as in the modern day. It includes chapters on its theory, theology, myth cycles, magick, philosophy, and practice. It is written for those who find an active fascination for the craft, which inspires them to at least occasional action. If you are one such individual, I hope that these efforts will prove interesting to you.

I have named this work *Witcha- a Book of Cunning.* Perhaps the fairest place to start is to explain why I have chosen this odd title, and what I mean by it.

The word witcha has its roots in the Middle English wicche, an etymological root word for both witch and wizard. It may be traced back further still to the Anglo Saxon wicca, meaning a male sorcerer, the feminine form of which is wicce. The terms wiccan, meaning 'witches', and wiccian, 'to bewitch' both occur in the laws of King Alfred, 890 AD. Wicca has become a word associated with the modern resurgence of certain aspects of the Old Ways, which have become an organised exoteric part of the New Age movement. Its practitioners tend to pronounce it as 'wicker', although in actuality the phonetic spelling chosen for the title of this work is more correct. This is because the double 'c' in Anglo-Saxon, as in Middle English, is sounded as 'tch'.

The spelling has also been adopted for the purposes of distinguishing itself from this movement, whilst laying claim to a common heritage. Both are speculative reconstructions based upon snippets of traditions all but lost, and are in this sense equally valid. What I mean by the word 'witcha', however, is a far more inclusive esotericism than much of modern Wicca, which I see as far more exoteric and exclusive, despite the claims made by many of its practitioners. In other ways, however, I also recognise certain aspects of Wicca as having their roots in the same soil, and seek to include rather than exclude those mysteries that have found expression there. It nevertheless remains that I am more concerned with results, rather than gratuitous mumbo jumbo. I am not attempting to define any kind of cohesive religion. Witchcraft does not concern itself with transcendence or salvation. It is about getting things done.

Despite its usual modern meaning, I use the term 'witcha' and 'witch' to imply either a male or female practitioner of the Old Ways, if not both. Witcha is in turn a corruption of witga, meaning someone of wit, and applicable to either gender. It was a title given to mean a sorcerer, seer, and magician. It also lives on in the common English family name, Whitiker. It is still in use by those who practice the 'elder persuasions' of the craft, who have received the genuine oral teachings rather than learnt from published books.

Another word for a magician in England, used since the Middle Ages or before, is cunning man, and of course cunning woman. This means something very similiar to witga, but the etymology of the word 'cunning' in this context is also worthy of attention. It is linked to the Middle English kennen, which is still used in modern Gaelic, meaning knowledge, understanding, and also the clever use of words in poetry and lyrics.

A kenning could also be a kind of enchantment or spell, and its mystery is invoked in the rune kennaz. It is related to the Anglo Saxon cunnan, the 'action' of knowing, and that knowledge is power, because you can use it to become more capable. Hence from ken we gain the modern word can, as in I can do magick, and also con, as in con man. The cunning wo/man knows when to be liberal or creative with the truth. Their trade

is the magical art of turning superstition into coin; the confidence trickster.

There are a few notes on each of these meanings included in this work. I hope, if I can, to cast a spell or two through the words I use to write this, and hence I have given it the sub-title A Book of Cunning. Out of kindness to my readers I promise to keep the poetry to a minimum, and for that matter the etymology. I hope that one or two of these spells will hit home.

I am also including some of my own experiences and opinions. You will find that I have no shortage of these. I hope that none of them offend you overmuch, and that you will find the patience to indulge me where you disagree. This is very much a book about witchcraft as I personally see it, rather than any audacious attempt to write as the voice of all witches. I feel that since I have grown up within the witch traditions my opinions might count for something. This is not a claim of superior knowledge or power so much as a claim of birthright. With regards to claims of heritage, lineage, and 'authenticity'; a certain degree of wariness should always be applied. The usual motive behind such is to 'con' the way into a position of authority, leadership, and power, or to grind some personal axe. However nor should such claims be dismissed out of hand, simply that their revelation is circumspect and never given without reason.

I include excerpts from my own personal magical diary. This is my *'Book of Shadows'* if you will, that gives the how, why, and when. The majority of 'magical' books available these days, if they are good enough to contain instruction at all, strike me as insulting to their readers. They present ritual formulae and theory that the authors have rarely, if ever, actually performed. There are few hard and fast rules in witchcraft; the basic principles are learnt, and then you apply your own imagination and common sense. As a particularly ironic demon once said, 'The rules are only immutable if you really want them to be'. Whilst it is obviously not going to help to use, say, runes of harming to cast a spell to cure a cold, or luna symbols to make the sun shine, there are no laws dictating how any act of witchcraft *must* be achieved. So, I simply give details of how I went about such things myself, rather than expecting you to reproduce my work. In fact, I would rather that you do not. I seek merely to illustrate the application of those few basic *principles,* which can be so

hard to explain directly.

I am the oldest of four brothers born to the respected witch and recognised priestess of the mysteries, Ann Bryn-Evans (Honeybell). Not quite the seventh son of a seventh son, however this does seem to mean that a certain degree of psychic ability and 'mediumship' is passed down through the blood, which reaches back through the generations. When I call my mother and grandmother (A. St.John) a pair of witches, I am not of course saying this in any derogatory or misogynist way. I am not saying that this is what other people say about them behind their back, or that they are a little strange and 'might as well' be witches. I mean that they are practitioners of witchcraft, and thus have had occasion to call themselves witches. Our use of this term is as found in any good dictionary.

Like many, I started doing the odd spell here and there at a very young age, showing 'wild' talent, and had a natural inclination to meditation. Having witches for a grandmother and mother, plus a few mad aunts, meant that I was aware of how things were done, but as a child I was discouraged from paying too much attention. I was told not to play with the Tarot cards when nobody was looking... (which of course I did - don't tell g/ma!)

I used to hear voices and see spirits. These would often foretell events that would later come to pass. I remember first seeing the Horned One and the Lady when around six years old, out in the woods on my own, having escaped from school via a hole in the back fence. My mother was also visited by the Lord and the Lady of witchcraft at the time of my birth. As a child, I knew by instinct that these were the principles behind manifestation. Unguided and in secret, I began to write down and illustrate my 'fantasies' concerning these figures. At around nine years old, completely independently, I began the compilation of my own personal grimoire. I began the practice of magick, attracted especially to what little I knew of both the runic and goetic traditions. I laboured to attain communication with my own patron daemon, and observed some of the first results of my spells.

I have encountered all manner of 'thought forms' and spirits. On occasions these have managed to accumulate such power as to have a

direct effect on the material plane, producing what might be termed 'poltergeist phenomena'. I have even been physically attacked by them. What this means is anybody's guess, but these have been my experiences. I have been visited at various times by those from 'beyond the veil'. These have usually been the shades of people important to me, and to whom I also held significance. Some of these claim to be practitioners of witchcraft themselves.

My family travelled a lot. We spent considerable time in the mountains of the south of France, away from all 'civilisation'. When in England, we would attend the festivals and fairs, and so I came across the 'sabbats' as a matter of course. A little later in life, once my mother married her present day husband, Adrian, they came to head a coven proper, being The House of the Old Ways.

My brothers are all as weird as I am. There are many myths concerning witchcraft talent being passed down this way, and I shall be dealing with some of these later on.

In addition to this, I have made a serious study of the practice of magick throughout my life. As well as the witchcraft knowledge of my family I have learnt directly from practitioners of voodoo, taoism, buddhism, runa, kabala, gnostic, thelema, and even satanism. I have also worked the magick of the Zos-Kia-Cultus, goety, other branches of traditional witchcraft, a few approaches I have ended up coming up with myself, and even modern Wicca.

Perhaps it is because I am linked so securely to my heritage that I feel no need to be 'purist', and will use techniques from different places and times. Because I am not on a mission to prove my authenticity, I do not have to worry whether I am doing it 'the right way'. What and who I am constitutes a part of the witchcraft tradition, which has been changed, affected, and to some degree recreated, by every practitioner that has come to it.

It is important to recognise that witchcraft is a living tradition, with its roots reaching far and deep. They spread throughout the entire world, through the African, Egyptian, Assyrian, Oriental, Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Norse, Greek, Roman... Indeed there has never been a civilisation that has not seen its practice in some form, and most of its manifestations

have influenced and been influenced by most of the others. For example, the roots of the Celts themselves might be traced back through Syria and Egypt. In the Irish myths, the Fomorians of the Thatcher Isle are said to speak Greek. In all of these cultures there have been the magicians, priests, mediums, necromancers, geomancers, palmists, physiognomists, phrenologists, astrologers, spell casters and fortune tellers, whose knowledge of the spirit world and things to come has meant that they have found a useful place in their society.

The culture of Britain is a melting pot, and the mish mash traditions of lore and practice we have inherited today reflect this splendidly. They also mean that the various esoteric 'truths' of witchcraft can often seem to conflict, lacking any coherance that can be recognised in an exoteric sense. Whilst it may seem desirable at times to identify with one or two of these strands above any others, for example in the recognition of your own ancestral roots, it is undesirable to neglect the wider picture, learning from anyone and everyone.

Consider the names of our weekdays, a hybrid pantheon where Thor's Day (Thursday) and Freya's Day (Friday) are followed by Saturn's Day (Saturday), followed thereafter by Sun's Day and Moon's Day. Our months take their names from the gods of the Roman Empire. The names of our festivals, such as Easter, have Celtic origin, adapted to the mysteries of the Church. Confused? We all are.

Anybody who turns to witchcraft as a way out of this confusion will only find disappointment. I have tried to create as much cohesion as possible within this book, yet it must be stressed that this is an order that I have recognised within a chaos of possibilities through my own conclusions. I have worked hard, my research is far and wide, my experience is not little. Nevertheless, it remains that much of what I have to say is merely personal speculation, and a wholly personal exploration and account. No writer of witchcraft lore can avoid this.

You will also find here a little bit of politics. Spirituality, if defined as 'the way we choose to lead our lives', is inseparable from politics. Witchcraft as I practice it is a subversive art. There are all kinds of issues that come into its circle, such as our rights to the land, how we choose to bring up our children, and how we are forced to live under laws and

regulations placed upon us by the hypocrite servants of a dead God. As has been said before, an anarchist is a witch in politics and a witch is an anarchist in religion. This author is no exception.

I once heard a theory that the original covens were formed in reaction to the Masonic Lodges. During the Middle Ages these ceased to be a union for nomadic workers and became a class based 'esoteric' structure, whose real purpose was the control of the marketplace and the ownership of property and land. If so, then this is a very significant part of the witchcraft story that tends to be neglected by modern writers, not to mention modern practitioners.

It is also quite ironic that so much of the modern Wiccan formulae, for example the Gardnerian initiation rites, are inspired so heavily by the rituals of Masonry. Gerald Gardner was an initiate of The Cretona Fellowship, a co-Masonic lodge based in Christchurch, Hants. His sponsor was Mrs Woodford Grimes, who was his contact for the New Forest Coven. There are also those who claim that the inner secrets of some witchcraft traditions are related to the esoteric mysteries of medieval Freemasonry. Certainly, we have the tradition of Tubal-Cain, and the luciferian, gnostic inspired witchcraft traditions. It is difficult to say what the relationship is, if there is one.

Witchcraft is empowering spiritually because we are taught to recognise the feminine principals of nature, rather than teaching us to cower in fear beneath the shadow of the wrathful All Father,. We are shown that the smallest of actions, such as a spell, can have the furthest reaching consequences. We are significant, and what we do can make a difference. The practice of witchcraft is the practice of creating change, or it is about nothing at all.

Witchcraft, having been supposedly released from oppression in 1951, has suddenly become a commodity. Whilst this is good for certain aspects of the craft, which are in essence a religion of the common people, it also means that there is a whole lot of dross printed for the seeker after gold to sift through.

Although the genuine and ancient mysteries of witchcraft cannot be passed on through the written word, and there is no real money in books like this in any case, it seems timely to politely step forward and give my

two penneth worth. I hope you will consider this book to be a lucky find amongst so many There are certainly formulae within my mother's grammar that some traditionalists will recognise from their own coven's rituals, and yet have never seen the light of publication, electronic or otherwise. These tend to be more ceremonial in style than much of the material presented here. It includes spells, invocations, and enchantments as well as the rites of the sabbats, hand-fasting, child naming, and funerals. The life of the witch can be solitary and dark, indeed needs to be. It can also, and should be, sociable and useful to the community.

N A T A N
A A A
T A S A T
A A A
N A T A N

Chapter 2
DIRTY WORK AT THE CROSSROADS

'By the stars in the south,
By the stars in the west,
By the stars in the north,
And the stars in the east,
By the Black Messenger...'
Nightmare Culture

Let us begin our journey at the crossroad, the 'Four Wentz Ways'. Wherever and whenever you are in the traditions of witchcraft, this is a significant meeting place. In Medieval England witches would hold their moots here, and if caught it was here also that they would hang, and no doubt be buried alongside other petty criminals. Sorcerers were and are fond of performing their rites at such places, usually to bully some ghost into telling where they buried the stash. The crossroads is a place where the worlds meet and so we may also encounter the spirits here. These may include such figures as the Mercury of Rome, Hecate of Greece, Odin of the Norse, Exu-Elegbara of Africa, the phearie and the El of the Celts, werewolves, shapechangers, not to mention the Devil himself...

Standing at this place where the two roads intersect we are faced with four choices as to where we go from here. Since we have met for the purpose of witchcraft, our choice must relate to our intent. It must take us in the direction we really need to be heading. Perhaps the most sensible of these would be to go back the way we came ... into our past.

Witchcraft has not suddenly arrived on our planet as a 'ready packed religion'. Its practice dates back, in one form or another, to the dawn of human consciousness itself. It has developed through the ages, from the 'shamanic' practices of the cave dwellers and hunter gatherers, its

presence known to us by the paintings and altars and dwellings that these people left behind them. What these people actually believed and practiced can only be conjectured, although it seems likely that human belief evolves through certain patterns that we can recognise if we look at the 'bigger picture'. We may learn from those people who still live in similiar ways today, having found no reason to move on into the somewhat less convenient mode of life we call agriculture. Such peoples have a universal belief in magick, strange spirits who come in many forms, and also in reincarnation of the human 'soul' in one form or another after death. Although we cannot tell rationally what our own ancestors specifically practiced or believed, we can create for ourselves a fairly good feeling for the kind of things.

These 'shamanic' practices were to evolve into the more structured spiritual beliefs of the agricultural pagans, who became vain enough to put human forms to the 'gods'. Its practice continued still under the shadow of monotheism. The church and state, being intent on making their own God the only one and true, embarked on a brutal campaign of murder and torture in an attempt to eradicate the pagan past of its subjects. If you want to destroy a people you must first destroy its culture. Gradually, the seers and magicians of the royal courts were replaced by clerics, and amongst the common people too such changes were enforced.

Yet the church knew, or must have known, that ultimately the Old Ways would continue. Many of the Catholic saints, whom the Roman Church claimed to be actual people touched by their God, began as pagan local deity. Their rites and prayers were incorporated into the rites of the church, who all the while went on to declare that the gods of the pagans were actually devils, and that all who did not follow their Christ would be condemned to Hell, whose very name they stole. After being publicly murdered, of course, having been forced to 'confess' under the pain of torture. In such times as these, the mystery schools were taught a new meaning of secrecy. Covens met in secluded places, and found ways to disguise the tools of their craft. Many forms of heresy, the esoteric schools of self realisation, became concealed beneath the cloaks of the witches. They became amongst the last custodians of such wisdom.

It is important to know where you have come from if you are ever to know where you are going. He who forgets the past is condemned to repeat it. Something that has been lost to so many in modern times is our link to our ancestry. We no longer pay respect to our dead, indeed we do not even talk with them. We could learn from much of what they knew but, since they are silent and their spirits unfed, much of their knowledge has sadly dissipated with them. To some this may sound an awful lot like the disreputable practice of necromancy, or worse still spiritualism, but there was once a time when the ancestors would communicate their wisdom to us freely. This continues within such spiritual paths as tantra, voodoo, and macumba, but to the average western white these practices seem ridiculous. If there is anything that I have learnt personally from my contact with such traditions, it is that this loss is a great tragedy.

This respect we should continue to pay, because the spirits of our dead may be kept powerful through it. As each generation venerates the spirits of those that pass before it, so each generation in turn dies and joins with the ancestors to be fed by those that come after. We do our dead and ourselves a great disservice by neglecting such traditions. This should include our own blood relatives and also all those who have been influential in keeping the witchcraft traditions alive. Those witches and sorcerers who have passed before us, and who may be our mentors and wise council, are respected in some traditions through the title 'The Hidden Company'. Much beyond this, it is a break of oath to speak.

Yet as witches we must always be going forward. We must recognise that our present and future is a continuation from past traditions, but not a continuation of them. We live in a modern and ever changing world, where ideas like 'spiritual truth' are fluid and unfixed. The ancestors can lend their wisdom and power to our magick, but we should not try to emulate them and live our lives as they did. Times have changed. We are the old people, and the same people, but we are also the new people. This should provide no excuse to wander around dressed in medieval garb and pretending to be something that we are not. One day we shall have passed away, but the world we have lived in will continue for our children, and our children's children.

Two more options present themselves to us. These are the right hand

path and the left hand path, which are sometimes also called the path of the white witch and the black. The definition accepted within my family for these two paths is as follows; White witchcraft is about dressing up, spouting bad poetry, and *therapy*. Black witchcraft is anything that actually gets *results*. Grey witchcraft, having no opposite and thus no impetus to evolve, is the path of stagnation and is thus anathema to witchcraft and *does not exist*.

We are only half joking.

The common understanding of these terms has it that white witchcraft is always for good, such as the selfless healing of other people or love spells, and that black witchcraft is all about bitterness and curses. This is somewhat of an oversimplification. Is it still good to heal someone so that they cannot die, even though their life is pain and this is all that they really want to do? Is it still good magick to make someone fall in love with somebody really ugly and abusive? Is it bad to curse someone who repeatedly commits sexual crime, thus preventing them from continuing and punishing them? Or supposing you decide to heal someone from being an arsehole by teaching them a few painful lessons, so that they become a better person for it?

Moral issues aside, since they are clearly irrelevant, the right hand path and the sinister path may also be defined as two paths to power. The terms are used in witchcraft as in other schools of magick. It is commonly understood to have its origin it the practice of tantra, where the right hand path consists of ritual intended to reinforce the codes and practices of society, for the good of all. The left hand path, however, is concerned with rituals of taboo breaking and personal empowerment. Admitting this possibility, it should always be remembered that just because a tradition is reflected elsewhere, it is not always correct to assume that one has its origins in the other. The symbolism of working with the right and left hands is also reflected in Afro-Caribbean spirituality, and there have always been a rich variety of 'superstitions' in the United Kingdom that link left handedness with the practice of witchcraft.

The Norse god Tir, also known on this island as Tiw or Twisto, was left handed, having sacrificed his right hand for the good of the world. The

combined forces of the gods were not enough to defeat the demon Fenris-Wolf, and it was only through this act that he consented to be bound until the end of this world. It is possibly for this reason that it was considered unlucky in Christianised England to meet a left or 'skir' handed man on a Tuesday (Tiw's Day), as he may in fact be the old pagan god.

Left handed people were often held in suspicion because they may be from the 'other side', the world that exists beyond the mirror. Such people might be phaerie folk or devils, and thus most likely to possess the powers of the witch. Thus left handedness was proof enough to justify the torture and murder of a suspect in the days of the persecution.

The left hand of a corpse is reputed by the superstitious to have many curative powers, especially if of a criminal hung from the neck or of a suicide. At public executions the hangmen were often be bribed by those suffering from disease to let them stroke the afflicted part of their body with the criminals left hand. Wayside gibbets, where criminals hung in chains, were often also similarly visited. The hand was drawn three, seven, or nine times across the troubled area in the belief that the trouble would then be cured. Barren women were also amongst those who would use such a charm, and anything that came into contact with it also became 'charged' with such power.

Another famous charm is the Hand of Glory, which was similarly created from the left hand of an executed criminal, this time severed from the body. A candle made from such a gruesome object, or a candle held by it, was supposed to cast a light that would be invisible to all except the criminal in possession of it. A burglar might also use such a charm to cast a spell of sleep over the occupants of a house, so that they would not awaken to catch them.

We may reasonably conclude that the association between the left hand and witchcraft is very ancient. Such power may be used to both harm and heal, and may not be defined as a path of either good or evil, kindness or cruelty. Its practitioners must through necessity live outside the realms of the 'normal', because 'normal people' do not possess or employ such strange practices. Again, we find that witches are considered sinister for the simple reason that we are different. Indulging the

occultist's obsession with etymology, we may trace the word through the Anglo-Saxon word *swooster*, itself meaning 'left hand' (Skeat, 1882).

In witchcraft also the right hand path is most often community based, consisting of religious rites that seek to unite the individual with the flow of Wyrd, or the 'direction of the universe', and the worship of deity as something 'out there'. It is commonly associated with the quest to transcend material existance in favour of the numinous. The left hand path is more commonly a solitary practice, and consists of magical rites that seek to unite the flow of Wyrd to the flow of the individual, and the recognition that there is no deity beyond the self. Which is, by far, not the same thing as saying that there is no deity at all.

This relationship to deity forms an important difference between the sinister and right hand paths. The right handed practitioner tends to be, by their own admission, practising a religion. Their approach is one of worship and supplication. Their witchcraft, they believe, will only work if the goddess is pleased with them, as it can only work through her. The right handed witch may recognise that they possess their own power, but they accept this as a gift from some beneficent and all powerful 'other'. Their magick works through the power of faith.

The sinister witch, on the other hand, may often be an atheist. To such a practitioner the myths hold only symbolic truth, which may be interpreted esoterically. They still perform acts of magick, and may even still celebrate the sabbats, but to them there is only the power that they find in themselves. Deity may well present a 'role model', an image from which they may learn even if they know they can never actually become as a god or goddess in the flesh. There is no worship in their rituals, since their magick requires no faith to perform. It happens because the witch possesses their own power, wit, and cunning. For what is there to believe in, but the self?

I find it an interesting observation that witches of the right hand path tend to consider themselves to be on the path of 'good', morally superior to their sinister sisters and brothers. The practitioners of the left hand path tend to be far less judgmental of others, living their lives as far as possible 'beyond good and evil'. This tends to mean that the practitioners of the craft sinister, whilst gaining the reputation of wandering

around cursing people left, right, and centre, tend to be much nicer people in real life. Having recognised and embraced the darker side of themselves, they are far more comfortable with themselves overall. The self proclaimed 'good' witches, on the other hand again, tend to feel a lot more justified in such activities as throwing the odd hex. How can this be so?

One theory I favour is that the self proclaimed 'white witches' tend to identify far too heavily with the 'light', going to great efforts to make sure that people think they would not harm a fly. This means that the darker sides of their nature, finding no honest expression, become suppressed into the subconscious. Since it is in these deeper realms of mind that the power of magick resides, this suppressed darkness tends to make itself known and give its force to their conjurations. Whilst such coveners are always harking on about 'perfect love and perfect trust', they seem to me to spend an awful lot of time stabbing their athame into each other's backs.

Paradoxically, many practitioners of the left hand path, who dress in black all the time and hark on about how compassion is for slaves and Lex Talionis is the true way of nature, tend to be far more genuinely considerate and caring people. Characters such as the witch and spiritualist Austin Spare, a sensitive, expressive, and kind individual who went out of his way to help others, and hardly wished anyone any harm, are the perfect illustrators of this point.. He was condemned by Crowley himself as a member of the 'black brotherhood', a practitioner of the left hand path, and a servant of his own ego. Crowley, despite revelling in his self identification as the Beast 666, actually considered himself to be a practitioner of the right hand path.

Another interpretation of the difference between the right and left hand paths lies in the consideration of human physiology. The right hand is governed by the left hemisphere of the brain, which deals with rational and linear thought, and thus exoteric religious teachings which are taught and reasoned through the written word. The left hand corresponds with the right hemisphere, and thus to intuitive understanding and esoteric self realisation. Perhaps this is the origins of the distinction, for human physiology has remained pretty much unchanged, it is simply our understanding of it that has developed.

The crossroads may be represented in the rites of witchcraft in the casting of a circle. In this, a space is assigned to be 'between the worlds' by marking out the four quarters, north, east, south and west. For works of right handed ceremony, the circle is cast deosil, which is the direction of the sun, or 'clockwise'. For left handed working, the circle is cast widdershins.

Two examples as to how a circle may be cast are included later in this book. There are many other ways that this may be achieved, calling on other spirits or even none at all. A method favoured by my grandmother is simply to throw salt to the quarters, banishing all troublesome and malign sprites in the process. It is the spirit of the ritual that is old and traditional, rather than the specific wordings and actions of the rites.

There are witch traditions and sorcerers who define their working spaces in other ways, such as a square, trapezoid, triangle or pyramid, often simply walking the space out. The solo witch may choose to identify their own self as the crossroads, invoking the magical forces within their body rather than the working space around them. The basic circle formula is by far the most common, especially in group work.

Chapter 3
THRICE BOUND

Þaðan koma meyiar, margs vitandi,
þrár, ór þeim sæ, er und þolli strendr;
Urð héto eina, aðra Verðandi
—scáro scíði—, Skuld ina þriðio;
þær lög löumlgðo, þær líf kuro
alda bornom, ørlög seggia

Thence come the maidens, mighty in wisdom,
Three from the place, under the tree,
Wyrd is called one, another Werðende
Scored they on wood, Scyld is the third;
There laws they laid, there life chose,
To men's sons, and spoke orlay
Völuspa 20-25

The image of three witches ... Macbeth ... the Fairy Godmothers in Sleeping Beauty ... the Morae ... the Morrigan...the three Mary's at the foot of the cruci-fiction ... the triple goddess of the waxing, full and waning moon. The Fates. the Gorgons. Diana, Artemis, & Hecate. The three faces of Noticula-Hecate. The Njorns. The three sisters Wyrd.

They are the laws of time; the past, the present and the future. They are the mysteries of destiny, whose power it is to shape and to influence. In the various myths they are often seen as spinning time on their spinning wheels, weaving the fabric of reality, working their spellcraft over a roaring cauldron at the crossroads, or found at the well of Wyrd, a spring that lies at the base of the world tree Yggdrasil. Each day they take water from that well that the roots of the axis mundi do not fall to rot.

The image of the three sisters recurs throughout the world even after the conversion to Christianity. Even when the knowledge of the Old Ways has fallen into decline, even in the modern day, they remain a strong image in our customs. We still have the folk saying that 'these things tend to happen in threes', reflecting this connection between the number

three and what we call fate. The knowledge of Wyrd is the knowledge of destiny, and presents a world view quite at odds and 'out of law' with Christian beliefs.

The concept of Wyrd, and of the three fold law, is central to the philosophy of the witch, as it is to its modern cousin Wicca. It is also one that seems to be much misunderstood. It is often quoted as the main reason why witches do not do 'black magick', since all things return to their sender three fold. Wrongdoers, according to this philosophy, are punished by the cosmos itself, and we in turn need do nothing. Whilst keeping the press and the public happy, this interpretation has very little to do with the genuine Old Ways, or how Wyrd was percieved by our Anglo-Saxon forebears. I believe it to be a modern reinterpretation of a genuine piece of witch lore, an attempt to sanitise and de-satanise the Old Ways to make them seem harmless.

The most common perception is that this is a fatalistic philosophy. Yet the goddess does not fix, determine and decide our destinies for us. Wyrd is a fluid and ever changing substance, it is the way that time unfolds. Sometimes it is understood as a web, which connects all things. This metaphor shows us that all events are inextricably connected, and that to pull on one strand is to effect the web as a whole. The smallest of actions can have the furthest reaching consequences.

Wyrd is not fixed, we do not live in a deterministic universe. Much of what we like to think of as the future is merely the hopes and fears that we have for it. These hopes and fears we are thinking and feeling now. The future is uncertain, as is much of the present, and indeed the past.

Our forebears considered it a virtue to accept one's Wyrd, however hard, as it was a virtue to know that we can be responsible for our Wyrd and change it. This is what magick is all about. Whilst the world around us is subject to its own greater destiny, we are subject to our own personal fate, which are effected by absolutely everything that we do in the now. Who and what we are now is the result of our past actions, and the world we live in we have inherited from our ancestors.

All Wyrd is one Wyrd, and yet we each of us possess our own individual Wyrd, of which we may occasionally fool ourselves that we may become the master. 'Goeth ever Wyrd as she shall!', as Beowulf put it. We may

petition her, and we may learn from her, yet she will always be a force of unpredictability. Daily, new actions sink into her well, and old deeds rise again to the surface. We are the sum of our Wyrd.

The younger sister of Wyrd is Werðende, whose name means 'custom, tradition, and law'. These are not the decree of any supreme king or god, they are a power that is derived from the folk. They are the customs, traditions and laws of our ancestry. Not everyone lives the same way, such as the traveller communities of modern day England, or the Tuscany gypsies of the last century. There are witches whose kin have been at odds with the laws of the Christian government through their very lifestyles.

Here where I am currently living in the city of Norwich, we have the example of Kett's rebellion. I believe this revolt was started and lead by witches, whose beliefs were entirely at odds with the Church's claim to the ownership of land. The rabble rouser himself gathered his following beneath an ancient oak, and their main tactic was to set land owners against each other by secretly moving the boundaries under the cover of darkness. The revolt saw vicious attacks against the Church, who seemed to be particularly targeted by the murderous revellers. It is recorded that the revolt finally ended when the peasants enthusiastically received the divination from a group of witches that should they descend into the heath 'their will be much bloodshed'. They unfortunately did not stop to ask whose blood it would be.

In the modern day there are witches who have found themselves protesting on the streets, there to meet with violence from the soldiers of what is still Christian law, or who have found that their spirituality has justified the theft of their children by the state. Thus, it may be seen that these laws are not Werðende. They are not the customs and traditions that we have taken with us to remember our histories; they are the rule of those who would destroy them.

Wyrd's older sister is the goddess Skyld, whose name means 'debt, obligation, and mortality'. During the conversion, when the Christians needed to find a word that could explain their concept of 'sin', they borrowed the name of this goddess, and thus gave it new implications of meaning. Yet she is not a negative force, for in upholding our obligations

we are rewarded. Wreaking vengeance for the harming or murder of one's kin, for example, is an obligation. It is the custom, tradition and law of Wyrd that we cannot inherit the power of our ancestors, and have no virtue or honour in our blood, without carrying such obligations out.

This is the original three fold law of the witch, that we must never shy from our responsibilities, including the punishing of our adversaries. We must not give up our battle in whatever field we fight, against those who would crush us and our ways. The deeds of the present sink into the well of Wyrd, becoming the past. Yet the deeds of the past are inevitably pushed back to the surface of the well, by natural action of the fresh spring water that moves beneath them. The well of Wyrd was seen as a dynamic force of change.

Wyrd is not just about the maintaining of traditions for their own sake. It is about our own place in the flow of the waters of time. It is about appreciating who we are, and the world we experience. It is the appreciation of how we came to be, what we can and must become. It is the courage to create and to change through our actions, as it is the acceptance of all that has been created and changed otherwise.

The three fold law of Wyrd is indeed the law of returns. Like the law of 'karma', many have misunderstood it as a moral force. Our debts of karma or of Wyrd are not based upon some kind of tally system, or any kind of 'sin now pay later' cosmic scheme. Whatever actions we take will always have consequences. If I throw a curse at you, my own bitterness might just come back and slap me in the face. But if I give Johny three sweets there is no guarantee that he will give me nine in return. More likely, he will eat them all himself and proceed to ask for three more. Nevertheless, the way of Wyrd is that what we give out is reflected in what we get back. It has always been the belief that good deeds are at least more likely to bring good returns, and that arscholes only serve to make their own lives more difficult.

However, Wyrd is fickle. She does not obey the laws of anyone but herself. Actions that are well meaning from the heart can sometimes bring ruin, and actions intended to wound can sometimes bring healing. Witchcraft is the art of serving Wyrd, that she may side with us, and that

our intentions may bring the results we desire. It is also the virtue of honesty, in accepting who and what we really are.

The way of Wyrd was seen to permeate all things, flowing through us as it flows through all of nature and everything we experience. All things travel on a path of return; the earth, the air, the fire, the water, and the spirit. To recognise the flow of Wyrd is to know when and where to make those little changes that will get us what we will, and when such actions might be considered unwise. Wyrd is reflected in the rise and fall of the sea, in the three faces of the moon, in the menstrual cycles of woman, the life cycles of a man, in all birth and in all death, in the stars and the turning of the seasons. Through observation of the world around us we may come to know ourselves, when our personal power is high or low. We can learn to recognise omens, and when it is the best time to work certain acts of witchcraft.

The three sisters are recognised in nearly all branches of the witch traditions, under a thousand different names. Similarly, the number three itself is one of power. 'Third time lucky' is a common English folk superstition. Circles are danced three times around in common tradition, hence it is considered a taboo act to walk around a church thrice (or nine times) widdershins. Folklore has it that doing so walking backwards will cause the Devil to appear. Amongst the first spells taught me by my mother was one of binding, where a poppet is tied with three cords, three knots in each. Many folk charms are repeated three times. The tradition of 'touch wood' is to knock thrice upon living wood.

Witches pay close attention to the phases of the moon, for these are the three faces of Wyrd. Acts of creative and positive magick, which mark the beginning of new endeavours, are performed upon the waxing moon. Magick concerned with motherhood, healing, and suchlike are performed when the moon is full. Spells of destruction, death rites, and ceremonies representing the end of an endeavour or process, are performed upon the waning moon. Similarly, the meaning and symbolism of the sabbats is attended to when choosing what acts of magick and ceremony to perform at such meetings. For example, the rites of handfasting, a form of 'common law' marriage, are traditionally held at Beltane and Lammas, with it being considered particularly unwise to get 'married' at Samhain.

Chapter 4
TOOLS OF CUNNING

There are many tools of the craft, their use in ritual and their physical design varies from tradition to tradition. The most commonly accepted four, as reflected in the Minor Arcana of the Tarot, are the elemental tools of the disc, the blade, the wand, and the cup. Whilst it seems necessary to give some information on each of these, many witches do not actually use them at all, whilst others have expanded upon them. The elemental tools are common to many forms of magick. Their symbolism comprises a part of that grand arcanum of philosophy, theology, and technique shared by all occidental practitioners of the art. The chief custodians of this knowledge have always been the witches.

Magical tools acquire their power through their context. Commonly, rituals of consecration act to 'awaken' such items, and set them aside from mundane objects. Over time, they may become more powerful with repeated use, since their association within the magical mind is reinforced. They may even develop, or be imprinted with, their own sentient or semi-sentient spirit.

The Disc

Sometimes referred to as the pentacle or platter, the disc is representative of the elemental force of earth. Its magical uses concern the material body, and all material concerns. Commonly the disc is made from wood, but it may also be of wax, clay, bread, or any other material. It may be inscribed with the symbol of the pentagram, representative of the whole physical body, or with the eight spoked wheel of the year. The platter is often used for cakes given as a consecrated sacrament or eucharist.

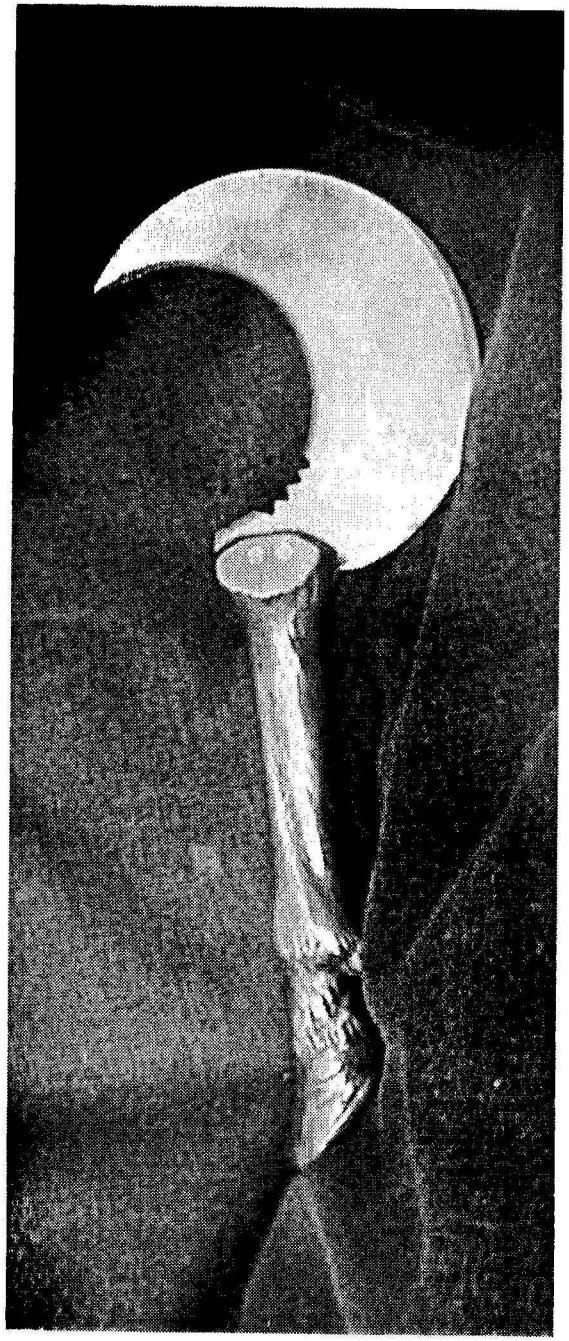
Some witches prefer to represent this element with a bowl of earth or salt. In the Tarot, the discs sometimes become coins, since money is our most basic material concern in the modern world.

The Blade

The blade corresponds most commonly to the elemental force of air, the intellect, although some say it is the tool of fire. There are commonly three classes of blade that are used from witch to witch, these being the black handled athame (dagger), the white handled boline, and the sword, although not all witches will use all three. Some witches may even use magnetised steel.

Where the two knives are used, the 'rules' are usually that the black handled blade must never be used for cutting or harming, whilst the white handled blade is more practical in its use. The witch's boline is employed for the cutting of herbs, the collecting of woods, and the scratching of runes and other talismanic sigils. Where the dagger and sword are used together, the dagger represents wit, for it is quick and sharp, the sword represents memory, for it is long and cuts deep. The element of air may also be represented by incense smoke, or a feather.

In luciferian tradition the blade is representative of the power of Tubal-Cain, the first blacksmith and cunning man who was the prime initiator of the current. In those traditions relating to phaerie witchcraft steel is considered anti-magick, and the witch's blade if there is one will therefore be either made of flint or absent.



Boline, privately owned. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans.

The Wand

Also known as the sway, or blasting rod. This corresponds to the elemental force of fire, the assertion of magical will, and the making of oaths. It is the tool or weapon with which the sorcerer delivers the charge, which may be the empowering of a spell or a direct magical and/or physical attack upon a person. Some consider it to be the principle tool of witchcraft, whilst others favour its brother the blade.

Various traditions assert that the wand should be made from specific materials, most commonly rowan, sometimes hazel or blackthorn, and marked with specific runes or glyphs, depending upon the kind of spell casting it is to be used for and the spirits served by the witch. There are also specific dimensions of measurement that may be employed, for example one East Anglian tradition states that a wand should be precisely one 'ell' (26.4 inches) in length. Some forms of wand are tipped with a pine cone, twisted with vines or serpents, giving a very phallic effect. Thus it may be identified as the caduceaus of Hermes Mercurias, resembling also the thursus of Dionysus. This may be seen to represent magical energy travelling along the spine, and 'flowering' around the head, as a symbol of ecstasy not unlike the kundalini or 'fire snake' power of the tantric yogi.

In some traditions, wands are also made as channels of the phallic power of the witches' god. These are employed in sexual magick, such as the symbolic form of the Great Rite. Similarly, this sorcerer has come across wands that are fashioned after the phallus. These may be hollow, so as to contain sigils representative of the will, that become 'charged' with sexual energy when employed as a part of magical love play. The most powerful form of such a wand is carved from human bone.

Rods may of course also be used for divining, and we find this most commonly in Ireland and Scotland. These are not the forked divining rods more commonly seen today, but are fashioned more like a wand. Commonly, these are made from the wood of a flowering tree, and were a tool of those cunning folk employed as diviners in the agricultural community.

Other traditions say little regarding the specifics of design at all. Some witches, wizards and magicians prefer to use a staff, which is in fact a

wand so long that it can be used as an aid for walking, social recognition, or as a sign of office within a group.

The element of fire may also be represented directly by a lit candle, or a bonfire.

The Cup

Also called the chalice, and in the romantic traditions, the Graal. Corresponds to the elemental force of water, and hence to emotion and intuition. Its magical force is passive, and considered female, and in practical workings the formula of the cup consequently means prayer, and acts of divination. Its use is also in the sharing of the sabbatical sacrament of wine.

As the wand represents the will, the sword the intellect, the cup is representative of the witch's understanding. In the symbolic Great Rite, the cup stands in for the vagina of the priestess, into which is plunged the wand or blade (depending upon the tradition) of the priest, representative of his penis. In the same manner that the wand and blade are paired as symbols of the masculine, the cup and the pentacle are paired as symbols of the feminine.

These are the four basic tools. In addition, dependant on the specifics of any given rite, any of the following might be included.

The Cauldron

In some traditions, instead of or as well as a chalice there is a cauldron, which may represent the power of goddess. It is the 'Cauldron of Cerridwen' that brings resurrection and sustenance, and was the original graal of Arthurian legend. Its symbolism is less that of the yoni, and more of the womb itself. Magical power gestates within, and thought forms and bud-wills may be birthed from it. Also, certain acts of necromancy may be achieved through keeping the bones of the dead, and other ingredients of pact making, within it. Such practice is reflected in the Brazilian art of Quimbanda, as practiced by the likes of the Castranegro family.

The cauldron is the classic symbol of witchcraft, the vessel of potions and poisons, and also, like the well of Wyrd, of fate itself. It would often be seen outside the house of the local cunning person as a sign that their shop was open for business, rather like the blue and red pole of a barber.

The Witch Ball

This is a sphere of mirrored or reflective glass, looking somewhat like a giant Christmas bauble. Some say its origins lie in the fisherman's bouy. This acts as a sign of the trade, hung in the window alongside the cauldron to advertise trade. Magically, it acts to reflect and protect against the evil eye and the more spiteful of the 'good neighbours'. Various secret ingredients are placed within it, including links to those who are to be protected 'within its sphere'.

The Censer

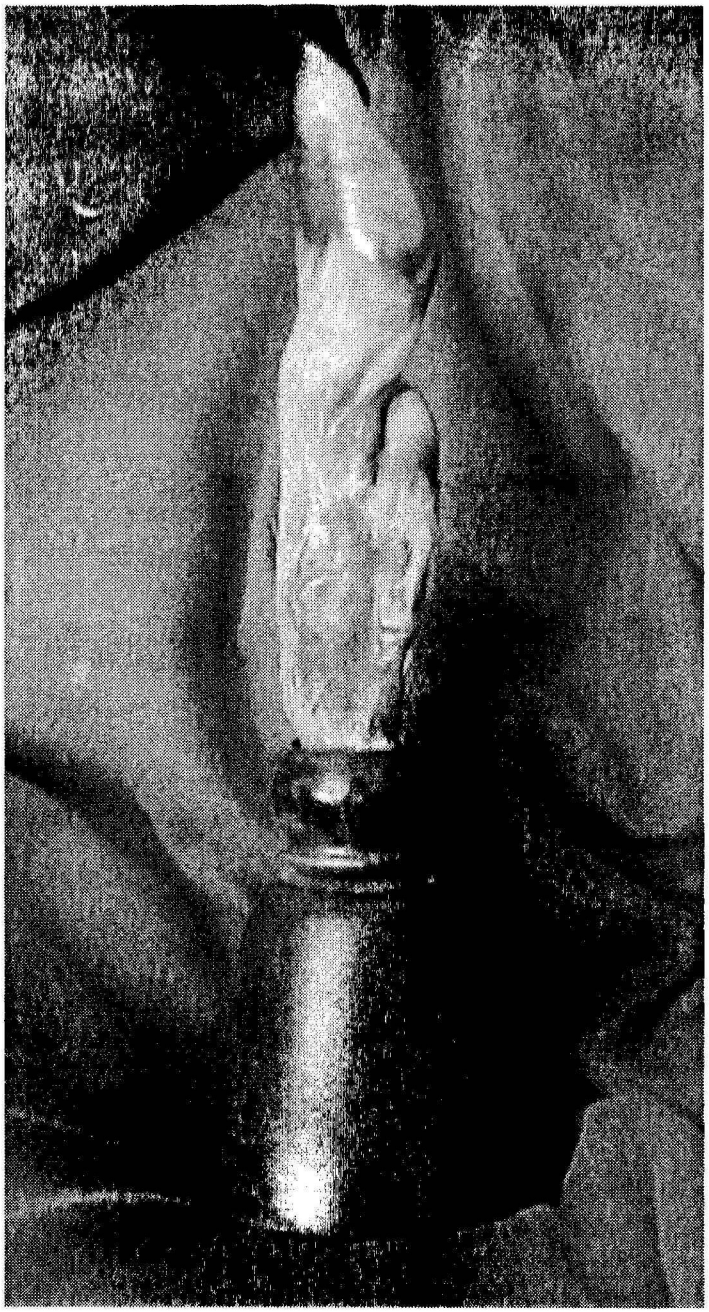
Used for the burning of incense, herbs, chemicals, wood, and other substances of magical significance. The recipe varies from tradition to tradition, rite to rite. As such, it is a tool of both fire and air. Incense is used to enliven the senses, set the mood, and has been a traditional offering to the spirits since the times of the ancients, all around the world.

The Bell

The bell is used in ceremony to signify certain changes in magical time, the beginning and end of certain procedures such as chanting, and plays its role in the traditional formulae of exorcism.

The Candle

Candles are traditional in acts of prayer as in acts of sorcery. They may be lit as offerings to the spirits, as they are lit as offerings to the saints. Anointed with oils, and carved with signs of the craft, they are commonly used in the casting of spells.



Ritual bell, for striking the beginning and end of ritual, and to call in the spirits of witchcraft. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, privately owned.

The Witches' Rosary

The origins of the rosary lie in the East, its purpose being an aid to mantra yoga, and its name coming from that of the goddess of the rose. The beads are counted off during the repetition of mantric phrase, in much the same manner as the use of an abacus. This traditional magical tool was stolen by the Christians, who use it to count off their pleas to the Holy Virgin when they fail to live up to their moral obligations.

In witchcraft, too, the rosary may be found. The number of beads on such a necklace are groups of nine and thirteen. Their symbolism links, also, to the Elphaen necklace of Brisinghamen.

The Scourge

Usually found in the form of the classical 'cat of nine tails', the scourge has fallen from favour in many witchcraft covens, yet is nevertheless a traditional item of practice. Gardnerian and Alexandrian Wicca both place a fair amount of importance upon it, as have magicians such as Crowley. Its use is in those witch formulae employing flagellation as a route to trance, which may be directed through the ritual into acts of divination, spell casting, or initiation. The rites administering and receiving pain are also traditionally considered as a form of human sacrifice.

The Cingulum & the Cords

The cords have many uses, from the casting of the circle, the taking of the measure during initiation, the binding of limbs, to the knot magicks of folk tradition. Different coloured cords are used for different purposes, with the power of the spell being trapped in the knot, and only released when the knot is undone. Various related events are trapped in a series of knots, and then released one by one as the knots are undone. This is the famous witch's ladder.

Cords may also be used to bind the body, and in conjunction with the skilled use of the scourge may produce altered states of consciousness. Such cords, as well as the traditional witches' noose made from thirteen

wrappings of the knot, play an important part in many forms of initiation ritual.

The Stanged Staff

Common to West Country witchcraft, the traditional stang is representative of the Horned God. Its appearance is that of a forked staff, suggestive of both an agriculturalist's tool or antlers. This item was supposedly amongst the chief means by which the cunning may be recognised by those who might seek to employ them. It may also act as a make shift altar unto itself, being decorated by wreaths of seasonal flora and placed to the north of the circle. Its modern reappearance comes chiefly through the work of Robert Cochrane.

A similar object, sometimes identified as a stang but more commonly simply as a horn stave, survives in the witchcraft and wizadry of East Anglia.

The Besom

Last but not least is the besom, witches' broom, otherwise called the witches' palfrey, fashioned from birch, broom, hawthorn, hazel, rowan and willow. Traditionally we are all supposed to fly around on these, but in practice their use tends to be more symbolic. The broom is often used to sweep the circle as a means of banishing the area. Elder lore has it that beneath the actual broom, the staff or handle is carved in the form of a phallus, and that its use is to administer flying ointment internally. That is, the broom is in fact a disguised wand of sorts, which like some other forms of wand may supposedly be used as a huge dildo.

Traditional folk dances do exist that employ the besom, such as the Comberton Broom Dance in Cambridgeshire.

The besom is sometimes given as a gift at handfasting or initiation, where it can represent acceptance into a witchcraft family. Where the broom is placed has symbolic significance- left outside the front door it is a sign that the woman of the house is around and about. Placed upside down, it shows that the husband is away, and that she is free to dally. Should

Stang, or 'Horned Stave'. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, courtesy of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, Cornwall.

the pair split, the broom should be destroyed, or else it will bring terrible luck upon its keeper.

Consecration of the Tools

Consecration is the ritualised act of 'setting aside' and charging an object for magical use. It imbues the object with the power of the witch, and the forces they call upon. There are many ways that this may be achieved. One of the simplest is to leave it out in the light of the full moon. Such objects should not be exposed to sunlight. Where practical it is usual to keep some consecrated items wrapped in silk when they are not in use.

The following ritual obeys a common basic formula used by many different witches and wizards;

The object is washed. This may be with water from a sacred well, fresh water and salt crystals, or water that has been otherwise 'blessed'. At this point the object will be given its own secret name, thus imbuing it with 'spirit'. It is then passed over the flame of a candle, and then through the smoke of incense on the censer. Finally, it is anointed with oil. The following charge, or similar, should be repeated thrice, or nine times;

'I consecrate this _____ with the powers of the witches, by the secret names of the Lord and Lady, by the Eyes of the Watchers, by earth, by air, by fire and by water, that it shall serve me well in this world, the next, and in between. So mote it be.'

Chapter 5
THE PENTAGRAM

The pentagram is a symbol of warding and of summoning spirits, as in the casting of the circle. The methods of drawing them are precise, and vary according to their intent. As a symbol of protection it appears on doors and garden fence posts, as well as on some churches. The most instantly recognisable symbol of witchcraft is the five pointed star, or pentagram, also called the witch's foot. This is, after all, the principal sign worn that we can recognise each other, as the Christians used the sign of the fish, and the Hebrews the Star of David. The pentagram is found throughout the magical traditions of the west, and was used as a sign of recognition by Pythagoras and his disciples.

With one point upward, it is the sign of a practising witch or sorcerer. Its meaning is multi-layered, depending upon context. The symbol represents the five elements in unison, creating human consciousness. The element of 'spirit' is as being represented by the upright point, so that spirit dominates matter and is seen to rise above it. The pentagram may also be seen to be representative of the human body, the five wounds of Christ, and the power of Te-tra-gram-ma-ton.

With two points, the sign of the left handed worker, the higher grades, and of the Horned One. It is described in The Key to the Mysteries by Eliphas Levi thus; 'It is the goat of lust attacking the Heavens with its

horns. It is a sign execrated by initiates of a superior rank, even at the Sabbath.' In its averse form, matter can be seen to have conquered spirit.

This I believe to be an oversimplification of the symbol, a misunderstanding of the nature of spirit. All elements are equal and integral to the whole, and can be positioned anywhere around the star, it does not matter. Spirit is immanent, not transcendent. There is no spirit without matter, no matter without spirit. It is thus impossible for one to conquer or dominate the other. The idea that spirit is in any way separate or independent of the other elements is an absurdity; a confusion with the Christian concept of the 'soul'. It may no more be said to conquer or be dominated by matter than the elements of earth, air, fire or water.

This is all about how you interpret what is meant by the word 'spirit'. Is this the same thing as consciousness, or is it like the pseudo-scientific term 'aether'? If the first is true, then the more common interpretation does make sense, but if the second is true, the fifth element is actually Wyrd itself, perhaps better served in this instance with the name spirament. Consciousness results through the interaction of all five elements together. They are like the interaction of the five senses; taste, smell, touch, hearing and sight, to create our experience of the world and the 'sixth sense', which is within our own hearts.

If the fifth element is to be seen not as 'soul', but as spirament and Wyrd, this also makes a little more sense with regards to the cauldron as the fifth tool of the witch. It is the cauldron over which the three sisters may be seen to work, as they may be found at the well of Wyrd itself.

Pentagram horse brass. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, courtesy of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, Cornwall.

Chapter 6
THE DEOSIL CIRCLE

'Within this circle is Jehovah's name
Forward and backward anagrammatiz'd
The breviated names of holy saints,
Figures of every adjunct to the heavens,
And characters of signs and erring stars,
By which the spirits are enforced'd to rise.'
Doctor Faustus, Christopher Marlowe, 1604
(scene III, lines 8-13)

We gain our word sorcery from the Old French sorcerie; to encircle, to cast lots, and to use magick. The rituals of casting the circle are many, it being a feature common to just about every path of magick. On a physiological level, the casting of the circle marks the shift into altered consciousness, or gnosis. Centring one's awareness prevents stray thoughts arising. Centring one's self is essential preparation for the ritual to follow.

On a mythical level, the casting of the circle is to protect the sorcerer and their aids from the influence of malign magick or spirits. These include those that the practitioner might be summoning by their own will, usually via the addition of the triangle of evocation. Generally, they call upon the aid of benevolent spirits for aid and power. The circle may be marked, as above, with holy names, the signs of alchemy, the four archangels of Hebrew tradition, the elemental spirits of sylphs, undines, salamanders and gnomes, or the elemental Lords of Eurus, Zephyrus, Notus and Boreas, or any of countless other symbols and names of the craft.

The circle as cast in most witch traditions today calls upon and salutes the four 'watchtowers' of the world. Some say this code has its origins in pre-celtic lore, others that it is kabalistic or gnostic, entering the 'western mysteries' in the nineteenth century via the Golden Dawn. Its

validity as an ancient rite seems sound, yet whether it was used by witches in the British isles before then seems doubtful. However, much of the 'common knowledge' and even 'hereditary' knowledge of our witch lore also seems to have absorbed elements of these very same mystical traditions.

Kabalist magick has also influenced ceremonial western traditions since the middle ages, and it would not be impossible for the more learned cunning men to study it from the grimoires. From these cross fertilisations it may be that witchcraft acquired certain aspects of the Hebrew ways. Circles may also be cast by calling upon the protection of the four archangels. The more 'purist' strands of modern 'Pagan' witchcraft may feel uncomfortable calling upon forces that they associate with Christianity, and yet the origins of these traditions are in ancient Sumeria, Persia, and Babylon. They are of purer and more genuine place in the traditions of witchcraft than might otherwise be assumed. The mythology of the Watchers is explored further in a later chapter.

The four cardinal directions are also the four major festivals or 'sabbats' in the wheel of the year, and on the wheel of an individual's own life they represent east as birth and childhood, south as youth, west as maturity, and north as old age and death.

This ritual is presented in a form suitable for performance in a coven or group of four or more people, with an 'officer' standing on the outside of the circle at each of the cardinal points. Each in turn performs their own act of summoning, drawing upon the powers of the elemental spirits to bring their protection and blessings to the place, and their aid to whatever acts of ritual are to follow. This is achieved through the drawing of the upright pentagram in the air, facing away from the centre of the circle, and voicing the request for the spirit's presence clearly so that all may hear.

The elemental forces of the watchtowers are reflected in the traditional tools of the craft. Traditions differ, but most commonly, and according to the traditions of kaballa and the Tarot, east is air and the blade, south is fire and the wand, west is water and the cup, north is earth and the disc. The officers are the custodians of these tools, and employ them in their summonings.

After each pentagram has been drawn, and after each summoning, the entire circle hail the spirits, to recognise and welcome them. The circle begins in the east, then moves to the south, to the west, and finally in the north. Thus, the working moves in a 'sunwise' direction, in preparation for 'right handed' rites of witchcraft. It may easily be adapted for use by the solo witch, who simply performs each summoning theirself.

(Officer in the East)
"Guardians of the watchtowers in the east,
Spirits of the air, of the witch's blade,
Bless us with your wit and wisdom."

(All)
"Hail, guardians of the watchtowers in the east!"

(Officer in the South)
"Guardians of the watchtowers in the south,
Spirits of the fire, of the wizard's wand,
Bless us with your will and determination!"

(All)
"Hail, guardians of the watchtowers in the south!"

(Officer in the West)
"Guardians of the watchtowers in the west,
Spirits of the water, of cauldron and graal,
Bless us with your instinct and intuition!"

(All)
"Hail, guardians of the watchtowers in the west!"

(Officer in the North)
"Guardians of the watchtowers in the north,
Spirits of the earth, of platter and coin,
Bless us with your protection and fertility!"

(All)
"Hail, Guardians of the watchtowers in the north!"

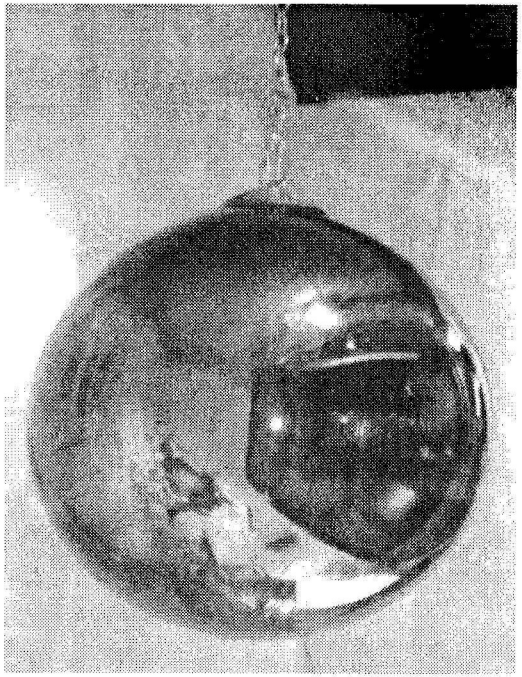
The circle is now cast, and none may leave until all acts of ritual to follow have been completed.

At the end of the meeting, the cardinal officers take their places once more, and bid the spirits to depart as follows;

(Officer in the East)
"Guardians of the watchtowers in the east,
Spirits of the air,
We thank you for your presence and aid,
And bid you to depart."

(All)
So mote it be.

Each cardinal officer performs the licence to depart, likewise.



Witches' Ball. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, courtesy of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, Cornwall. (Chapter, 'Tools of Cunning')

Chapter 7
THE WIDDERSHINS CIRCLE

The following ritual may be used to cast a circle in preparation for works of black witchcraft. It is intended for solo performance, since works of this nature are usually the more private kind. Of course, it may easily be adapted for use in a coven. It calls the aid of various spirit forces from the four directions, as with the deosil circle. However, the summoner moves anti-clockwise in their salutations, walking backwards. Also, the pentagrams are reversed, drawn with two points uppermost.

On a magicaly symbolic level, the casting of a circle 'the wrong way round', and the classical inversion of the pentagram, represents an act of willfull conflict, going 'against the grain'. This in itself is representative of the desire to create change, rather than to celebrate the way things are. Conflict and crisis create a situation that must be resolved in the now, rather than be worked through gradually, or avoided at whatever cost. Crisis, in this sense, is the great initiator, and the source of the sorcerer's power.

On a physical level, the centre of the circle is defined by plunging the dagger or rod in the ground, its point through the end of a cord four foot long. These together act as the anchor for a compass, the witch taking the other end of the cord and drawing a nine foot diameter circle in flour, chalk, salt, or whatever substance seems appropriate for the working.

The practitioner begins by facing the north, moving from there to west, then south, east, returning to face north. Whilst reciting each stanza, an averse pentagram is traced in the air with the left hand, utilising the rod or other magical tool if required. Whilst upright, in a deosil circle, this is a sign of banishing. In the widdershins circle, they are a sign of summoning. The pentagrams are visualised as being made from 'mind fire'.

(North)
Opener of the Ways,
Guardian of the Threshold
Who dwells in the house upon the borderlands.
I summon, stir, and call thee up!

(West)
Spirits of the Mystery,
Who know our secret motives,
Whose quest is eternal,
I summon, stir, and call thee up!

(South)
Spirits of the Sorcery
My familiar horde,
Who lurk at the edge of sight.
I summon, stir, and call thee up!

(East)
Shining ones of the Hidden Company,
Who are my wise counsel,
From my cradle to my tomb,
I summon, stir, and call thee up!

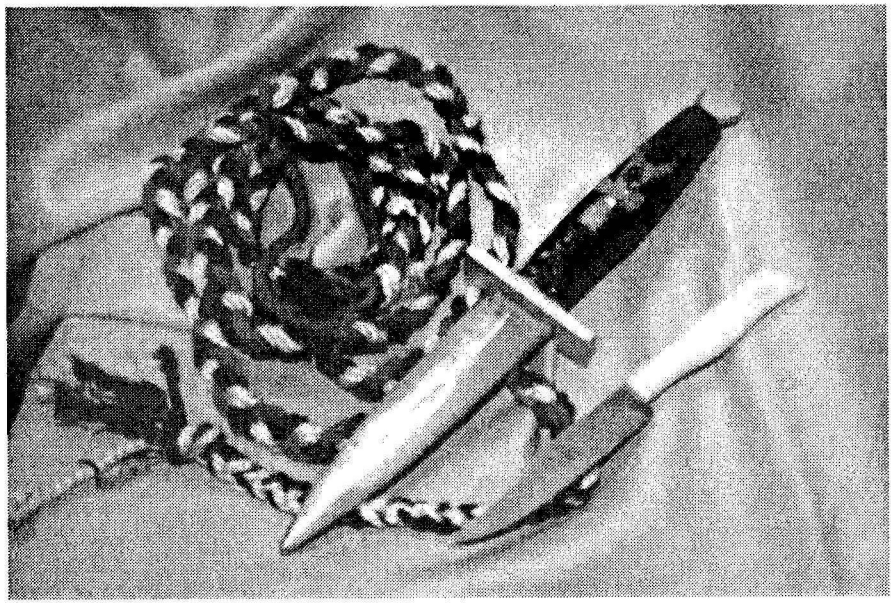
(Standing at the centre)
I give honour to the Lord and to the Lady,

Whose servant I forever am.

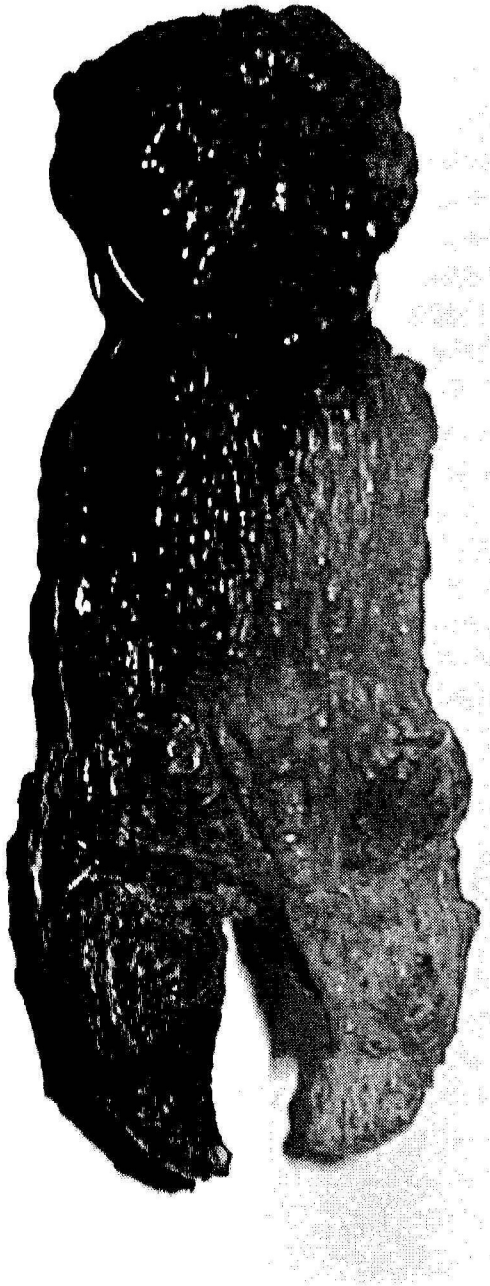
Be sure to thank such spirits for the aid when your sorcery is over, saying;

Spirits of the witches' craft,
I thank you for all the aid you have given me,
In the past, and in the now,
And for all the help that you will give in days to come.
Return to your abodes in the places between,
So mote it be.

Leave the area walking backwards for some way, sweeping the ground you have walked behind you of all traces that you have been there at all.



Working tools, athame, boline, and cords. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, courtesy of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, Cornwall. (See: 'Tools of Cunning'.)



Mandrake familiar. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, courtesy of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, Cornwall.

Chapter 8
THE SABBATS

I remember as a teenager being telephoned by the irate mother of my girlfriend. She was not a particularly rabid Christian, but had quite obviously fallen for all their myths about the witches' sabbats. This woman was very afraid for her daughter, and went on to say that my family held orgies and worshipped the Devil. I just happened to have my grandmother with me at the time, so I asked her how come I had not been invited to any of these orgies, and passed her the telephone. My girlfriend's mother hung up immediately.

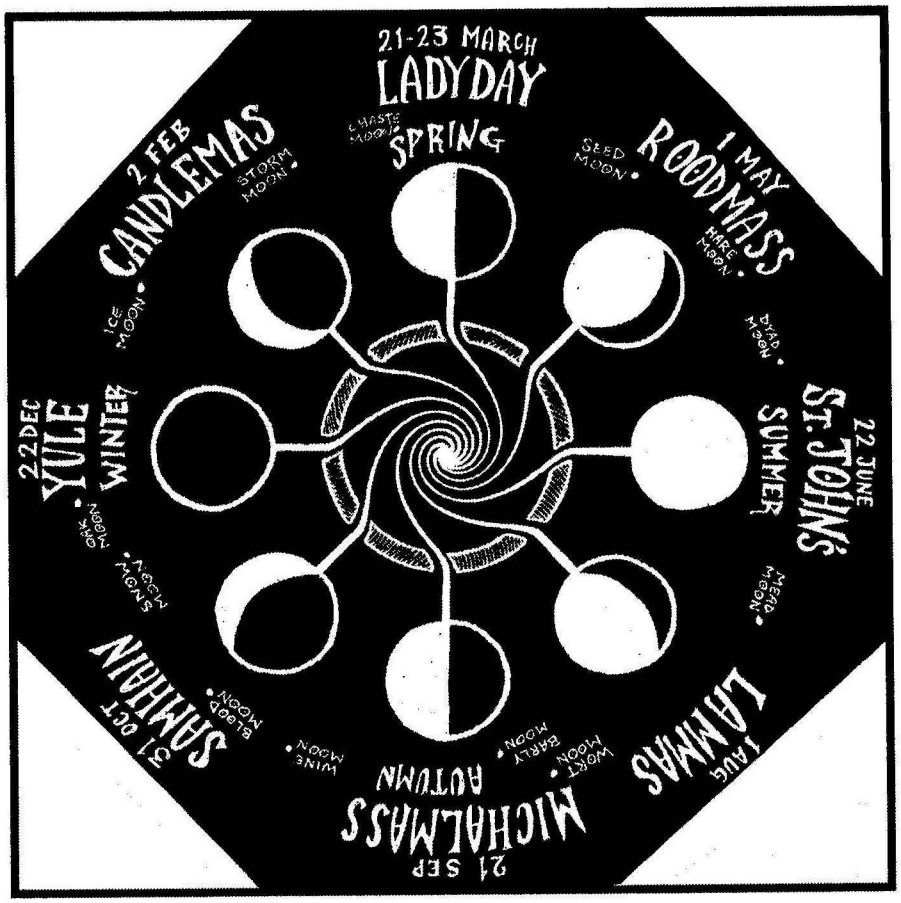
Did this woman actually believe all of the accusations she was coming out with? Perhaps she even believed that we all ride broomsticks and eat babies alive. In her limited awareness, since we were not Christians we must obviously be serving Satan. Such belief holds its origins in the forced confessions of the persecution. Detailed information concerning the supposed nature of the witches' sabbat comes from Scotland, where the witches would meet to perform a circle dance around a stone market cross, or a similar landmark. In Aberdeen this was the fish cross, whilst in Edinburgh it was alleged that the witches danced around a dolmen, whilst the Devil played to them. Such sabbats, we are told, invariably ended in a hedonistic orgy, where men, women, animals and the Devil all joined together in a carnal blasphemy of the last supper.

The truth is that the witches' sabbats have their origins in pre-Christian folk customs. They were pagan festivals that marked the passing of the seasons, and the turning of the wheel of time. They were socially practical, as they brought the community together at the time of harvest and suchlike, but they also held a deeper religious significance that has very little to do with the worship of Satan. Nor were they even called sabbats until the Holy Inquisition named them so. The word has its origins with the Jews, whom the Church incidentally also accused of holding midnight orgies and eating live babies.

Knowing that the pagan traditions could not be wiped out, the Church appropriated the festivals and made them their own, in much the same way as they made the pagan gods into saints and devils. Hence, to those that know, there are many pagan elements that still survive in the festivals as they are recognised today.

This is not to say that such traditions were necessarily harmless. They often contained elements such as human sacrifice and other things that none would wish to emulate in the modern day. This does not mean that we should neglect to celebrate them at all, or recognise their magical significance.

The sabbats number eight in total, being the spokes in the wheel of the year. In times gone by, as in the modern day, not all traditions actually recognised all eight of these festivals. Different areas of England place more importance on certain of these festivals than others. For example, in Norfolk the night of Halloween (originally Samhain) is barely recognised, and Christmas (Yule) seems to go on forever. In the West Country it is the Halloween celebrations that everybody really loves, and there are parties and celebrations that last the whole month through. The traditional sabbats are as follows;



Samhain

31st October, Greater Sabbat

More commonly known as Halloween, or All Hallow's Eve, this is the festival most popularly known as a witches' sabbat. It was and is particularly celebrated in the more Celtic fringes of the British isles. Along with their kindred spirits such as vampires, zombies, ghosts, ghouls, and werewolves, witches roam the streets, moving from door to door extorting money, sweets, fruit, toys and gifts, threatening that if such things are not freely given that some horrible trick will be played on the inhabitants. Traditionally games are played with apples and witch-hazel nuts, both of these also powerful emblems of the craft.

Samhain originally marked the beginning of the Celtic new year, being considered a 'missing day' between the old year and the new. It was also the welcoming in of winter, the dark counterpart of the Beltane fires. In preparation for the darkening and lengthening of the nights, the coming cold when the trees have lost their leaves and the ground gives no substance of food, the harvest was to be reaped and stored. Also, there would be limits on how much livestock people would be able to feed, so there would be a need to slaughter and salt a large number of the herd.

It makes sense that, since the ancestors require sacrifice to keep them strong and to appease them, that this should be the time of year to do it. The name of the month that Samhain falls in is called in Anglo-Saxon Blotmonath, meaning 'blood month'. Another name for Samhain in Irish Gaelic is File Na Marbh, the Feast of the Dead. This tradition survived in the giving of soul cakes, which were a treat left out for the spirits who rise from their graves at this festival.

It is at this time that the veil between this world and other realms is at its thinnest, and the entranceways to the sidh mounds would be laid open. Plus, of course, it is mushroom season. The festival of Samhain was not just a time for eating and drinking, but also a time of mystery and magick.

For those interested in syncretic tradition, it may be of interest that this night, also called All Saints Night, is in voodoo the Fete da Ghede. On this night new members of the famille Ghede make their appearance; spirits of death, graveyards, healing, humour, and revelry. The Baron, who is the paternal head of the Ghede, is married to the Irish goddess Brigid. The invocatory songs for her include amongst them one whose words translate as 'Brigid, she comes from England, From England...' So I think we can safely say that we are speaking here of the same goddess. In this incarnation she appears commonly as the classic crone, and acts as a judge and lawyer at the crossroads to the realms of the dead. This metisage between Irish pagan traditions and the African is the fault of Henry Cromwell, who was left in command of Ireland by his brother Oliver. He attempted to 'Christianise' the serpent worshipping pagans by selling them off as slaves to the baera (white Haitian land owners).

The traditions of dressing up as scary spirits and running through the streets playing 'trick or treat' may have its origins in rites of folk magick, actually intended to frighten bad spirits away rather than draw them in. The coming cold and dark is a time of anxiety, for if the winter proves too long and hard, and there is not enough food to get by, people will die. Such rites helped offer the protection such a vulnerable people need. The spirits required an appeasement of some kind, and this would invariably have been a sacrifice. Sometimes it may even have been human, perhaps a criminal saved just for the purpose. It seems likely that the modern celebrations of Bonfire Night, with the burning of the Guy, previously an anti-Catholic demonstration, may be a survival of such rites as the wicker man, as seen in the cult sixties film of the same name.

The bonfire is central to the sabbatical rites of witchcraft. Bonfires were traditionally lit in Scotland, Ireland and Wales. When they were consumed the ashes were collected and formed into a circle. A stone was set down for every person present, and if the next morning any stone had moved, this was a sign that they would be dead within the year. After this, the folk ran down the hill crying 'The black sow will take the hindmost!' This is the demon of dearth who had subdued, or eaten, the sun. He is known in Scotland as Samhanach and eats children. In Wales, he hangs out at sties in wait to terrify and consume the unwary. Children were possibly the earliest form of sacrifice offered to him.

Most of us have played the game of apple bobbing. The apple was always regarded by the Celts as a worthy sacrifice to the gods, hence the name of this land is Avalon, meaning land of apples. It was the talisman that lead heroes and sages to the Summer Lands, the land of the dead, and sustained them whilst there. Hazel nuts are also traditional in this season, the worship of which is alluded to as one of the particular rites of the first triad of Irish gods. The first of these is MacCuill, the god of the hazel tree. The hazel was the tree of the most profound immortal wisdom.

Yule

22nd December, Lesser Sabbat

The Christian celebration of the birth of the son of God has its origins in the rebirth of the god of the sun, and the vanquishing of the Holly King (The 'old' and dying Horned God) by the Oak King (The 'new' and living Horned God) by right of combat, and rite of sacrifice. It was not until 723 A.D. that Christ's birthday was given any date at all. The Church quite wisely chose this date to 'superimpose' their own celebrations upon those of the various solar deities, almost all of whom saw this date as auspicious since it marks the return of the light, and the lengthening of the days. Jesus Christ thus gets to share His birthday with, amongst others, Mithras and Dionysos.

'Obby 'Oss, Cornwall, said to be at last 200 years old.
Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans.

The vanquishing of the Old Horned God survives in our traditions of the Yuletide mummer's plays. Drunken peasants in exotic masked costumes move from house to house, making a hell of a lot of noise, and enacting a play whose theme and words have been passed down through the generations. In this play, Saint George is forced to face the Turkish Knight in combat and slays him, only to lament after his death that he has killed his own brother. The Knight is then magically revived through the aid of the Doctor, and all rejoice.

The master of these Yule ceremonies is the Lord of Misrule, known otherwise as the Pope of Unreason, or the Pope of Fools, whose reign lasts until Twelfth Night. He is the leader of the masked dramatis personae. These might include all manner of beasts, dragons, the 'Obby 'Oss, and other 'guise dancers as may be seen in St. Ives and other parts of Cornwall, as well as in Scotland.

In times past, we considered these twelve days to be 'invisible'. They officially did not exist. The normal rules of the land would be reversed, so that a Lord became a servant, and a servant a Lord, and there is a lot of cross dressing, so that boys become girls and girls become boys. Any crime that was committed during these days, if the culprit was not caught by the time normality was resumed, would go unpunished.

The Yule log, whose ashes are saved and spread upon the fields, has its origins in Scandinavia, and was brought to the British Isles when they invaded. They also brought us the name Yule itself. In France we find a 'pointer' at the original purpose of this log. It is believed that if it is kept beneath the bed, it acts as a talisman against malign forces such as fire, thunder, and lightening for a whole year. The size of a real Yule log means that it gives off massive heat and light, standing in the place of the departed sun. It was the very soul of the banished god. Thus it acts to deter the dark spirits who have reign during the winter months.

Other survivals include the decoration of the home with evergreens; holly, ivy, and the mistletoe above the door, or held above the head of someone we wish to steal a kiss from.

Mistletoe is closely associated with Druidic ritual, where it is taken from the oak with a golden sickle on the sixth day of the moon. Custom has it that when put in a drink it may restore fecundity to barren animals. It

was considered by the ancients to contain the essence of life, and was much sought after by the apothecaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

The most obvious survival of folk custom at Yule must be the giving and receiving of gifts, the consumption of vast amounts of foodstuffs, and of course the drinking. My own family has always been especially fond of hosting 'open circle' celebrations at this time of year, with a house party and plenty of home brewed mead. None of this would mean anything without the presence of Saint Nicholas, or Santa Claus. There are folk who hold dear that Santa has his origins in Odin, the Father of Darkness, for whom a popular name just happened to be 'Old Nick'.

Imbolc

2nd February, Greater Sabbat

More popularly known by its Christianised name Candlemas, this festival sees in the first signs of the spring season. It is also the festival of the Celtic Goddess Brigid, Christianised as Saint Brigid, even if only thinly disguised. Even in this form she shows distinctly un-Christian traits, such as being born with a supernatural flame coming from the middle of her head, being brought up by a sorcerer, knowing more than a little of the arte herself, and inspiring great poetry. She gave her name to Brigantia, the Celtic kingdom that covered the whole of northern England, and her worshippers were called Brigands, which became a name denoting a highway robber, in the same way as the Thuggee worshippers of Kali gave their name to thugs.

Overall, however, she was less concerned with acts of violent robbery than with fertility, poetry, smiths, doctors, and lovemaking. Folk customs still exist today in which the woman of the house 'welcomes Brigid' into the home, creating an effigy of the goddess, laying it down outside the front door or inside the home, alongside phallic items. The word 'bride' also comes from her name- she is the 'original bride' of the Horned One.

Brigid was the goddess of the sacred cleansing fires of purification, which are lit in her honour at this time. Her worship perhaps also

survives in the rural tradition of the Crown of Lights, which is a crown of burning candles placed upon the head of the village's prettiest girl. It is possible that this tradition may have its origins in rites of possession, where the goddess was considered to 'descend' into the body of a living mortal. In her Christianised version, Saint Bridget continues to tend the sacred fires, in the company of nineteen nuns.

It is at Imbolc that the Biddie is made, which is a corn doll effigy of the goddess. These are blessed by the whole community, traditionally taken from home to home, the carriers knocking on each door three times, and then sacrificed to the land. An alternative form of Biddie is that made to do the 'witch's bidding', and it is from here that we have acquired the term 'old biddie', meaning an old woman who has spirits that do her bidding.

The traditional rituals of Imbolc also include spring cleaning, and the sweeping of the house from top to bottom with the besom.

Spring Equinox / Lady Day

March 21-23, Lesser Sabbat

This season begins truly in a minor way at the very start of March. This is when the crazy hares may be seen boxing in the fields. The competition amongst the folk upon meeting someone on this day, is to be the first to box their ears. It is the time when the days finally begin to become longer than the nights, and so it is said that the sun god grows to become adult. It is also, traditionally, the time when the furze fires are set upon the hills, burning away the old prickles. The result is that tender new sprouts rise, which are greedily eaten by the sheep.

Post Church, this has become the season of Easter. It is from the pagan festivals that we have inherited the rabbit and the egg, both symbols of fertility, and of the Teutonic goddess Eostar, or Ostara, from whence the festival gets its name. Her celebration traditionally fell upon the full moon after the Vernal Equinox, which the Church changed to the first Sunday in order to avoid explicit association with goddess worship in any form. Indeed, should the Sunday happen to be a full moon, the festival

would be postponed for a week. Hence it is that Easter moves around the calendar, never falling on the same day from one year to the next.

In his work Traditions, Superstitions, and Folk-lore, 1830, Charles Hardwicke speaks of a tradition in Lancashire and the North of England where grown adults would dress in the skins of animals and parade the streets 'egg rolling' or 'pace egging'. They were lead by a man with a blackened face, whose name was Toss Pot. Occasionally they acted out a drama of murder and resurrection quite identical to that described below, deeply rooted in the lore of the sabbat.

In our tradition, coverners will often perform witchcraft based upon the symbolism of the egg. These are blown out and painted, then ritually 'fertilised' with a desire. A hollow egg may of course have all manner of glyphs and sigils hidden inside it. These are given as gifts.

Another ritual is to have a bowl of soil, each coverner adding a seed and voicing their desire. It is understood that each desire added in this way is shared by each member of the coven. These are planted and allowed to grow.

Beltane / Roodmas/ May-Day / Walpurgis Night

30th April / 1st May, Greater Sabbat

The May Day festivals see in the real start of the summer festival season, and in the village of Wivenhoe (Wyvern's Hole?) in Essex where I grew up, this is the time when many of those whose lives had taken them away from the area would return. For us, May Day would be anticipated as a time of reunion, with stalls and bands on the green, as well as jugglers, stilt walkers, and all manner of performance.

May Day is a day of forgiveness, or 'getting things over with'. Grievances that have been held through the winter are aired on this day, so that you either get on with them afterwards, or you beat each other up. This tradition means that in some villages of England, May Eve sees the public houses erupt into massive brawls. This is something that has

continued, despite attempts by 'the authorities' to prevent it, for hundreds and hundreds of years. It remains ever popular.

Whereas Samhain welcomes in the winter, May-Day welcomes in the summer. Together they form the two most important of all the Celtic festivals. In England this was known as Roodmas, whilst the German Walpurgisnacht, taking its name from Saint Walpurga, who apparently died on this date in 777A.D. In the British Isles, the Druids recognised this date, celebrating upon hilltops as did the magicians of Finland.

The name Beltane comes from the Celtic god Bel, also called Belenus 'The Shining One', Bal, or Balor of the Evil Eye, who was the god-king of the Fomorians. Some even trace his name to the Middle Eastern Baal, and also Belial, both of whom make later appearances as classic devils of Pandemonium, as does Beal-zebub, Lord of the Dungheap. There is a boy's game still played in some areas of this country, which shows somewhat the original nature of Bel's Day. The children meet at the top of a hill with a hat or a bonnet, within which are a number of cakes, which are chosen at random as 'lots'. One of these is baked hard or 'blackened', and whoever picks it is declared 'to be sacrificed to Bel', and beaten up by all the others.

The Bel or Need fires are alluded to in the runes as Nauthiz. They were lit upon hilltops to bring light and power to the sky, celebrating the return of life to the ground, and also as a sign of social status and leadership. No fires atop any hill were to be lit until the king of the locality had lit theirs.

Beltane fires were also used in rites of sexuality and fertility. These are the fires that couples leap over hand in hand, also built in the form of straw huts with two doors, through which a winding dance was led as the straw was set aflame. For practical reasons, due to the fire risk, such dances are performed naked. Bel fires were also lit in pairs, so that cattle could be driven through them, the magick of the fire purifying them and increasing the likelihood of their mating.

On Beltane night, it was and is traditional to go out into the woods, collecting flowers and fauna. These were brought back to decorate the home and village, so that the first morning of May would be one of joy.

May Day means more street processions, and is traditionally the day of Robin Hood festivals. Murray, in The God of the Witches, and many others, have identified Robin Hood with Robin Goodfellow, and both names are associated with witchcraft lore. He is none other than the Lord of Phaerie, and Marion is none other than Lady May, the May Queen. They are the Lord and Lady that preside over the sabbat, the 'gang' numbering thirteen in all. Not only is the holding of a fair a frequent occurrence in the ballads of Robin Hood, but also in the ballads of phaerie lore. Popular tradition has it that Robin Hood was inspired in his time by a keen hatred of the Church and all its ministers. The pious complained that the folk swore by his name, as some of those less than a century ago in the Western Isle of Scotland swore by Crom Cruach, and the Hackney coachmen of London swore by Gog and Magog.

There is the historical event of Bishop Latimer who arrived at his village church on May Day, known in his area as Robin's Day, only to find the church door locked. Nobody was there to hear him preach, as all had gone abroad to celebrate the festival of Robin. The feelings of his parish were expressed in 1554, when the locals burnt him alive. Onlookers were heard to say that it was a shame that it had not happened sooner, as it might have saved the crops.

Other spirits of this season include Jack-o-the-Green, otherwise called Green George, who plays a role in the mummer's plays. His costume is made of leaves and greenery, and his face is often blackened. It is clear that all these rituals and dances are associated with the memories of more than one ancient cultus, all of them the expression of a common idea concerning the resurrection of the life force in spring. The basis of the May Day celebrations are undoubtedly Celtic, although certain features are later importations.

In Cornwall the 'Obby 'Oss may be seen, towering above the heads of the crowd. This fore-runner to the traditional child's 'hobby horse' can often take on a sinister appearance, the head being a horse's skull, and the carrier of this totem shrouded beneath a black cape that swells out from beneath. This image has been with us since paleolithic times, with the only piece of old stone age art found in Britain being a carving in bone, depicting a man wearing a horse's skull as a mask.

Where my mother now lives, they have an eight foot high 'Obby 'Oss which is over two hundred years old, the head of which is the huge skull of an old shire horse. In Padstow, Cornwall, the tradition survives that each year the 'Obby 'Oss is symbolically sacrificed, miraculously brought back to life the following year. This perhaps alludes to an even older tradition where the taboo on eating horse flesh, still strong in modern Britain, would be lifted for a day.

Into the nineteenth century there existed in Wales a traditional peasant dance and march, led by a dancer called the Cadi. An observer in 1825 records, 'His countenance is also particularly distinguished by a hideous mask, or is blackened entirely over; and then the lips, cheeks, and orbits of the eyes are sometimes painted red. The number of the rest of the party, including the garland bearer, is generally thirteen.' Perhaps this is none other than Tubal-Cain the coal black smith, the 'Devil' of the witches' coven.

The most famous of all May Day celebrations, and the best known to any child who grows up in rural England, is the May Pole. This pole, sometimes a garlanded tree, forms the centre piece of the village fair. Around it the boys and girls dance, weaving in and out of one another, each holding the end of a long coloured ribbon or rope, so that together they weave through the dance to form a multicoloured webbing. In Seasonal Games and their Sources, Lewis Spencer, 1947, the author traces the origins of the May Pole to the bile, or Bel Tree, which was a venerated tree said to represent the power of the ancestral dead. That miserable Puritan Philip Stubbes, in his Anatomie of Abuses, 1583, describes how twenty to fourty yoked oxen would be used to drag such a tree into the parish, 'every Ox having a sweet nose-gay of flowers tied to the tips of its horns, and these oxen drage home this maypole (this stinking Idol, rather) which is covered all over with flowers and herbs.' He goes on to describe how the villagers would 'leap and dance about it, as the Heathen people did at the dedication of their Idols, whereof this is the perfect pattern, or rather the thing itself'. In 1644 the British Parliament, attempting still in vain to stamp out the heathen past of its subjects, ruled that maypoles were to be made illegal. This did not last long, and they were reinstated in 1661, when a gigantic maypole was erected in London.

A feature of many old English May Day festivals was the garlanding of a staff, in the centre of which were many gaily dressed dolls. These were carried through the streets as a procession, lead by two children - a boy and a girl - who were known for the day as the Lord and the Lady.

Sex is quite high on the agenda at this time of year. As the sun comes out, young hormones are racing. The game of 'kiss chase' has its origins in the traditional celebrations of May Day, and the love chase wherein the coal black smith and his like chase their chosen sweethearts, pursuing them through a stream of shape-shifting. She becomes a hare, he becomes a fox, she becomes a fly, he a spider. It is the time of greenwood marriages, performed quite unashamedly without the blessing of the local priest, or at least, not in his Church. It was traditional to stay up all night, and watch the May Sun rise with your loved one. It was believed that the more the villagers frolicked at such a time, the better the crops would grow. The Puritans reacted with horror at such rites, since there is nothing that they fear as more pagan than the sight of people having a good time.

St. John's Day / Summer Solstice

21st June, Lesser Sabbat

The Summer Solstice is the time when we celebrate the longest day in the year. From this day onwards, the nights begin to get longer, and the darkness creeps up upon us. The festivals at this time have always been noted for their bonfires, which were and are danced around deosil (sunwise). Leaping over it, or driving one's cattle through it, acts to 'decontaminate' from malign influences.

At Whiteborough, a tumulus near Launceston in Cornwall, a large bonfire is traditionally set on Mid-Summer's Eve. Local custom has it that there are giants buried beneath it. In times past a pole was set at the centre of the fire, on the top of which was placed a large bush. Around this, wrestlers competed for small prizes. However one day they received a visit from a devil in the form of a large black dog. Since then, none might wrestle at this spot without receiving injury.

Although the Solstice may have been all but unknown to the Celts, at least according to some historians, the Summer Solstice festivals are in England now amongst the biggest. Hundreds of people gather to celebrate, and one of the places they tend to gather is Stonehenge. Modern day Druids also meet there, to perform their daylight rites.

There are many theories as to who originally built Stonehenge, and much controversy over the yearly events that happen there now. One theory, now generally discounted, is that the Druids built the henge as a solar temple, and that the whole structure is a little like a sun dial.

More recent theories tell us that the structure is actually far older. The theory as to its solar significance, however, still stands as strong as the monument itself. The pagan scholar Professor Ron Hutton has presented the idea that there is in fact a missing stone, which would have cast a shadow around the circle which would have gradually lengthened, until it fell upon a nearby underground opening in a rather sexually suggestive manner upon the Solstice morn. The sun god fertilising the earth? A replacement structure was made, in order that the casting of this shadow could be observed, and his theories indeed seem to hold out.

It is my belief that places hold their own power and significance, and that to have any idea what this significance might be, one must observe the kinds of things that happen there now rather than simply speculate about the past. Each year thousands of people, many of them 'travellers', who consider it their right to have access to these stones as a part of their spiritual heritage, have to break through lines of barbed wire fences and police officers who believe that they do not. The reason for this is that such people might damage them. The facts are, however, that they are respectful of the place's mystery, and do not cause any damage at all.

There are many stiff upper lipped 'Pagans' who believe that such people are nothing more than scum, refusing to recognise them as any kind of 'fellow Pagan'. One wonders where these Wiccans and Druids find the right to be so infuriatingly presumptuous, judgmental, and patronising.

Since the Battle of the Bean Field, when Thatcher's police brutality reached its height, and many of these travellers had their homes destroyed whilst the rest of us watched pregnant women being beaten with truncheons on the evening news, the importance of these henge

celebrations has only increased. It is symbolic of the people's attempts to reclaim Albion, and the heritage that has been denied us as a whole. Although the government records may say otherwise, we are not talking about a violent people who take too much heroin, but the attempted destruction of an ageless heathen tradition. It is about the claim of the land's ownership, and is a struggle that has continued since the Church's first arrival on this island.

If Druid rituals are supposed to be 'for the people', it is hardly right that these people should then be excluded. It is these people who, by taking the authorities on face to face, are working to prevent its destruction. If it were not for them, there would most likely be a motorway running straight through the monument's centre. It is easy for the ignorant to make a claim to what is right on their own side, and what is right on the other side, but nobody wants to get their heads smashed in by rioting police officers, marching in Roman formation, for no good reason. This fight for the reclamation of Albion thus provides a strong and central theme in the modern celebrations of the Summer Solstice.

There are theories that the henge was originally built as a meeting place to unite the tribes, who in early Celtic England were nomadic wanderers. In 25 AD *Strabo* wrote of the Celts, 'Their cities are the woods. They enclose a large area with felled trees and set up huts to house themselves and their animals, never with the intention of staying there long.' I do not know what the historians may think of this idea, but it would certainly seem born out at a geomantic level by the events that have happened there in more recent years. Too many of the parallels are just a little too obvious.

Lammas / Lughnassadg

1st August, Greater Sabbat

Lammas takes its name from the Scottish Gaelic, meaning the mass of Lugh, a Celtic god of fire and light. He was the son and slayer of Balor, and thus the deity who replaced him in the procession of the ages. Some theories suggest that he takes his name from the Latin lux, meaning light,

thus giving his name a similiar root to that of the witch's god and Christian fallen angel, Lucifer.

As may be expected, there are many parallels between the autumn traditions of Lammas and those of Beltane. The two are celebrations of the waxing and the waning of the year, and were times when the Celtic tribes would gather together. Both are times of marriage and mating, and it is from the traditions of the Irish Tailltean celebrations that we possibly gain the 'one year and one day' rites of handfasting. This meant that a couple could renew their vows or not, depending on whether they still got on. According to my mother, it was essentially of convenience to the women, who could dump the male if she decided he did not pull his weight in the relationship.

Lammas is also the time of year associated with Crom Cruach, the Lord of the Mound, also called Crom Dubh, the Lord of Darkness. This is probably one of the most frightening of all the Celtic gods. Crom Cruach was originally a huge, black bloated maggot, who represented the fact that death feeds upon life, and life feeds upon death. A corpse ridden with maggots can often give the illusion of being animated. His worship, according to what the Romans have written, was achieved through magical rituals centred upon a severed human head.

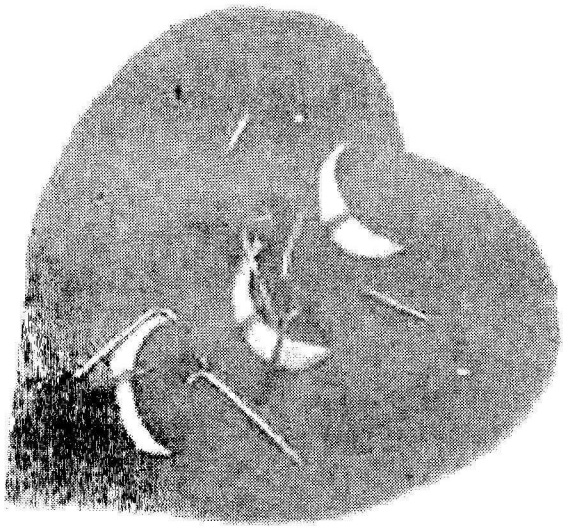
This festival marks the beginnings of the grain harvest, and the sacrifice of the Corn King or John Barleycorn. As is suggested in the words of the folk song, the rituals of this time of year would originally have featured a human sacrifice, whose blood would be spilt on the fields. This sacrifice tends to be symbolic in modern times, represented in my own mother's rituals by a corn dolly to be sacrificed in the place of the Old King. Lammas is also known as Loaf-Mass, and the sacrifice may also be an effigy made from bread, who is then 'killed', torn apart, and shared amongst the coven, with its head left for 'the place' where the rites are held.

Autumn Equinox

21st September, Lesser Sabbat

The nights and days are of the same length. From this night onwards, the darkness dominates the light, and the rituals of witchcraft reflect this. Among many covens, this is the time of year when the game of Benevento is played. The men sit in a circle, and the women move around this circle but are forbidden to enter it. The men pass a lit candle between them, and the women attempt to reach inwards and snuff or blow it out.

Also, this is the last in the sabbatic cycle before the witches' new year, and so magical rituals may be performed to symbolically 'tie up loose ends'. In my mother's coven such spells are cast using ancient and traditional methods of knot magick.



Love Spell. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, courtesy of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, Cornwall.

Esbats

"See next the wretches who the needle left,
The shuttle and the spindle, and became
Diviners : baneful witcheries they wrought,
With images and herbs. But onward now :
For now doth Cain with fork of thorns confine,
On either hemisphere, touching the wave
Beneath the towers of Seville. Yesternight
The moon was round. Thou may'st remember well,
For she good service did thee in the gloom
Of the deep wood."

Inferno, Danté

The magical 'pull' of the full moon brings out the shapeshifters, the werewolves, the lunatics, and the witches. As well as the traditional eight major solar sabbats, which link the practice of witchcraft to the wider 'pagan' rooted folk customs, there are the thirteen lunar esbats, which fall each upon a full moon. Each has its own name, and symbolism linking to its season. Since there are twelve solar months, and thirteen lunar months in a year, the two are slightly awkward to align.

They are, as best as can be approximated:

Blood Moon, a night traditionally associated with the slaughter of animals, falling on the last full moon before Samhain.

Snow Moon, November, at which we are supposed to have the first fall of snow.

Oak Moon, December. Associated with the Oak King, and the darker aspects of the Horned God, who battles with the Holly King at Yule.

Ice Moon, January.

Storm Moon, and the original Ostara rites, February.

Chaste Moon, March.

Seed Moon, April.

Hare Moon, May.

Dyad Moon, June.

Mead Moon, July.

Wort Moon, August.

Barley Moon, September.

Wine Moon, September/October.

Reverence for the moon, in one form or another, seems to be common to most schools of witchcraft, world wide and throughout all of history. Whilst some covens tend towards the solar current, others towards the lunar, with some striking a balance, it is rare indeed for a group to work with either exclusively.

Chapter 9
THE WITCHA'S RUNES

This is a rune I have heard a man say:
"Hold your head up and you see far away".
This is a Rune I Have Heard a Tree Say, George Barker

The runes came to us in England via the Norse, in the form of what is now known as the Elder Futhark- taking its name from the first few runes that appear in its alphabet, of which there are sixteen in total. We know that this alphabet was of immense spiritual, religious, and magical significance. It was not simply used for writing lists of who owns what cattle, or who owed who how much. Each letter was a pictographic representation of some principle, and by inscribing these symbols this principle could be tapped into. They were used for the purposes of spellcasting for good or malicious ends, and to receive communication and advice from the realms of the spirits. We know the meanings of these runes to some degree, because the poems that told of them were transcribed in the *Eddas*.

These remained part of our own culture, and we expanded upon them to create our own variation with twenty-nine runes. We have been left the manuscript *Cottonian MS Otho BX*, which dates back to perhaps 1000 AD, although the actual poem itself dates two centuries earlier. This manuscript is, tragically, not for us to view in its original since it was destroyed by fire in 1731. The single oldest version of this poem exists in a book published by George Hicks in 1705, *Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus* (Treasury of Ancient Northern Languages). The inquisitive reader is directed toward the book *An Introduction to English Runes*, R. I. Page, published by Methuen Co., which contains a translation from the Anglo-Saxon. The truly dedicated researcher may enjoy the study, as I have done, in its Anglo-Saxon original, with a good A.S. dictionary by their side. I have created my own translation, which is influenced by the work of the real scholars who have performed this task before me, but which also remains essentially my own. I do not

include it here.

Instead, I am even more assuming, and present *A New English Rune Poem.* This was written as part of my own study and work with the runes, through free association or 'automatic' writing. This is not written to replace the others, but as a tribute to them, and as a working tool in my own magick. For the sake of completion, I also include some guiding notes as to the meanings of each rune, and the Elder forms from which they originate.

The only way to study the runes, in my opinion, is to study these original poems and work with them through meditation and practical application. Only then can some of their deeper meanings come to the fore. Many writers have presented their own list of meanings for the runes, many agree in places and disagree in others. This may baffle and confuse some students, but the reason for it is simple. Nobody really knows. Study their works if you will, but always bear this in mind. Throw away anything that goes on about a 'blank' rune, which is supposedly the rune of Odin. All magical systems warp and adapt, but this has to be one of the most misleading pieces of rubbish ever to lie its way into 'tradition'.

Through personal work, you will find that the runes may acquire significance for you, personally, that might not be included in any of these lists, and possibly not even hinted at in the poems. There is nothing right or wrong in this, although many of the scholars who build their reputation on the intellectual study of rune lore may disagree with you. But what do they know? So long as your knowledge comes from genuinely disciplined work, and not sloppy fantasy, you are tapping into their mysteries in a way that purely intellectual study of can never do. The study itself is crucial, but the runes will never really respond to you until you feed them your blood.

In the use of runes for divination, I can only recommend that you do not buy for yourself a bunch of stones or inscribed plastic pebbles from any of the 'witchcraft' shops. Make your own, from the wood of a fruit bearing tree, and charge each as you carve it. Sing the names, and hold what meanings they have for you in your mind. Feed them your blood. If painting them, as was actually more common practice than carving by the time they developed the cursive forms of the English runic alphabet,

a little blood may be added to the ink.

The word *rune*, in common language, means to whisper, as well as to sing. There are many ways of casting their magick, giving them life through breath and sound. Their signs may also be made with the hands, such as the *mano cernuto* Horned God salute which is also the *Uruz* rune, or the crossed fingers of the *Need* rune, the raised finger of *Isa.* They may even be signed with the whole body. There are occult martial arts that relate directly to their forms, the projection of *spirament,* and even sexual formulae. Their magick is physical, and actual. They work brilliantly as charms when tattooed upon the body, and are also quite beautiful to the eye.

I see the rune poems as being a little like the classical grimoire, in as much as they are each the sign by which a spirit may be summoned. Indeed, the traditional books of 'Galðr' kept by the warlocks bare an uncanny resemblance to the books of glyphs and supplications to the infernal ones that are found in the possession of many of rural England's cunning folk, or folk of 'kenning'; itself a term that implies a connection to the runic traditions. Like all twilight tongues and the language of the birds, they are a subliminal code that reaches back into the deeper mind; right back to the group soul of ancestral memories.

Is it even politically correct for me to say such a thing? Their use by Fascist groups I find most regretful. The swastika is a beautiful symbol, most beloved by the Picts and the Celts as a sign of good luck and sunshine, appearing also in the Orient, long before its association with such acts of atrocity. I feel quite strongly that this symbol should be resurrected from the cave it has been hidden in since the Second World War, and their association with Nazi politics. I am in no way supportive of Nazi Germany or Apartheid, but by making symbols such as the flyfot cross or the triskel taboo because of such people serves to strengthen their association with such symbols, which they have effectively stolen from the rest of us. We should not let them thieve our magick for such ends.

My own introduction to the runes was principally through one of my first teachers outside my family; a friend of my mother and the daughter of a close friend of J. R. R. Tolkien, herself also a practising witch. Amongst

the first spells I remember consciously casting was a rune spell. Some of the most successful and strangest magical events of my life have centred around them. They still retain their sense of awe for me. I recognise them as a part of my own personal heritage, and yet I nor any member of my family are nationalist or racist. That it is necessary in these times to state this explicitly is a sad thing indeed.

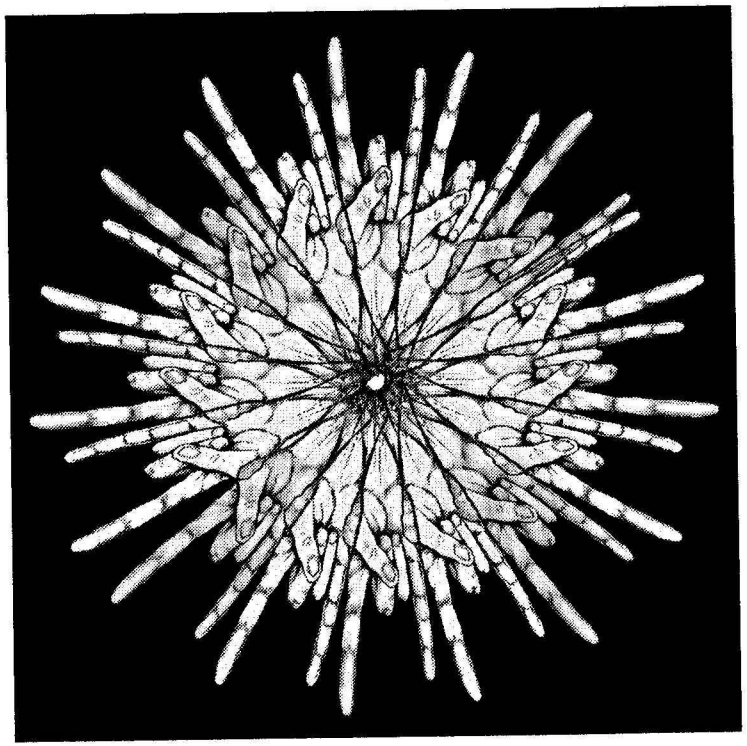
Notes on the suggested use of runes in magick are given in greater detail later. However, it is only through personal and practical application in meditation, enchantment and divination that the witch, warlock, or *rardlokkur*, can ever grasp their significance and power. Over time, a relationship is recognised between the spirit symbols of the runes and the spirit matter of the witch. Through anointing them with your blood, they become linked to you, and so the study of them must ultimately become the study of your own self. They are a secret language that speaks of the very mystery that is the embodiment of witchcraft.

The nature of spirit is ever changing, and does not abide by conservative lore. As we have embraced the runes and made them a part of our own culture, their nature has adapted and warped. Similarly, with the gods. We have seen how the Wyrd sisters have merged with similar archetypes and evolved to become our classical idea of the three witches. The well of Wyrd has become also the cauldron, roaring at the crossroads where the witches work their sorcery with wing of bat and tongue of dog. It is also the case that we have embraced others amongst the 'gods of the north' and made them distinctly our own.

Odin or Wotan is identified with the master of the crossroads, as the lord of the hunt and the guardian of the corpse paths. In Scandanavian lore, it is Odin that first discovered the meanings of the runes and 'earthed' them as the knowledge that became central to the warlocks. Piercing himself with his spear, he hung for nine days and nine nights upon the world tree, Yggdrasil, and so it is easy to equate him with Christ upon the cross, which itself may be reinterpreted as a sign of witchcraft in any case. However, Odin has also hidden behind the tales of Old Nick. With the re-identification of the old gods as devils, we find him keeping company with those of the infernal realms. It is common knowledge that the Church enforced such an identification, but rarely admitted that witches ever responded by identifying their devils as gods in an 'equal

and opposite' reaction. His name was evoked in the old charms of England alongside those of Beezlebub, Satan and Lucifer. He thus became a 'folk devil', a memory kept alive as a spiritually rebellious act amongst the peasantry.

The Norse god Tyr, having sacrificed his right hand for the good of the world, is thus identifiable as a master of the left hand path. Through his association with smithery and steel, the mystery has resonance with that of Tubal-Cain, and the Wayland Smithie. He is a sorcerer god, and keeper of the Black Hound. In East Anglia, where I have lived for most of my life, there are still many sightings of his beast-sending even by those who do not know his identity. He is called by us *Old Shuck*, and across the U.K. he survives also under variations of this name. According to the persecution records of Scotland, the witch master was known as *O'Shak*, as was the initiator of the nineteenth century 'Made Horsemen'. Since this mystery school made its way from Scotland to East Anglia, it seems unlikely to be mere coincidence.



Chapter 10
A NEW ENGLISH RUNE POEM

FEE

We live in a world where everything has a price,
and we can see it.
(Reversed: The only logical choice is
the refusal to pay.)

ORIGINS: (Old English) feoh, feo, meaning cattle, property and wealth. (High German) fehu, fihu, meaning cattle, beasts.

ELUCIDATION: The cattle driven wagons of Celtic and Germanic migrations consisted of the mobile wealth of the peoples.

MAGICK: Usually interpreted to mean wealth of any kind, money, material power. The paying or receiving of a fee.

URUZ

The horned beast dwells within us all,
and the witches salute this fact.
It cannot be repressed,
for such will result in its manifestation
by some other route.
But it can be directed.
It is the Will in its pure and unassuaged form,
instinct without deviation.
We may even be tempted to call it..
the Devil!

ORIGINS: (Old English) ur, meaning ox, bison. In German and Dutch ur means primal and ancient.

ELUCIDATION: This rune takes its name and form from the 'auroch', who were a great wild horned beastie not unlike the cattle of the highlands but much bigger. Nomadic tribes relied upon them for their lively-hood. They have been extinct for some several thousand years.

MAGICK: Self assertion, bravery, ferocity, aggression, the instincts, atavistic sorcery. Bloody mindedness, obstinacy. Matters of health.

THORN

Fuck the roses,
send me the thorns.

ORIGINS: (Old Norse) thurs, (Germanic) thurisaz, meaning giant. (Old English) thorn, meaning piercer.

ELUCIDATION: Its original meaning of 'giant' suggests the untameable and unpredictable elements of nature, and the power of the ancient gods whose rites have been lost. These in turn suggest the forces of Chaos. The later meaning of 'thorns' is in some ways in keeping with this, the thorn being a symbol of potent human sexuality.

MAGICK: Chaos, pain, severity, love and war. May be used aggressively or defensively in magical combat, like an astral dagger or the wall of thorns around sleeping beauty.

OZ

We are off to see the wizard,
The wonderful wizard of Oz.
Because...

ORIGINS: (Old English) os, meaning god, mouth, speech. (Norse) ass, meaning a god, an estuary, a river mouth.

ELUCIDATION: Often considered as Odin's own rune. The Anglo-Saxon Rune Poem suggests that the meaning of this rune was connected with the knowledge of ancestry, magick and wisdom with its roots in the distant past.

MAGICK: Wisdom, wizardry, ancestral magick, communications, transmissions, and the discovery of new magical systems.

RIDE

Sit back.
Relax.
And enjoy the ride.
The ride of your life.

ORIGINS: (Old English) rad, (Norse) rado, meaning road, ride.

MAGICK: Travel, a journey, decisions, moving on, progress, transportation, return.

CUNNING

The strong control the weak,
The clever control the strong.
Cunning itself is the clever use of knowledge.
All knowledge is power. Do you understand?
Do you ken? Can you?
Can you show me?
The cunning man is a sorcerer, mystic, and trickster.
The cunning man is a conning man.
The tools of such a swindler included all forms of superstition,
the belief in magick.

ORIGINS: (Norse) Kennaz, meaning torch (Old English) cen, meaning torch, illumanation, (Gaelic) ken, knowledge.

ELUCIDATION: The cunning man may easily be as familiar with folk magick, runes, the ways of witcha, Catholicism or diabolism. His magick is to turn such superstition into coin. There are certain features that are common to all such conning men. They generally lust after fame, and are excellent self publicists. The cunning man may work alone or with associates, forming temples, covens, lodges and societies. In all cases his living is made through exploitation, playing on the simple human fear of the unknown and our human longing to be able to force the hand of Fate.

MAGICK: Knowledge, cleverness, cunning, wit, illumination, to throw light upon a situation, a journey into the dark. Also, female sexual mystery, receptive and fertile. The mystery of the womb, and of redemption.

GIFT

A gift can be a blessing or a curse.
It can raise a spirit and show love and kindness,
It can humble the giver showing respect or fear,
It can repress through the bondage of gratitude.
It can support or destroy the dignity of giver or receiver.
Come here. Let me give you a kiss.

ORIGINS: (Norse) gyfu, (Old English) gifan, meaning gift, generosity.

ELUCIDATION: The people of the Old Ways always considered the giving of gifts to be a show of honour, and a way of creating good Wyrd for ourselves.

MAGICK: Fair exchange, the giving or receiving of gifts, sacrifice, contracts, personal relationships, kisses. May be used as the 'carrier' of a magical intent, some good or ill wish 'given' to another person.

WIN

The best way to win is by making an effort.
Love and determination can move mountains,
But they cannot change the world or turn back time.
We may have to fight in order to win through,

It may take great patience.
Let us take pleasure in our winnings at the end.

ORIGINS: (Norse) Wunjo, wynn, (Old English) wyn, wen, wenne, win, meaning to enjoy the fruits of labour, hope and expectation.

MAGICK: Success, reward, accomplishment, gaining a wish.

HELL

The darkness is a place of healing
And a place of punishment.
We lick our wounds and shed our tears.
Walk away to some place
Where you can hide your disgrace
The pain you feel now
Is the key to the lock
That will set free your heart.

ORIGINS: (Norse) Hella, the goddess of the underworld, Hagalaz, meaning hail. (Old English) haegl, hagal, hagol meaning hail, snow, frozen rain.

MAGICK: Hell. The underworld. Unconscious mind, and troubles buried there in the past. Witches, haegtessa. May be used for both healing and harming.

NEED

Often what we need and what we want are not the same thing.
It has been said that if the gods wish
to destroy us,
They can do no worse than to give us
what we want.
Fingers crossed that we get what we need!
(A friend in need is a friend indeed).

ORIGINS: (Norse) Nauthiz, (Old English) ned, nied, nyd, meaning neccessity, compulsion.

MAGICK: The recognition or creation of need, responsibility, obligation and guilt. The lighting of fires.

I

I want.
I want not.
I am.
I am not.
I will.
I will not.

ORIGINS: (Norse) isa, (Old English) Isa, meaning ice, to freeze.

MAGICK: Identity, point of crystalisation, ego, conditioning. May also be used to block or 'freeze' other kinds of magick or Wyrd.

YEAR

The wheel of the year is ever turning.
You reap what you sow
You sow what you reap.
Reaping time has come.

ORIGINS: (Norse) gera, (Old English) ger, meaning year.

MAGICK: Knowing the right time for things, and acting accordingly. Gradual change, hopes and expectations. Gaining the benefits of past actions.

YEW

The graveyard tree,
Whose roots reach to hell

And whose branches reach heaven.
It is the mystery tree.

ORIGINS: (Gaelic) iubhar, iughar, yew. A yew tree.

MAGICK: The world tree, movement between the worlds, werewolfery. The driving force of the unconscious, motivation, sense of purpose and meaning, the will to power.

CHANCE

A die rolls a one,
Rolls a two,
Rolls a three and a four,
A five and a six
In that order.
Is this a random sequence?

ORIGINS: (Norse) pertho, possibly meaning a dice shaker.

MAGICK: Chance, gambling. May be used to effect 'luck', for good or for bad. Wild psychic ability.

CROW'S FOOT

The black crow king
Is the king of nothing at all.
He owns no estate
And wanders the land as a gypsy vagabond.
His treasury is the horde of a scavenger.
He owns no castle,
And rules over no kingdom
Beyond his own heart.
Loathed and despised by so many,
He turns to witchcraft for protection.

ORIGINS: (Old English) cohl, meaning elk or elk sedge.

MAGICK: Invocation, religious aspiration, protection. Upright it is a female sign, reversed it is male. Also used in the gypsy traditions as the sign of a witch, not unlike the wearing of a pentagram.

SOL

She rises in the east
She falls in the west
Is cold in the north
And hot in the south.

ORIGINS: (Norse) sowulo, (Old English) sigel, meaning sun.

ELUCIDATION: The sun may be seen as a male aggressive force or as a feminine, life giving force. In astrological alchemical occult philosophy, the sun is interpreted as a symbol of the ego, yet this is more directly alluded to in the rune 'Isa'. The original Old English Rune Poem seems to suggest the use of the sun by seafarers to navigate.

MAGICK: Navigation, the 'higher self', solar magick.

TWISTO

A piece of iron in the earth
Aligned with the Northern Star
Struck hard,
Becomes magnetised.
The nail of the world
And the spear of destiny.

ORIGINS: (Norse) Tyr, a god, (Old-English) Tir, meaning glory.

ELUCIDATION: Tyr is the name of the Norse god of war, who was originally head of the pantheon. He was a fearsome warrior, concerned with social values and the keeping of law and order, as well as the exacting of justice. His symbol is the spear, thrown over the heads of your enemy on the onset of battle. He lost his hand whilst binding the power of Fenris wolf. He is said to have his own black hunting hound, Shukr, who may be the original Black Shuck who is still seen roaming the

English countryside today. Tyr's rune can be interpreted as either a spear or an arrow pointing the way to the north star. Other of his forms include 'Tyr-Magen, from where we gain the word magnet. In East-Anglia he was also known as "Twisto', hence 'twisted'; to 'twist' is to make something crooked.

MAGICK: Male sexual energy, active and impregnating. For justice against wrongdoers, active martial force. Leadership. The sending of a dart. Healing for men's problems.

BIRCH

The birch!
Rarely seen in our schools and establishments in the modern day.
There are no doubt as many who miss it as who do not.
It is the traditional weapon of
The school mistress,
The asylum keeper,
The fetishist,
And the exorcist.

ORIGINS: (Norse) birkana, (Old English) beorc, meaning birch.

ELUCIDATION: The tree and rune both take their name from the Norse goddess Berchta, whose role in the universe it is to act as a surrogate mother and protector of abandoned children. The Celts, being tree worshippers, also especially venerated the birch tree, and it continued to be considered as a magical tree well into medieval times.

MAGICK: Motherhood, fertility, matriarchy, whipping. To exorcise badly behaved spirits. To bring comfort. Healing for 'women's difficulties'.

EOH

The four hooves of time
Beat out the seasons.

ORIGINS: (Norse) eh, (Old English) eoh, meaning horse.

MAGICK: Partnership and cooperation, joint efforts, relationships. Marriage, handfasting, companionship, sexuality.

MAN

Old friends are the best friends,
Since they know just who you are.
Yet all who meet
Must also part.

ORIGINS: (Norse) mannuz, (Old English) mann, meaning mankind, kinship.

MAGICK: Friendship, enemies, other people, the limitations of mankind.

BLOOD MOON

Tides of blood
Beneath a menstrual moon.
The dreams that stuff is made of.

ORIGINS: (Norse) laguz, meaning lake, also logr, laukar, meaning the use of magick.

MAGICK: 'Aether', astral and dream planes, intuition, imagination, initiation.

CLAN

To be certain where you are heading
You must be sure of where you
are coming from.
Know where you are.
Know who you are.

ORIGINS: (Norse) inguz, (Old English) ing, meaning 'son of' or 'peoples of'.

ELUCIDATION: Apparent in place names such as 'Hastings' and 'Uffington', Frisian patronomic names such as 'Bunting'. From the Old Norse god Ing, or Yngvi, who was an early form of the fertility god Frey.

MAGICK: Ancestry and the continuation of the bloodline or tribe. Integration into the tribe.

ESTATE

Loyalty and Royalty
Nobility and property.
This is the mystery of blood.

ORIGINS: (Old English) ethel, meaning homeland, property. (Norse) othila.

ELUCIDATION: The oldest meaning of this rune is Germanic, usually interpreted as 'noble'. It means a land owner, hence the inheritance of land, and also the virtue of loyalty.

MAGICK: Home, enclosure, spiritual heritage, experience.

DAY

Night becomes the day
Day becomes the night
Break on through
Break on through
Break on through to the other side.

ORIGINS: (Norse) dagaz, (Old English) daeg, meaning day.

MAGICK: Duality, things relating to and becoming their opposites, movement between the worlds. The origins of consciousness in the breakdown of the bicameral mind.

OAK

The acorn fattens the pig

And the pig fattens the man.

ORIGINS: (Old English) ac, meaning oak.

MAGICK: Food, nourishment, the food chain. Strength and reliability over time.

ASH

The ash provides great and sturdy logs
Ideal for building a fortress.

ORIGINS: (Old English) aesk, ash tree.

MAGICK: Standing firm, tall and steady against adverse circumstances. Stubborn resistance.

BOW

The fourth world war
Shall be fought with bows and arrows.
There is a great dignity
In the discipline of the archer.

ORIGINS: (Old English) yr, meaning bow.

MAGICK: Hunting, warfare. May be used to 'send' a spell.

THE RIVER SNAKE

Do not try to walk on the water
Do not try to swim on the land.
Take your meals where your stomach can relax.
Build your home in a safe place
And be happy there.

ORIGINS: (Old English) iar, meaning unknown. Jan Fries in Helruna conjectures that the term 'river snake' in the Old English stanza is what we now call an otter.

MAGICK: Adaptability and survival. Comfortable life.

THE GRAVE

What is all this love for,
If death is to part us?
It is sorrowful when love is taken away,
Leaving nothing but goods behind.
Ashes to ashes, dusts to dust.
Earth covers earth covers earth
covers earth.

ORIGINS: (Old English) ear, meaning grave.

ELUCIDATION: This last rune marks the beginning of a new cycle. It is followed by the rune of Fee. The two together represent the only certainties of life. Death and taxes.

MAGICK: Death, burying things, mortality, decomposition, inevitability.

Chapter 11
THE SACRAMENT

"And you shall teach the gentle art of poisoning,"
Aradia: The Gospel of the Witches, C.G.Leland

The tradition of the witches' supper remains an 'out of law' practice, even if the Witchcraft Act has been repealed. To make any kind of genuinely worthwhile study of this area would take at least one book, all to itself. Therefore, I will say what I really deem to be important, and leave those who wish to study further to do their own research.

How is it that the witches flew to the sabbat, riding on broomsticks and the backs of animals? How is it that witches and sorcerers gained experience of shapeshifting into animal forms, if not through the use of flying ointment, applied to their flesh and orifices, administered via the wands and broomsticks so famous in the craft?

A recipe for flying ointment is recorded by Sir Walter Reginald Scott, 1584; '... an ointment by which they ride in the air, being compounded by obtaining the fat of young children, and seeth it with water in a brasen vessel, reserving the thickest of that which remainth boiled in the bottome, which they laie up and keepe, untill occasion serveth to use it. They put hereunto Eleoselinum, Aconitum, Frondes populeas, and Soote.'

Jean de Nynauld, in De la Lycanthropie, Transformation, et Extase des Sorciers, 1615, gives information concerning three distinct types of magical ointment, each used for a different purpose. The first is for attending the astral sabbat, and is comprised of the fat of a child, juice of water parsnip, aconite, cinquefoil, belladonna, and soot. The second, which is for attaining the power of flight, includes belladonna, alcohol, and the eating of a cat or child's brain. The third is for the power of shapeshifting, stating that parts of toads, serpents, hedgehogs, rats, and

other animals are to be mixed with various plants in an infusion of human blood.

From an objective viewpoint, we can see that most of the plant ingredients of these recipes, and many others like them, belong to the order solanaceae, and contain consciousness altering alkaloids. The other ingredients perhaps served the purpose of heightening the frenzy and fear of the witches. They could be merely a part of anti witchcraft propaganda, or included in tradition to dissuade the uninitiated from experimenting with their own formulae.

With this in mind, it is stated that this chapter is included for the information of the curious but sensible. It is in no way my intention that you risk killing yourself or suffering psychological damage through experimenting with these substances. I have thought long and hard regarding its inclusion. Whilst I would hate to be implicated in someone else's stupidity, it would nevertheless be an unforgivable exclusion to ignore the subject.

In medieval European herb lore, many plants were given names associating them with the Devil. In some cases, this was because the plant possessed some unpleasant qualities such as foul smell or ugliness, Satan's Boletus being a perfect example. Others are hallucinogenic, and were traditional ingredients in the witch's magical potions and ointments.

I will state explicitly that I have met witches who have created such concoctions to great effect, although without the morbid ingredients of human fat or blood, and that I have been brave enough to use such ointments myself. The results were indeed that I left my body, and had the experience of spirit flight. Yet it would be irresponsible of me to not reiterate that these ingredients are all poisons. Handled without cunning they can kill you, or worse. Their knowledge and use has thus been kept an initiatory secret.

In modern times there has been much discussion of the use of hallucinogenic substances in spiritual ritual. This is hardly surprising, since from the 1960s their use has risen to popularity within the subcultures of today, and a large percentage of the population have experience of them. I do not risk ostracism by my piers if I admit that I am amongst

these experienced people. We know that most cultures, if not all cultures, have employed them in their religious rites at some time in their history. I seriously doubt that our own culture could have been any different to the rest. There are even some studies that suggest, quite powerfully, that human consciousness would not have evolved to become what it is if our ancestors had not partaken.

Most books on witchcraft and magick will state that the use of such compounds is to be avoided at all costs, with many organisations refusing admittance to those who not only use them in the now or if they have ever used them at all. However, it is this author's own opinion that the origins of human spirituality, magick, and art can all be traced back in time to one wide eyed soggy mushroom inspired moment.

A part of this modern subculture has coined a new term for the use of hallucinogenic drugs, which is the word 'entheogen'. The word 'hallucinogen' means that the substance produces hallucinations, the alternative term 'psychedelic' means manifestation of the psyche, whilst 'entheogen' means a substance that acts as a catalyst for the deity within. The term is deemed more descriptive of the actual experience and spiritual use of such substances.

Deadly Nightshade
(Atropa Belladonna)

An atropine. The berries provide the hallucinogen, and there are various ways of preparation. This may be absorbed through the thinner membranes or smoked and enhaled. Anyone tempted to experiment with this plant, be aware that it is a deadly poison and could kill you. At no time are the berries to be ingested. The drug also remains in the body for some considerable time, and so cumilative use can easily result in overdose.

Devil's Apple
(Datura stramnium)

Otherwise called Thorn Apple, gains its name from its spiky, unfriendly looking fruits. Up until the 1920s, it was a popular ornamental plant in

many gardens of England. Spread upon the nipple of the mother its juice was used to kill unwanted babies. It is a powerful witches' sacrament, advised only for the informed and brave.

Fly Agaric
(Amanita Muscaria)

These are the classic red and white toadstool, commonly linked to phaerie lore and witchcraft. Some have also identified it as the soma of the Hindus, written of in the Rig Veda. Fruits between late summer and autumn. They must be dried, or roasted over a fire, in order to release their emetic effects. This is of course illegal. Get it wrong, and you can die.

The Germanic word bot means toad, toad stool, and devil, making a strange trinity that perhaps points at the elder witch tradition of toad magick. Ingested, the effects of the toad stool amanita muscaria are initially a physical stimulation and a burst of athletic energy. Later, there may be vomiting and unconsciousness. Upon awakening, the perceptions are shifted to a place between, and the experience is truly one of initiation. Its effects are diverse, and vary according to dosage, method of preparation, and cultural expectation. At even the lower doses, hallucinations are both visual and auditory, and also may include the impression of changing in size. After this, stupor and more vomiting. A 'hair of the dog' dose is all that is required to trigger the whole cycle again.

Henbane
(Hyoscamus niger)

Found on rubbish dumps, and growing happily in rotting flesh, this plant typically grows about two to three feet in height, with yellowish flowers veined with purple. The active ingredient of Henbane is scopolamine, an hallucinatory hypnotic. Intoxication is commonly accompanied by feelings of physical dissociation, the astral self seeming to outgrow and separate from the physical, giving the impression of spirit flight. It seems to act as a catalyst, in combination with other substances such as the psylocybe mushroom.

In 1999 I appeared, alongside three other working witches, on a television programme discussing the use of such substances, particularly in relation to the agent of henbane. Three volunteers were administered the substance in scientific conditions, and under medical scrutiny. One of these subjects spoke about experiences of shapeshifting, and another had the impression that they might be able to fly. The programme, Sacred Herbs, ran for around six episodes, each focussing on the historical ritual uses of different mind altering substances.

Henbane may also be burnt, and its smoke inhaled as an aid to magical vision. All parts of the plant are extremely toxic, and should not be eaten under any circumstances. Folklore states that a child who falls asleep near a Henbane plant will die as a result.

Hemlock
(Conium maculatum)

A small white flower with a purple spotted stem, very similar in appearance to parsley. Many of the myths concerning these two species may thus have become muddled. Produces delirium and excitement, and in larger doses paradoxically acts as a sedative.

Hellebore
(Helleborus niger)

Called the Christmas Rose, because its white flowers bloom in winter, hellebore has a reputation as a mood enhancing stimulant. Gerard, in his famous Herbal, states that 'A purgation of hellebore is good for mad and furious men, for melancholy, dull and heavie persons, and briefly for all those that are troubled with blacke choler, and molested with melancholy.'

Pliny described an elaborate ritual to harvest the roots of the plant. First, a sword was used to draw a circle around it. Prayer is made to the east for permission to dig up the plant. Finally, look to see if an eagle is flying nearby; if spotted, it presages the death of the collector within the year.

Mandrake
(Mandragora officinarum/Bryoni dioica).

This is possibly the most famous of all the witch herbs. There are two species that share the name mandrake. The first is the solanaceae, and is not actually indigenous to England. However, they have been imported here since at least the sixteenth century. The second is known as black bryoni, and is actually a cucurbitaceae.

Witches have always been fond of mandrake from a sympathetic viewpoint. Thick and fleshy, often around a foot in length, it often grows in a form suggestive of the human body; with arms, legs, and head. The mandrake root is subject to a vast body of occult lore. It was believed to grow at the foot of the gallows, where the sperm of the death ejaculation hit the ground. The harvesting of the mandrake is traditionally achieved through tying a hungry dog to the root, and placing a tasty piece of meat just out of his reach. This is because upon being torn from the ground, the mandrake is said to produce a scream so terrifying it can kill any human that hears it. The carving of such a root to house a servitor spirit or homunculus is known in Germany as the creation of an Alruan. Its magical power to cure infertility is mentioned in the Bible, Genesis 30:14-16.

From a toxicological viewpoint, mandrake contains a significant amount of scopolamine, hyscyamine, antropine, and cusohygrine (mandragorine). It acts as a soporific narcotic, hypnotic, hallucinogenic, and excitory aphrodisiac. Like most alkaloids, it may be used to alleviate pain, and causes vomiting. Its use was also medicinal, for these reasons.

Magic Mushrooms
(Psilocybe)

Also known as 'liberty caps'. They appear towards the end of September, and their season lasts into October. They are thus the classic Halloween hallucinogen. Those who are interested in the subject will know that, unlike the chemical drugs manufactured in laboratories, the magical plants in question each have their season. Come Samhain, many of the fields popularly known to favour the psylocybe mushrooms are crowded early in the mornings.

Their ingestion causes the mind to enter into the realms of phaerie. One has no choice but to experience the numinous, and this can be both beautiful and terrifying. Common experiences include being able to see spirits, and hence their lore is that of initiation into the mysteries. Other effects are similar to those of the toad-stool, although with lessened nausea.

Monk's Hood, Wolfbane
(Acnitum napellus).

These two plants are distinguished by their flowers; monk's hood is purple and wolfbane is yellow. The root contains around 0.4% aconitine, with the fatal dose being one fifteenth of a grain. It is thus a very dangerous. Its use in the witches' ointments is uncertain, for whilst it is a powerful relaxant, it possesses no inherent hallucinogenic properties. Its popularity as a poison, however, is huge.

Meadow Saffron

Not the same thing as cullinary saffron, it has a soporific effect.

Morning Glory
(Ipomea purpurea)

Traditionally used in mallefica, and known to witches as a powerful 'bindweed', the stems being wrapped thrice times thrice (nine times) around the victim's poppet, three nights before the full moon. For the 'high', the seeds are commonly smoked. Preparation as a potion, I am informed, makes for a more instant and powerful effect. This is achieved by powdering the seeds in a mortar, and soaking in petrolium ether. These are then dried thoroughly, and added to alcohol. The effects have been likened to LSD. Alternatively, they may simply be left to soak in water to make a milder intoxicant.

Opium
(Papaver somniferum)

'Opium is the only vegetable substance that communicates the vegetable state to us', Jean Cocteau. Harvested as sap from the pink or purple opium poppy, or the heads may simply be boiled as with a tea. Opium is the base for heroin.

In former times, addiction to opium was common. Specifically in East Anglia during the nineteenth century it was used as a cure for the Ague, a disease caused by damp. Most probably it was also one of the causes, since withdrawal from opium tends to produce exactly the same symptoms. Many gardens would have a patch of poppies. At least until 1868, opium could easily be bought from shops.

Parsley

Medieval legend said that parsley seeds went to the Devil nine times and back before they would germinate. This possibly stems from the earlier Greek belief that parsley seeds visited the underworld nine times before sprouting. Parsley was dedicated to Persephone, the wife of Hades and Queen of the underworld. The Greek phrase 'to be in need of parsley' denotes someone who is close to death.

The English also had several traditions regarding parlsey: Proverbs state that it grows for the wicked, but not for the just. A parsley field will bring a man to his saddle and a woman to her grave. Where parsley is grown in the garden, there will be a death before the year's out. To dream of cutting parsley is an ill omen; the dreamer will be 'crossed in love'. In Devonshire it's believed that transplanting parsley is bad luck, and either the offender or his family will be severely punished within the year.

The oils extracted from parsley have amphetamine like qualities.

Rue
(Ruta graveolens)

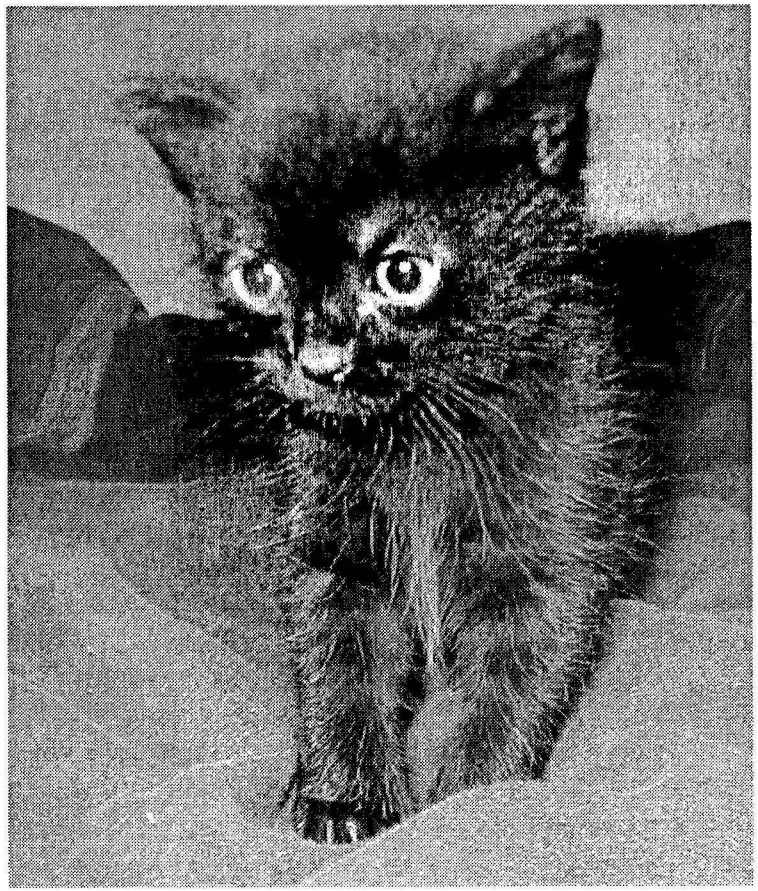
Usually combined with yarrow as a tea to make 'witches' broth', a potion that traditionally gives the ability of spirit flight. It may also be used to regulate the menstrual cycle.

Witches' Thimbles
(Foxglove digitalis)

This tubular flowered plant is a primary source of the drug digitalis. Ironically, it was used in medieval Italy in trials by ordeal.

Yarrow
(Achillea millefolium)

Made as an infusion into a tea, Yarrow is traditionally used in acts of clairvoyant divination.



'Arty'. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans.

Chapter 12
THE SACRIFICE

In the days of the persecution, witches were said to gather at the sabbats, there to offer sacrifices to the Devil. Whilst such sensationalist propaganda was simply part of a campaign to stamp out the Old Ways, there is a certain amount of fact behind such accusations. However, it is equally true to say that the early Christians made these very same sacrifices to their God. The Book of Leviticus, in the Old Testament, gives instructions for all manner of sacrifices, including animals and fowl. In Genesis, Abel offers one of his flock, and Cain offers the first fruits of the harvest. These are not pleasing to the Lord. Cain therefore offers up the best of his own flock, which just happens to be his brother. There are theologians who conjecture that the tale of Abel's murder is in fact a later warping of an earlier practice, where a human would be sacrificed as a part of the founding of a new city.

The purpose of the sabbatic rite was, and is, to bring the community, its gods and ancestors, together. This was achieved through a communal sacrifice, an eating and drinking together. Such a feast, when food was shared amongst the people and the spirits also, was called in Anglo-Saxon a 'Blot', signifying that blood was shed. In the Old Ways, we did not buy our meals ready packed from Techno's, but had to kill our animals ourselves. This was part of every day existence, and not a personal taboo broken for any kind of thrill. It was merely an act of

respect, and of recognition in our own scheme of things, that the life force of our animal sacrifices would be delivered to the spirits. The carcass and mortal body would be cooked and eaten by the folk themselves.

In most magical traditions, it is recognised that at the moment of death, and with the spilling of blood, the life force that is released from the body can feed and sustain the spirits.

Traditions such as those of Santeria continue to practice this, causing much consternation and inspiring many legal battles.

Many of the ancient grimoire texts give instructions as to the sacrifice of various animals, in order to bribe or inspire to manifestation various leagues of demonic entities. The skins of these animals provide the parchment upon which the spirit's sigils are inscribed. As with any animal sacrifice, it is usual that such animals are young, healthy, and virgin.

Ritual blood sacrifice plays a major part in almost all ancient religions. Livestock, and human beings, were slaughtered to appease the gods in times of trouble, or to ensure a good harvest. Reputedly the Celts drank the blood of their human sacrificial victims, consuming a part of their soul in the process. Such practice reflects the traditional Christian Mass, and also the mystery of Cain and Abel. Amongst the ancient Celts this possibly included the seasonal murder of the High King, whose blood would be spilled that the crops may grow, and whose soul would return to the goddess. Such sacrifice may have included captured enemies or criminals sentenced to death for offending against the Wyrd of his kin. It is more than possible that some tribes actually had voluntary sacrifices, those set aside living a life of no work and relative luxury in the meantime. The sacrifice of children, particularly the first born, is also common to many early cultures. During the Punic wars, for example, the nobility of Carthage sacrificed hundreds of children to Baal by dropping them into pits of fire.

The act of killing an animal or human is very emotively charged. There are few people that do not react dramatically to either watching or performing such an action. Hence, when outsiders point their fingers at the witches and accuse us of practising animal sacrifice, the public are

up in arms. Urbanised civilians may go through the whole of their lives without ever killing their own dinner. Thus they cannot appreciate the role that animal sacrifice may have made in earlier times amongst those who lived a rural life.

The act of killing, for food or for punishment, is something that most of us would rather avoid. Yet to the rural craft of earlier days, it was a necessary part of life. Thus people were closer to the fact that life feeds upon death, and closer to an appreciation of this mystery of return.

More recently, sacrifice has been made symbolic. We find, for example, a man of bread stands in for the corn king. He is formed with a large erect phallus, representing the active life force that would have been the blood of a genuine victim.

The second alternative is the use of the whip. A human being makes a sacrifice of pain, in the place of an actual killing. This tradition possibly has its origin at the Lake Sanctuary, at Lacedaemon, which was sacred to Standing Artemis. This goddess had originally demanded blood sacrifice. The whipping of boys became a substitute upon the command of Lycurgus, the founder of the State of Sparta.

The giving of sacrifice is very much an individual thing, and defines the relationship between the servant and their spirits. Whilst it is not wholly necessary for us in these modern times to slay our neighbours in the name of our goddess, the role of sacrifice is still something that requires our attention and meditation.

The arrangement between the witch and the spirits is one of mutual benefit. The spirits gain from having powerful servants, the ancestors share their Wyrd with their kin. Thus they lend their power. In return for the lending of their power, they receive the sacrifices they require. Like anybody else, they need to eat and drink or they will wither away, ceasing to have an effect upon our dimension.

They also appreciate many of the same pleasures we do. We would not expect any mortal to continue to be our friends if we simply demanded of them and never gave anything back. We should not expect our relations with the spirits to be any different. There are ways that they like to be treated which show that they have your respect, and that their

presence in your life is appreciated. As a bare minimum, the sabbatic rites should be maintained through the giving of sacrifice in some form.

The things that you give to the gods and the ancestors are their sacrifices. They enter into them. If you give them things that they desire they will give you what you desire in return. Whenever you approach the spirits and call upon them, you should offer to them some kind of gift, however small. The law of Wyrd is the law of returns. If you are asking big favours, you should offer them something suitable in return. Always offer with sincerity, and never seek to underpay them or have them work for you 'on credit'. If you insult them they will cease to work for you. They may even punish you.

The candles that you light upon their altar are in themselves a sacrifice. When you light them, it is a signal that they are called to be present. Therefore do not light any candle that has been placed upon the altar for any other purpose. At the conclusion of ritual, they should be snuffed out, never be blown out.

Another sacrifice commonly made by modern witches is the giving of incense. This should be burnt upon a charcoal disc. Some forms of joss are acceptable, such as those made from pure resin, or the sacrificial incense of Tibet which are infused with gold, and made especially for sacrifice to the ancestral dead. Cheaply perfumed joss that remind you more of Indian sweet shops than the majesty of the spirits do not make good sacrifice.

Plants are also a living sacrifice, and this may be of foodstuff but also of flowers. The tradition of feeding and tending to our ancestral spirits lives on in the way we tend our family graves. Witches tend to place flowers on the altars to the deity they serve, and in the sacred places they visit.

Wreaths and ribbons are tied upon the branches of the witch trees, and all around the sacred wells. Such decorative sacrifices are often accompanied by written petitions to the spirits of the place, and by the making of wishes. This remains a strong folk custom in many areas of rural Britain. There are places you can visit where you will find such ribbons tied in their hundreds, such as Madron Well in Cornwall. Many have Christianised names, and the stories and myths concerning them have been changed likewise, such as St. Nectarn's Glenn, the cave of a

monk, which was previously Nathan's Glenn, the cave of a wizard. The power and magick of such places has been far from dissipated.

You can also offer to the spirits your own life force, your blood or sexual fluids. The spirits of witchcraft are sexual, and all acts of love and pleasure may be in their name. Through the Great Rite, or hieros gamos, we may offer our bodies as a sacrifice complete, the Lord and Lady conjoin in love whilst possessing the flesh of the mediums.

There is a traditional method by which those who work in a more private circle may create between them a magical child, or 'blood sugar baby', a kind of bud-will whose sole purpose is to act as a sacrifice in a later ritual. Sexual power may also be stored by mixing fluids with a base to make what is sometimes called a 'cake of light', which may also be sacrificed similarly, but is not assumed to develop any kind of immediate consciousness. It is this sexual sacrifice that has given rise to the myth of the child sacrifice, and of witches who give birth in secret places, slaughtering their new babies in the name of the Hidden One.

There are sorcerers who specialise in blood magick, a form of necromancy. The feeding of one's own blood to one's familiar spirits is also an old tradition. With the male witch, blood must be let by cutting, with the woman menstrual blood flows with the moon tide. There is deep mystery here, for this blood is both of sex and of death. These methods of self sacrifice are key to the genuine and most powerful sorceries of the ancients. Indeed, assuming that at least one of its parents is female, the magical child of the paragraph above is most powerful if created during menses. A magical child, unlike physical offspring, does not necessarily require two parents. It may have one, three, or even thirteen.

Perhaps the most important of all the sacrifices is our own time, belief, love, effort, the acts of imagination and creativity we perform in their name and in their service, and the workings of self improvement that we perform that we may serve them better. Hence, this book. In a very real sense the famed 'goat without horns', or human sacrifice is the witch themself.

Chapter 13
THE BAKER'S DOZEN

'Hele, conceal, never reveal;
neither write, nor dite, nor recite;
nor cut, nor carve, nor write in sand.'
The Oath of the Horseman's Word

According to an old witch, the term baker's dozen is rhyming slang. In the traditional coven structure there are thirteen individuals, being six couples and the coven leader. The claim is that this is a parody of the Last Supper, from where we gain the superstition of thirteen being an 'unlucky' number. Perhaps both traditions have a common root.

The name coven has been applied to groups of witches from around 1500 onwards. For example the confession of the Scottish witch Isobel Gowdie in 1662 includes 'ther is threttein persones in ilk coeven'. The word coven itself has commonly been traced through the Latin conventus, meaning a gathering or assembly of any number, or a group of thirteen monks and their abbot. This is also the etymological source of our words convent, convention, and convene. It may be traced through the word covine, meaning a group of conspirators. The term was popularised in 1830 by Sir Walter Reginald Scott in his 'Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft'.

There are scholars who argue that the word 'coven' does not seem to be used anywhere before the persecutions. For example one might be surprised to know that no surviving old folk songs include the term. It is assumed therefore that covens did not therefore exist. Such arguments are in direct contradiction of the 'party line' of Wicca, upon whose

system many modern covens are based. However to deny that witches and their kind gathered together in clans, brotherhoods, sisterhoods, groves and temples, whatever they may have been called, is to claim that we are the only culture where this has not happened!

Traditionally witches tend to work alone, but meet on various occasions for specific purposes when the increased power of a group is required. Whilst all members may have their own ways, methods, and beliefs used in their personal magick, all agree to the symbolism and structure chosen by the magister or maiden as the 'final arbiter' in these matters. All agree on adopting a common system at times of coven meetings for this reason alone; it is practical. Witchcraft is a path of the individual, a service to the self, for there is no other god, as they say in the mystery schools. A coven is merely an organised group of such individuals, held together by common interests; knowledge and power.

Within the structure of the craft, admission is achieved through the rites of initiation. Traditionally, this can only take place after one year and one day from the date at which admission was first sought. Such a waiting time is essential to keep out 'thrill seekers' and those that merely wish to take a look. Any coven that operates under this rule is only ever going to consist of members who really mean it.

The kenning of death and rebirth has traditionally been applied to initiation. Upon undergoing such a process, the candidate is voluntarily put through renewal and renovation. The nature of the person may remain unchanged, as the quintessential self survives the death process and moves through to reincarnation. Lessons are learnt, however, and the personality gains a new sense of direction. It is a time of new beginning, hence initiation, to initiate and begin.

Certain strands of witchcraft have a sexual mystery, and initiation may involve an actual or symbolic sexual act. This has similarities to certain schools of tantra, in as much as initiation is generally passed from male to female and female to male. This is not to deny the validity of homosexual or lesbian magick, indeed we know that there were Anglo-Saxon schools of witchcraft that were passed female to female, with no males admitted. There are also traditions of the cunning craft that are passed exclusively male to male. Many traditions of witchcraft are quite

openly homophobic, claiming homosexuality is 'unnatural', as are some separatist groups equally heterophobic. In no coven or temple that I have ever run or been active in has gender preference ever proved a problem. Homosexuality may be observed amongst all species of animals, human and otherwise. However, the Lord and Lady remain central, for without heterosexual coupling there would be no homosexuals in the first place.

The initiation rituals consist, generally, of the following ; Firstly, a consecration of the aspirant so that they may be 'blessed', some test of the aspirant's dedication and ability, an oath to keep the secrets of the coven including its membership from outsiders, allegiance to the spiritual forces served by the coven, some statement to say that the aspirant walks the path of the witch, and the taking of their measure. The formulae is that of the witches' pyramid; to know, to will, to dare, and to keep silence.

The magick of the ritual, which is the dedication to the path and the blessing from the presiding deities and spirits of the coven, tends to mean that there will be outside events that will serve to teach the aspirant a lesson or two. It is to stand in the presence of the spirits of witchcraft and say 'I want to learn', and what would be the point in this if the spirits did not respond? This is the true conjuration; from the French conjure, meaning to swear together, to bind by oath, also, the summoning of spirits.

The oath of silence may seem strange. It has its origins in a time when people died for their practice, which was illegal in the British Isles until the middle of the twentieth century. Also, there are covens whose membership could suffer should the general public or press learn of their affiliations, such as schoolteachers, government officials, or ecclesiasts. (Yes! I have been in circle myself with a Christian priest who was secretly a practitioner of witchcraft, just like in the old days, eh?). With the tradition as I practice it, the oath of secrecy is of prime importance. Whilst I speak openly about many aspects of the craft, there are specifics of ritual formulae that are protected by oath. All that happens within the circle is kept between those inside it, and is never to be discussed or revealed to cowans (non-initiates) under any circumstances whatsoever.

Another reason for this is that a coven, over time, builds a thought form of its symbolism and a 'group soul' sometimes called an egregore. This provides the masks that the spirits take on when communing with their witchcraft kin. Outsiders who meddle with this symbolism threaten our own personal power. This is especially so if they are of an overly cynical nature, employing 'active disbelief'.

It should be understood by all members of a coven that they are of allegiance, and this understanding is formalised through the rituals of initiation, as it is by the shared will of their spellcasting.

The taking of the measure is a tradition that offers both magical security for the member whilst they are loyal to the oaths of the coven, and also a dire threat against their betrayal. Cords are taken which are 'tied off' against the height of the aspirant, and at points taken around their body. Links are also taken such as hair, and the coven put these in places of hiding under protection by the spirits so that ill wishes and spells from enemies cannot find them. Should any member betray the Wyrd of the coven, these will also be used as links to curse and punish them.

Rarely seen in any covens of the modern day, but fairly common in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, was the making of the *witch mark*, also called the *Devil's mark*. This was a tattoo, usually upon the hand. So called 'primitive' communities commonly apply a tattoo upon initiation, even the early Christians. In *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, Jospeh Glanvil, 1681, detailed accounts are given of two Somersetshire based covens, another in Brewham, and another in Wincanton. From the confessions given by these witches, it seems that their initiation was sealed by a mark made with a pin prick upon the upper and middle joints of the physic finger. Two Northampton witches, condemned in 1705, bore the 'prick' at their finger's ends, although which finger is not specified. Details are also given of such marks amongst Scottish witches, who were more commonly marked low upon the fool's finger. Such marks of tattooing, called by us *stigma*, were abhorrent to the Church. They are identified with the mark of Cain.

Another sign of witchcraft that might be taken up upon initiation is the garter, otherwise called a pointe. Again this practice may also be found in Haitian voodoo. They are often mentioned in the confessions of the

European witches, and are a stock feature in the descriptions of the Devil who was their initiator. These have acquired magical significance from the earliest of days, being seen in the dress of the morris dancer, and in the common picture of the neolithic witch-doctor, who is of course otherwise naked. It is said that during the witch cult of the middle-ages, these garters represented an officer's obligation to kill those who were suspected of giving evidence, or whom it was feared would confess. They would be found, murdered in prison, a garter tied around their neck.

Professor Margaret Murray traces the origins of the Order of the Garter to the witch cult, pointing out that when Edward founded this order he appointed twelve men for himself and twelve for the Prince of Wales, making two Baker's Dozens. Edward himself, as Chief of the Order, was entitled to wear 169 garters; thirteen times thirteen. More recent claims have been made that they were a secret order of vaginal veneration. Essentially a Marian observance, their honour was given to the vesica piscis, with their chapel of St. George at Windsor being designed around it.

There are secrets that are only passed on at times of initiation. These include such things as the watch-word, introduction to more reclusive members, secret names, ritual formula, the inheritance of experience, and sometimes actual physical objects.

The positions of leadership and authority within a coven are taken by the position of Magister or Priest, if male, Maiden or Priestess, if female. A coven may have anything up to three 'leaders' who are responsible for the organising and implementing of ritual, including the specifics of the symbolism and beliefs employed in the magick. Many covens also have other stations, officers and responsibilities that they may confer upon its members.

For example, they may choose to keep a Book of Shadows or gramma recording the rituals and events of each coven meeting, and place the trust of keeping such a book to one of its members. It is my belief that the concept of a book hand copied by each initiate, whilst alluding to the manner in which true grimoire would indeed have been transmitted, nevertheless is an invention of Gardner. Witchcraft, at least as I know

it, has no holy writ. Even with the solemn oath that the book is to be destroyed upon the death of the initiate, at least one antique copy would have survived and fallen into the wrong hands sometime in the last few hundred years.

Where rites of possession play their part, there may be a need for an official exorcist, whose role it is to gently bring the medium back to normal consciousness.

The coven may elect a male messenger known as the Summoner or Fetch. It is this person's responsibilty to remain in contact with all coven members, and to ensure they know when and where meetings are to take place.

They may also elect a Hand-Maiden, who acts as the primary assistant to the leader(s) in the ritual circle. Such a person is usually considered as a deputy to the Maiden, and will eventually go on to become a coven leader in her own right.

Some groups, such as a coven that specialised in sexual rituals, have found the need for members to act as Tyler. This is the guardian of the threshold, whose job is to answer the door!

Then, of course, there is the question of self initiation. Is such a thing valid? There is no reason why an individual should not fulfil such needs of their own accord, making their own personal oaths and promises to the spirits, defining their own relationship with them. It is perfectly possible to perform such acts of magick, and they can be just as effective on a personal level as initiation within a group. However, it is not the same thing, and should not necessarily imply the ability to initiate others. A self dedication to the spirits is not a recognition from others of the ability to lead, teach, counsel and inform. However, there are certain gifted individuals through whom the spirits may work to do these things.

You may learn from the spirits, and you may serve them without the support, aid and teaching of a coven if this is the way that you wish to work, or if you should find yourself isolated from a group. For some this is the harder path, for others it is that with which they are truly comfortable. However, just by working through Buckland's Book of Witchcraft will not give you the experience of orchestrated ritual.

This is not to invalidate the idea of self initiation, which is in fact a genuine tradition. After all, any line of initiation has to start somewhere. For example, we have the account of Tilley Baldrey of Huntingtoft, one of many who initiated herself into the tradition of the Toad Witch. Related in Eastern Counties Magazine, (1901); 'You ketch a hoppin' toad and carry that in your bowsom till that's rotted right away to the back-boon. Then you take and hold that over running water at midnight till the Devil he come to you and pull you over the water... and then you be a witch and you kin dew all mander of badness to people and hev power over 'em.'

The Rite of the Toad Bone is common to many forms of genuine witchcraft and cunning lore, being also popular amongst the Horse-Whisperers of East Anglia. Many traditions link the Toad to the Devil and Master of the Witches. A variant of the following formulae, whilst quoted from the works of another, has also been passed down through my own family;

'Let him go to chancel.. to sacrament, and let him hide and bring away the bread from the hands of the priest; then, next midnight let him take it and carry it round the church, widdershins - that is, from south to north, crossing by east three times : the third time there will meet him a big, ugly, venomous toad, gaping and gasping with his mouth opened wide, let him put the bread between the lips of the ghastly creature, and as soon as ever it is swallowed down his throat he will breathe three times upon the man, and he will be made a strong witch for evermore.' Footprints of Former Men in Far Cornwall, R. S. Hawker, 1895

There are also profound mysteries of dreaming that are of a most ancient lineage. The experience of dream initiation is a real experience. Therefore the experience is a real initiation. Since such experiences can be shared by several people, it is a matter of mystery in itself as to whether this is purely a tradition of self initiation or not.

Because certain ritual initiations gain their power through the context of the coven, the coven gains power through the context of ritual initiation. You should not expect to be able to become a member of such a group without going through the formalised initiation specific to those people, making the same oaths of secrecy and allegiance as all the other

members. There is great power in being part of an initiatory tradition, passed person to person, and I feel that the preservation of such mysteries to be of utmost and immeasurable importance. At the same time, however, there must be some point at which somebody struck up a relationship with the spirits and initiated their own self, or such lines would never have begun in the first place.

An old tradition known as the Three Mile Law states that there should be at least this distance between the physical meeting places of covens. This seems to be a survival from the days of persecution, when tact and secrecy were paramount. Thus, smallness of numbers and the 'territorial rights' of the covenstead were wise precautions. A greater amount of flexibility is advised in the modern day, however, unless one wishes to be in continual conflict with one's neighbours.

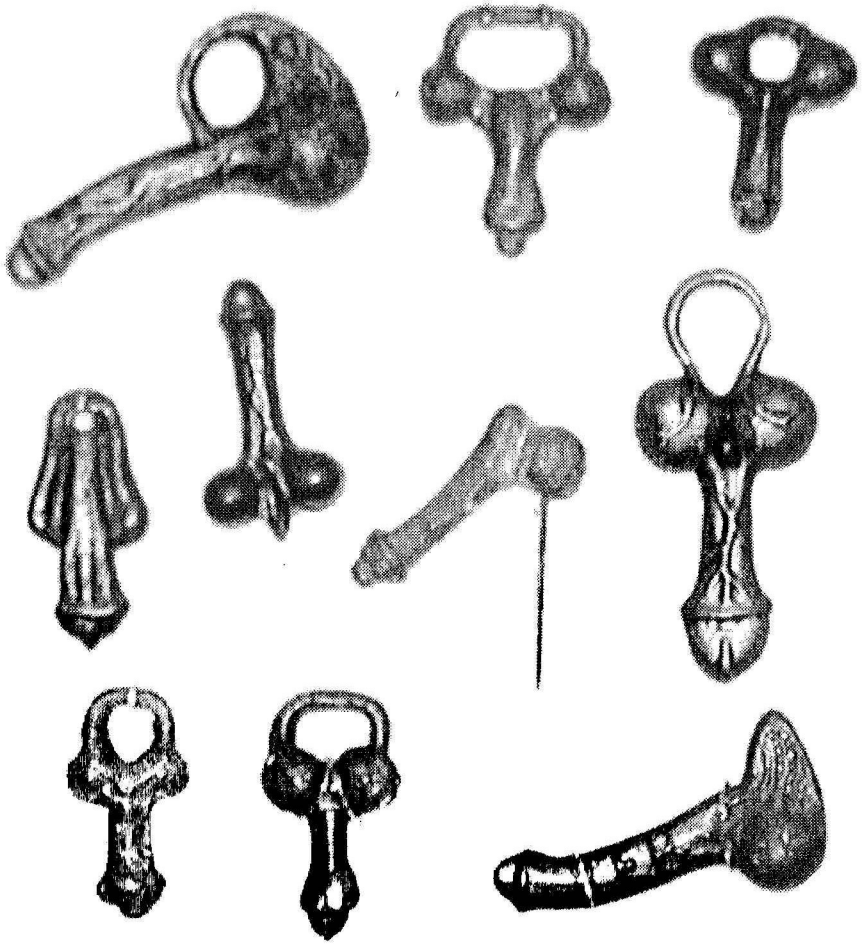
I will end this chapter with what I consider to be the three most important points I can make concerning witchcraft initiation.

The first is that life itself is the greatest initiator, that conflict and crisis can make us grow far more than any ritual. Spiritual power comes from real life experience, and except in the most bizarre cases cannot be conferred from one person to another simply and purely by the means of ritual. However, there are bizarre cases. Knowledge may be conferred through our experience of one another. The more intimate this experience, the more profound our knowledge. Yet there are those who would do this only once in their lives, their inclination to love being itself the profundity.

There are also those who, contrary to the understanding of others, will actively seek a life of challenge rather than a life of comfort in order to grow spiritually. Whilst some traditions may make claims of authority stating that formal initiation is necessary to practice witchcraft, I myself have witnessed the dark flame awaken spontaneously in many people.

The final, and perhaps most important point... The origins of the witch cult are in a time before the need of secrecy from authority, and the rituals of initiation were a part of our general education within our wider social structure. Even during the persecution, there were those whose family were part of a larger spiritual group, whose rituals formed part of their everyday lives. Children were brought up into the tradition, and

were witched during naming in much the same way as Christians are baptised. Engagement with the mystery schools was through great ceremonies and rites of passage, of which these are merely disjointed memories.



Ritual phallus, from the Ritchel collection. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, courtesy of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, Cornwall.

Chapter 14
THE POWER OF NAMING

Initiation into a coven requires the acceptance of a new secret and magical name. This symbolises a kind of rebirth, and the sharing of power within the group. In some covens this name is chosen by the initiator rather than the candidate, in others it is chosen by the individual, in others still the spirits give a name through dreaming vision. Traces of this practice exist in the confessions of the witchcraft trials stating that the covener was renamed and baptised by none other than the Devil. In Bute, Scotland, 1662, Janet Morrison confessed that she was told by the Devil ' ..believe not in Christ but believe in me. I baptise you Margaret.' Other, rather more outlandish names given to the coven members include 'Batter-them-down-Maggy', 'Blow Kate', 'Pickle nearest the wind', 'Able and stout', 'Over the Dike With It', and 'Throw the Cornyard'.

It is an ancient and universal belief that there is power in a name, and that it must therefore be chosen wisely and guarded with secrecy lest this power should be used against you. To know the 'secret name' of a person is to gain a certain amount of influence over them. Should one happen upon a phaerie in one's travels, or indeed anyone who might be one in disguise, the worst thing that you can do is let them know your name. Similarly, to know the name of a phaerie gives you power over them; to

summon and bind them with a guise. Consider the traditional tale of Rumpelstiltskin.

In the gnostic and kabalist literature and tradition God creates the world through the utterance of the logos spermaticos, which is His own name. This contained the seat of His life, power and soul. In the myth of Lilith, we are told that she may not be bound and commanded, because she knows the secret name of God. In the gnostic Apocrypha we find the Virgin Mary beseeching Jesus for His secret name, as this will provide protection for the deceased against all manner of harmful devils.

In the magick of ancient Egypt the knowledge of the names of the gods provided the key to tapping into their power, as well as to free one's self from this power. In the Egyptian Book of the Dead, the soul entering into the Hall of Maat says unto Osiris, 'I know thee. I know thy name. I know the names of the fourty-two gods who abide with thee.'

This belief in the magick of names may be seen in all the traditional ancient grimoire. The knowledge of a spirit's name gives the sorcerer leverage in the binding of it, usually within a circle or triangle of power, which is itself created through the correct inscribing of other names of power.

This belief continues into the Christian age, with the first task of an ecclesiastic exorcist dealing with an involuntarily possessed person being to gain the name of the demon or demons causing the trouble. This they would attempt to achieve through the utterance of the names of God, in much the same manner as the goetic sorcerer binds a spirit. These names were considered to possess a power all of their own, which would (hopefully) be stronger than the power of the demon, and thus aid in bullying the malign spirit into submission.

Similarly, a witch may bind the spirit of another through the knowledge of their name, using it to cast magick for or against them. This belief plays its part in the creation of the traditional wax, clay or cloth poppet, which would include all manner of links to the spell's target such as hair and nail clippings. Amongst the most important things is that this poppet is given a name, and perhaps even 'baptised', which is the same as the name of the target. Through this the material basis of the spell and the

person become linked, so that to harm or heal one is to harm or heal the other. Such traditional folk magick is common the whole world over.

An object, such as a herb or stone, may be linked with certain occult powers through the virtue of its name. For example, in Haitian voodoo we find High John the Conqueror Root, which is considered to be a powerful charm in overcoming adverse conditions, and is used in all manner of good luck spells and 'mojo bags'. It is a close equivalent of our own mandrake. In our own herb lore we also find such things as bind-weed, used in spells of binding. Similarly, the name of a person may link them to certain forces. This may be their mundane name, given to them at birth, as it can be their magical name, accepted at the time of initiation.

The character and magick of a place may similarly be known through the names that have been given them by the ancients. As has already been discussed, these people were fully aware of the power of names. Through consideration of this, we may come to know the power and nature of a place, and the cunning may recognise traces of the elder lore once common but now lost.

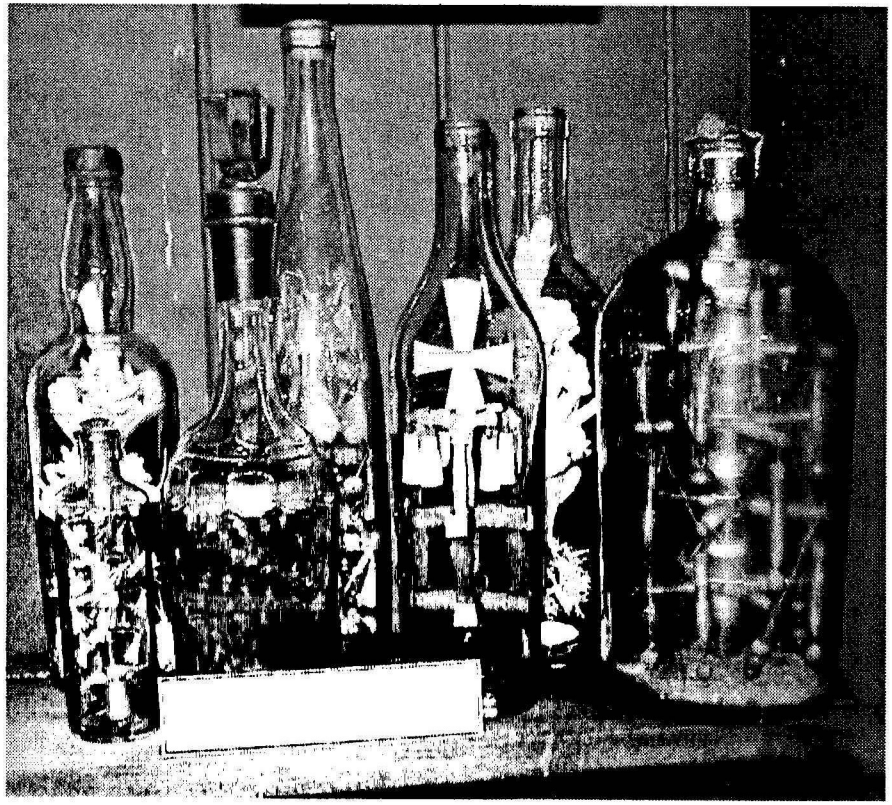
For example, although the place is hardly secret or wild, we may consider the name of the town Colchester in Essex. Popularly it is known that the place name is a reference to King Cole, who appears in the popular nursery rhyme as 'a merry old soul'. He seized the crown of Britain after slaying King Asclepiodotus, and was the father of Helenus, famous in British legend as the mother of Constantine the Great, and for her skill in music which she gained from her father.

Yet the name Cole itself is a British variant of the name Camulus, the Gaulish god of war, wind, and thunder, associated with the Phaerie King. The name finds variants in the Irish Cumull, the warrior king of Erin, and father of the heroic giant slayer Finn McCual.

The Roman name for the town during their occupation, at which time it was their capital of Britain, was Camulodunum. And so we can see that the town was considered the 'dun' or city presided over by this Celtic and Gaulish war god. This is wholly in keeping with the 'spirit' of the town, which in modern day is an army barracks for troops from England, Scotland, and the U.S.A.

Nathaniel J Harris

Our name is one of the most potent forces in shaping our personality, and therefore also of our future. It can contain the seeds of what we are to become, holding the qualities of what and who we are.



Spirit bottles. A form of witch bottle, housing familiar spirits. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, courtesy of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle,

Chapter 15
SELF DEDICATION

The following is a minor ritual of self initiation, a promise made between the practitioner and the spirits; a dedication of the 'self to the self', gently stirring the sleeping power of witchcraft, and the mysteries therein. Its basic formula of 'all that lies between these two hands' dates back hundreds of years.

In preparation, the aspirant has chosen a witch name, held secret until its declaration to the spirits in this rite. The place and timing are of utmost importance, to be chosen by the witch, and may be combined with other formulae, names of the forces, signs and symbols, if the inspiration dictates.

This rite must be kept utterly secret. None must know of its planning or execution. There is much power in silence.

The circle is cast. Sacrifices and gifts to the spirits are given. The declaration is made;

'I call upon the spirits of the witches' craft,
Upon the Lord and the Lady,
Upon the spirits of the mystery,
The spirits of the sorcery,

Upon the Hidden Company.
I ask you to bless us with your presence,
And to witness this rite of self dedication...
This oath I take, in the presence of the spirits;
Myself to my self.
Rather would I die than break this troth!
Hele, conceal, never reveal;
neither write, nor dite, nor recite;
nor cut, nor carve, nor write in sand.'

Placing their one hand upon the head, and the other upon the sole of the foot;

"I dedicate to the service of witchcraft,
All that lies between these two hands,
Taking upon myself the secret name of (N.)
Though my body it may wither,
And my spirit it may wane
Though the circle may be broken,
This vow it shall remain.'

The spirits are thanked, and the circle is dismissed. Leave by walking backwards, and tell no one.

Chapter 16
PHAERIE BLOOD

A witch is not always made a witch merely by virtue of initiation, either of the self or into a coven. Sometimes, a witch is simply born into a family where the mysteries are passed through the parents. Most commonly, the one to possess and pass down 'the blood' is the mother. Tradition has it that the beginnings of this physical legacy lie with the phaerie folk, and that the origins of the witch bloodlines are in racially mixed couplings between human beings and our 'good neighbours'. The religion and magick of the witches, according to myth at least, was taught to humans by the phaerie folk, who were always spoken well of, but were invariably sinister in their nature.

There is some evidence, for those who know how to look, of the genuine traditions of witchcraft in those confessions left from the persecution. Whilst the accusers and torturers are insistent that the witches are all in league with Satan, and are loathe to make any reference to any genuine beliefs held by their victims, the phaerie folk make their appearance nevertheless. Invariably, they are brought up by the accused, rather than their persecutors. Such trials include the confession of an unnamed man of Yorkshire, tried in 1653, written of by John Webster in Supposed Displaying of Witchcraft, London 1677. He was tried for using magick to heal people, earning enough from his cures to maintain his family. The such knowledge he claimed to have gained from the phaeries.

In another case in Scotland, Inverary, 1677, a man was accused of 'the horrid crime of corresponding with the Devil'. The evidence against him was a confession he had made, stating that he had entered a phaerie mound, and made music for the strange, dark people living there to dance to.

Over one hundred years earlier, the Dorset witch John Walsh admitted that he had learnt 'how persons are bewitched' from the phaerie. Many other witches also attributed their knowledge and magick to having had contact with them. A traditional way to summon phaeries is to strip the bark from three hazel wands, writing the phaerie's name on the wood, and burying it at some hill known to be a phaerie mound. The wands are dug up again the following Friday, and used in the summoning of the spirit. All well and good, except that you must first learn the phaerie's name.

The phaerie mound, this gateway to another dimension or underground world where all make merry, is a place charged with awe and fear. People disappear into them never to be seen again, or be transformed by their magick into animal form. Those that do return may have no memory of where they have been, and have not aged in all the years that they have been away. Some may return having acquired magical knowledge and power. A woman might return with a child, having no knowledge of who its father is, or a man may fall in love with a phaerie princess whom he never sees again, dying painfully from a broken heart. Gifts from the phaerie are not to be trusted, pots of gold turning into pots of dung in the morning. Almost invariably those who meet them are quite mad from their experiences, with 'away with phaeries' being a term still used to describe someone as mentally ill. Magick mushrooms inevitably grow upon such places, quite inexplicably.

According to the ancient folk traditions magick is often worked through the actions of the phaerie folk. The word itself is related to the French word '*phaerie*', which means 'dream'. By this we can see that the experience of phaerie was considered even then to be the experience of what we now call the unconscious or subconscious mind, or certainly came to us through its workings. What has changed is our attitude to what the human mind consists of, and where the roots of our consciousness actually lie.

These phaerie mounds, regardless of the objectivity or subjectivity of the good neighbours, are a physical reality. They are burial mounds, built by our Celtic and pre-Celtic Stone Age ancestors, forming the centre of spiritual rituals to preserve the spirits of their ancestors. No doubt such places would gain the reputation of being the homes of their spirits, who could be seen and spoken to when the time was right. The phaerie traditions are most certainly a survival from the beliefs of the pre-Celtic peoples who worked their sorceries there, so very long ago. Whatever spirits they served they must have been very powerful, because people continue to see strange lights at such places, or even meet and speak with their inhabitants to this very day.

There are many aspects of this phaerie tradition that are unique to Britain. There are other theorists who agree that the most likely source for these beliefs would be a folk memory of the Stone Age inhabitants of this island, who were eradicated and driven out by the Celtic invaders. These people were driven to live in the hills, in caves and secret places. Strange, small and dark, perhaps they entered into folklore, romanticised for their uncanny nature in the typical poetic manner of the Celts.

Certainly there is an old traditional witch charm of the elf arrow, actually a Stone Age flint arrowhead. The Celtic invaders had the advantage of iron, which may explain the tradition that phaeries are harmed by iron and are not to be touched or struck by it. The Roman invaders, of course, had the advantage of steel. The later Norman invaders no doubt equated the indigenous Celtic peoples with their own myths, so they became 'mixed up' with the idea of the phaerie folk.

Other aspects of phaerie lore are almost certainly survivals from the days of paganism, the old gods and goddesses, and the spirits of places. For example the hideous hag of Leicestershire, Black Annis, may be Anu, or Danu, as may Gentle Annie of Scotland. Peg Powler of the River Tees is said to demand regular sacrifice, so it seems likely that she too has her roots in far more ancient folk belief.

In the oak forests of Sherwood, we find Robin Hood, who wears the colour green. This folk hero is a subversive figure, he and his men stealing from the rich to put food in the mouths of the poor. Associated with the Phaerie King, it may even be possible that he and his men in fact

were a coven, led by the Robin as the Horned God, and Maid Marian as Priestess. Indeed, we can see from the confessions recorded in Sadducismus Triumphatus, 1681, that the name Robin was sometimes used as that of the witches' chief and god. Perhaps it was none other than Robin Goodfellow. Marian's office of 'Maiden' is itself a traditional title for a male coven leader's female consort. It continues in the later office of the Devil's Handmaiden. Marian is the name of a spiritual tradition itself.

Arthurian legend has it that both Merlin and his half sister, Morgan la Fey (Morgana the Fate), were of phaerie or elven descent. Also of this heritage were Merlin's enchantress, Vivian, and of course Nimue, the lady of the lake. It is their non-human blood that is supposedly the reason why they possessed the second sight, and other magical powers.

This links us to another theory or 'claim' of bloodline, which states that the Holy Graal of these mysteries is in fact a code for hereditary lineage. The san-grael, or 'royal blood', which is the lineage of the early Merovingian dynasty of French medieval 'long haired sorcerer kings' descended from the marriage of Jesus of Nazareth, and his 'sacred whore' Mary Magdalene. Many writers have suggested that the idea of Mary as a prostitute links her to the sacred whores of Astarte, to whom Solomon has been said to have erected his own temple. This makes her a lady of high standing and a priestess of the mysteries.

Folk tradition also states that the phaerie are in fact fallen angels, cast out of Heaven with their master, and what remains of their offspring. This associates the Phaerie King, and leader of the witches' coven, once again with the Devil. It also relates to another myth cycle concerning the origins of the hereditary witch lines. As ever with tales of monsters and demons, what we are actually dealing with here is the reinterpretation of one people's gods as the dark opposers of their conquerors.

According to such lore, witches and phaerie are descended from the angel Azazel, or Azael, who was the first of many rebellious angels who elected to descend to earth countless aeons ago, for the purposes of educating and informing what were then primitive humans. Although they were not cast out of Heaven, the myth parallels that of Lucifer as the serpent in the garden of Eden. Azazel and 'the Watchers', as they

were called, '..saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took wives of all which they chose.' (Genesis 6:2).

This myth appears in the Zohar, sourcebook of kabalist magick, where we learn that the manifestation of these angels upon the earth makes for rather a mixed blessing. The story goes that they were unable to divest themselves of the material bodies they inhabited in order to descend to our plane. That this myth was also important to some early forms of gnostic theology, is also apparent from The Book of Enoch, written several hundred years before the birth of Christ; '... And all the others together took unto themselves wives, and each chose for himself one, and they began to go in unto them and defile themselves with them, and they taught them charms and enchantments, and the cutting of roots, and made them acquainted with plants...'

Thus the Watchers became recognised as the original custodians of magical lore, which they passed on to the offspring born to them by their earthly wives. These children became tainted somehow with the dark forces they sought to master. As it says in The Book of Enoch; '...And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh...'

In the lesser known work The Witches Sabbat by Austin O. Spare, reference is made to a spirit form called the Rechtaw. Kenneth Grant rightly spots that this is 'Watcher' reversed, taking a wild guess at the meaning of this. Quite possibly Spare was actually referring to the above witch tradition, using code to remain in troth with his oath.

The witchcraft bloodline supposedly beginning with the Watchers is known as the Family of the Rose. These traditions include a further myth of hereditary witchcraft, which claims that we are of the lineage of Cain, the first murderer and child of Samael (Lucifer) and Eve, or in some traditions of Adam and Lilith. Also, quite specifically that of the first blacksmith, Tubal-Cain.

According to the Biblical version of this myth, Abel and Cain are the only two human beings other than Adam and Eve. The brothers both offer sacrifice to the Lord, but Cain's offering is rejected. There are also European folk versions of this tale where Cain and Abel are commanded

by God to marry each other's sisters. However, Cain disagrees to this because Abel's sister is too ugly.

According to Saint Augustine, Saint Clement, Eusebius, Lactantius, the Abbé Simonnet, and others, the entire lineage of Cain were tainted. Whilst God declared his will to Seth by the mediation of angels, Cain was gone from the sight of the Lord and sought aid from the Infernal One. The offspring of Cain were 'deceived' by the workings of Satan so that they worshipped him. Thus was diabolism born, and Cain was equated as the first witch and satanist. Many old charms of witchcraft call upon him. An incantation to him occurs in Leland's Gospel of the Witches, showing that he also made his way into Romany lore.

His lineage, according to Genesis 4:17-22, begins with that most enigmatic figure of Enoch, supposed author of the Chronicles of Enoch, preserving the mystery of the Watchers. Enoch begat I-rad, who begat Me-hu-ja-el, who begat Me-hu-sa-el, who begat Lamech, who came across Cain the wanderer and ironically slew him.

Lamech took two wives, whose names were A-dah and Zillah. Through the first he fathered Jabal, who was the first amongst those who dwell in tents and keep cattle, and who invented geometry. Also she gave him Jubal, who was the first of all musicians, the art being taught him by the Devil that he may seduce mankind.

Zillah bore him Tubal-Cain, the first blacksmith, who later became identified as an initiator of the Horseman's Word and a 'black master' of the witches' sabbat. Tubal Cain is considered to be 'the first magician', and it is he who forged the Spear of Destiny which wounded Christ's side. Also, he is said to have appeared before Hiram Abiff, the 'Widow's Son' of Freemasonry, giving him the instructions required to finish Solomon's temple. He and his siblings are attributed with erecting the original twin pillars, Joachim and Boaz.

His sister was Naamah, who found out the art of weaving. Her name means 'lovely one', or 'sensuous one', and she is identified as a witch queen.

It is considered by many theologians that the evils of this lineage, combined with the descent of the Watchers, were the reasons why the

Lord in his wrath brought about the Deluge. The tale is told in both the Book of Enoch, Chapter 10, and Genesis 6 of the Old Testament.

Yet this in itself was not enough, for Noah's son, Ham (or Cham), continued the transmission of that knowledge imparted by the Watchers. According to the Christian mystic Jacob Boehme, 'Cham's progeny became unspiritual man, materialists, on whom was the curse, who were blind to the light of nature, blind to the interior light.' Ham initiated his son Mizraim into the ultimate mysteries of darkness. Whilst Cain's own satanic sorcery may have been primitive, the teachings of Azazel and his kind were a developed philosophy and science. It is Mizraim, tradition tells us, that left a legacy of magick to his descendants, the Egyptians.

Ham was also the father of Canaan, who begat Sidon the father of the Sidonians who worshiped 'the Devils themselves for Dieties'..

Ham's lineage also included Cush, father of the Ethiopeans, to whom may be traced the mythological origins of all the African cults such as voodoo and obeah. The sons of Cush also include Phut, father of the Bedouin nomads, and Canaan, father of the Phonecians.

Cush begat Nimrod, who built the tower of Babel, and was a powerful diabolist in his own right. According to the Malleus Maleficarum, Nimrod was also the first who compelled men to worship fire. He was the founder of Babylon, and Uruk on the Euphrates, and to him may be traced all their mysteries and the birth of the dark priestcraft.

The lineage of Ham divided into various tribes. The group led by himself found its way to Persia. The natives, called the Bactrians, were so enthralled by his enchantments that they named him Zoroaster, bright star of life. Ham-Zoroaster was the first to teach that the stars and planets were gods, and to be worshipped with sacrifices. It is recorded that the various peoples inhabiting the land of Canaan were charmers, enchanters, and consulters with familiar spirits.

Indeed the hereditary witch is not rare in folk lore. The Reverend R. S. Hawker records in Footprints of Former Men in Far Cornwall, 1895, that the locals of his parish believed witches were first birthed from the entrance of the demons into the ancestral herd at Gadara; '.. The old notion that a wizard or witch so became by a nefarious bargain with the

enemy of man, and by a surrender of his soul to his ultimate grasp, although still held in many a nook of our western valleys, and by the crooning dame at her solitary hearth, appears to have been exchanged in my hamlet of Holacombe (for such is its name) for a persuasion that these choosers of the slain inherit their faculty from their birth. Whispers of forbidden ties between their parents, and of monstrous and unhallowed alliances of which these children are the issue, largely prevail in this village. There it is held that the witch, like the poet, is so born.'

Whatever truths, literal and lateral, there are in such claims, the fact remains that there are families where witchcraft is passed from parent to child. There have been many that have claimed the mysteries, whose families have preserved them. Amongst the most famous of these we find the master witch Old George Pickingill (1816-1909). Here, the bloodline was begun with, or traced as far back as, Julia, 'The Witch of Brandon', who in 1071 was hired to create charms for the troops of Hereward the Wake, designed to magically confound their enemies the Normans. Possibly, the Pickingills descended from the Pickingale family of Romany Gypsies.

The legend does not pass beyond this, but ever since their family took positions of priestcraft within a 'hereditary' coven. This was the parent of the Nine Covens, located in Hertfordshire, Hampshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, including a highly influential esoteric society at Cambridge University in 1805. He had a reputation as a rabid anti-Christian, and combined forces with satanists, ceremonial magicians, freemasons, and rosicrucians, amongst others. His personal mission seems to have been to support any evolving esoteric path, as an attempt to draw people away from the church.

The myth of the bloodline also brings us to Robert Cochrane, whose 'Clan of Tubal Cain' gave service to the Elder Gods by methods ancient and traditional. He was a man with a very English and cunning sense of humour. Doreen Valiente was a member of his clan, joining with it after her split with Gardner, and she describes him as 'perhaps the most powerful and gifted personality to have appeared in modern witchcraft.' He showed less animosity towards christianity, choosing instead to draw attention to its pagan roots, and equating it with other mythologies of virgin birth and resurrecting solar deity. His own tradition he described

as hereditary, yet more a clan of individuals than an initiatory tradition. His style was less that of the formal ritual, and more that of the trance sorcerer or 'shaman'. Due to what some might describe as an inflated sense of honour, he sadly took his own life at the summer solstice of 1966. Those who wish to know more about the rituals and practices of the Clan of Tubal-Cain, and of Cochrane's lineage as a magician, are referred to the hugely influential work Witchcraft: A Tradition Renewed, by Doreen Valiente and E. J. Jones.

Probably amongst the most self consciously famous of witches to claim hereditary lineage was the self proclaimed 'King of the Witches', Alex Sanders (1926-1988). His 'Book of Shadows' was almost entirely cribbed from Gardner, but it seems that the actual coven goings on were much more varied and 'shamanic'. Sanders was an active bisexual and trance medium, and much of the covens more secret goings on included aspects quite akin to voodoo. He also included aspects of mask magick, particularly employing a spirit mask identified as 'the aztec'.

The magick of this code acts as the trigger of remembering. The power of 'the blood' lies as a dormant force within, awakened through service to the self. In a sense such myths are as good as arbitrary, and in another they serve an intensely specific magical purpose; the acceptance of our spiritual inheritance.

Chapter 17
WILD & SECRET PLACES

"On hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,
Or on the beached margent of the sea,
To dance their ringlets to the whistling wind."
Midsummer Night's Dream, W. Shakespear

The spirits of witchcraft live in the wild and secret places. Live? Yes, and they die, too. All of nature follows this cycle. Indeed it is said that the death of a phaerie is more complete than our own, for they are not subject to the promise given to the children of Adam.

When people ask about the witchcraft that my mother taught me as a child, I always say that, besides the songs that she sang, the most important things are what she showed me out in the wild and secret places. She could see into the spirit worlds, and in her company I was allowed to also. It is also true that to most people they remain utterly hidden.

There is a common understanding that children can see phaerie, and adults cannot. Scoff all you like, but children are more wise. Those adults who are shocked by sudden glimpses into the spirit realms had best keep quiet upon the subject. That the ancients found spirits in the world around us is well known, but when we come across them in the modern day we are always surprised. We doubt our own sanity, and wonder who put mushrooms in our omelette.

Such encounters, however we choose to describe them, happen with regularity, and often to quite normal people. There are places where such events happen over and again, often marked by the ancients with

megaliths and circles of stone. Clearly something is going on here, something to do with the places themselves.

There is a power that runs through the earth beneath us, a current of magick we can see in the undulations of the hills and the twists of the trees, in the valleys and heights, in the shapes chosen by stones, and the faces we can see in the cliffs. In the modern tongue, this power is called Ley. There are many schools of thought considering the Ley lines that span our landscape, aligning our ancient circles of stone, our barrow mounds and phaerie hills, wells and megaliths. Whatever we choose to personally believe, there can be no doubt that these are magical and mysterious places. Visiting them, we cannot help but be moved, to be awed, to believe in the realms of spirit known to the ancestors who built them.

These lines of power stretch not only across Britain, but link over 40,000 megalithic sites, almost all of them tombs, across northern Europe. Some say these places mark weak positions in the tectonic plates, the shifts of which create some mind scrambling electrical charge that gives us visions of little green men, be they elves or extraterrestrials. This is the 'earth lights phenomena', known to the more scientific end of the Earth Mysteries. The theory is born out by the fact that many of these sights are indeed built upon fracture lines deep beneath the earth. Perhaps the megaliths themselves were placed as conduits for the power they produce by their friction.

Others say they mark out the Coffin Paths travelled by the dead on the journey to their source, or the paths walked by our ancestors whose nomadic existence was ever a path of return. Certainly, the existence of the Coffin Paths is a genuine part of folk custom. A route became 'consecrated' by carrying the corpse of a person along it, and became common land as a result.

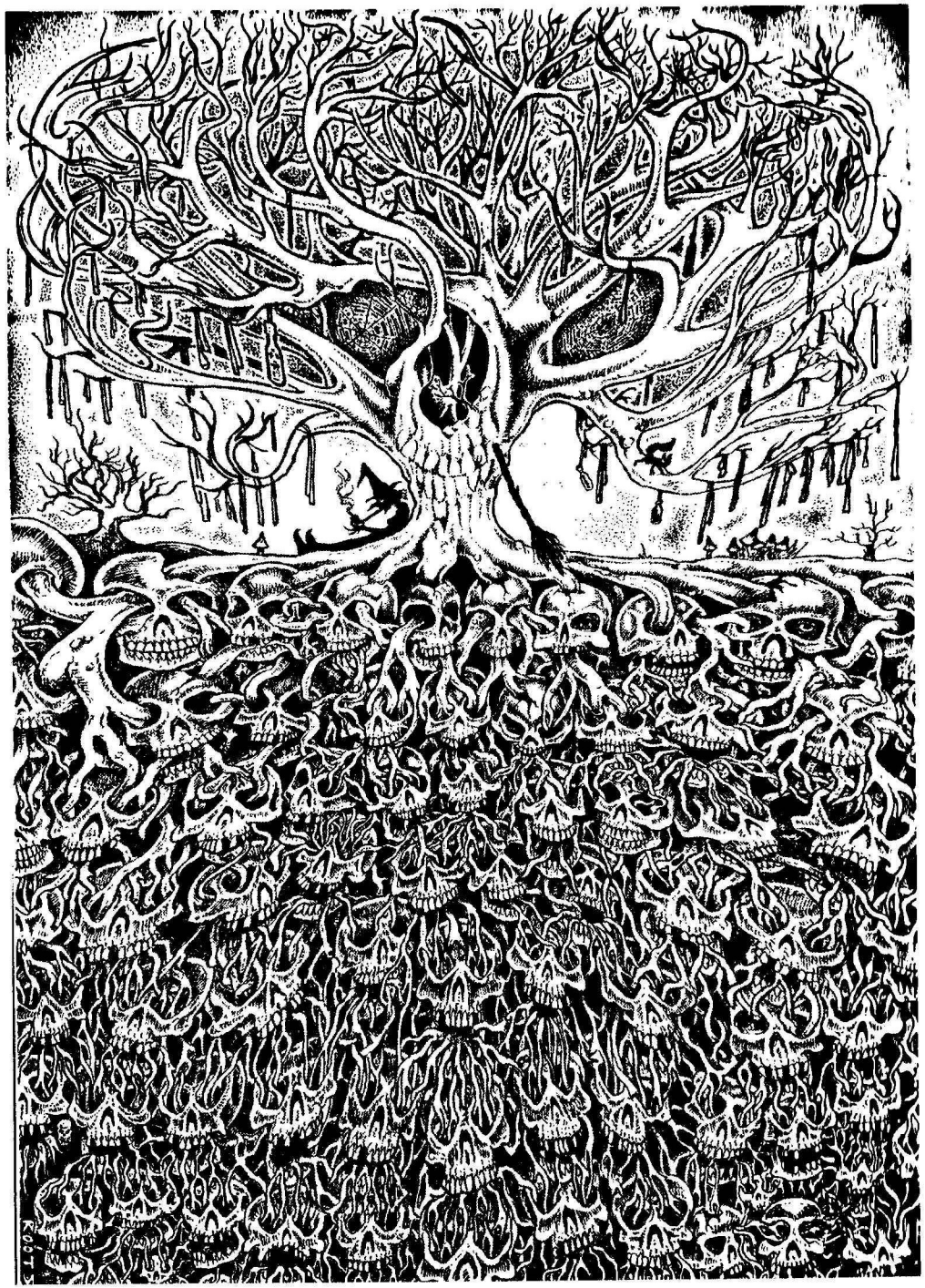
According to the experts in this field, there are all kinds of Ley lines. Some are linear, others spiral, they travel over the entire globe by the most bizarre and meandering routes, and even come in all the different colours you can think of, as well as some that you cannot.

The lines of power in our landscape are sometimes called Dragon Lines, a term reflected in the oriental geomantic discipline of Feng Shui. Since

our own knowledge of 'land power' has been all but lost, many modern witches have turned to the knowledge that has survived in this discipline. Although the philosophy of Taoism, and the symbols employed in their magick, are somewhat different to our own, many of the basic underlying assumptions remain the same.

Personally speaking, I feel I have learnt more from visiting such places and making myself receptive to them than I have from any human teacher or book. To visit a place of power, and to allow the spirits of the place to explore you as you explore them, is to allow the place to change you. To anybody that really wishes to learn what the old traditions of the British Isles actually are, I can only recommend to do the same.

Any place, whether naturally occurring or made by the hands of men, may be considered to possess its own spirit, sometimes called the anima loci or guardian. Many burial mounds are the homes of ancestral spirits, phaerie, or witches. The spirits are out and about, as well as within us. It is a whole lot easier to encounter the Horned One by accident, out in the wilds, than it is to call it by ceremonial magick in the confines of the temple. The wise witch will always bear this in mind, and will not conduct ceremonies or perform acts of magick that are 'out of law' with the land. Often, some form of dedication and offering are presented as a part of other workings, in order to gain the support, or at least not offend, the spirit of a place.



Chapter 18
VOICES OF THE ANCESTRAL DEAD

West Kennet Longbarrow, near the stone circle of Avebury, is a mysterious place in extremis. Its original use is unknown, although theories suggest that it was a place of symbolic rebirth. The wandering pre-Celtic tribes would return there with the corpses of their dead, which would be placed within the 'womb' of the mound and left to rot. All that would be left of them would be their bones, unidentifiable from those of all the others that had been taken there. The tribe would then return at a later date, and some of these bones would be taken for use in ritual. These would have been carved and decorated, making magical tools that would act as a link to 'the ancestors'.

In the summer of 1999, I travelled their in the company of two sorcerers, a male and female who were working together. We brought with us drums, Tibetan singing bowls, and a powerful sacrament. Once there, we performed a 'freeform' ritual to summon the spirits that reside there.

The mystery began for us about two miles or so from the site itself, when the lights of the car mysteriously failed. Our driver continued slowly through the pitch black, all of us worried that some kind of horrendous accident could result. Speaking personally, I felt that this event had something to do with our intentions. It was a little like being blindfolded

as part of some kind of initiation, itself a symbolic journey of death and rebirth.

When we arrived at the longbarrow, we were surprised to see that a group of people were just leaving. We passed each other without comment, although we could hear this other group giggling, as if they knew something that we did not. Entering the low opening to the mound, we were surprised again. The whole place was illuminated by nightlight candles, and decked out with daisies and other wild flowers.

The three of us decided to begin our work at the far end of the barrow, where some kind of celebration had obviously taken place only half an hour or so before. We sat in a triangle, the drums and singing bowls before us, and dedicated our sacrament to the spirit of the place. This sinister potion we then drank between us.

And so we began, the humming of our bowls and the freeform chanting filling the barrow, creating an intense atmosphere of magick. Almost immediately, I began to feel the spirits awakening, a ghostly thousands of years old. The spirits of the ancestors. We continued with our instruments and voices for some time, employing the chant; 'You know the living, we know the dead.'

Concentrating our breath together, so that we exhaled and inhaled, inhaled and exhaled as one. Eventually this died down, and the couple I was with took themselves off into a side chamber to make love. I could hear their breathing, and since we had been working together in such a way, I found that my own breathing naturally seemed to fall into rhythm with theirs. It also seemed to me that the spirits of the place were breathing with us, and that the energy being raised by my friends was somehow feeding the magick. I stayed put, and continued the chant quietly to myself, allowing this to fall gradually into a trance of 'talking in tongues'.

This trance took my spirit to a place of darkness, a darkness that was the place itself. Gradually, from the spirit realms, I began to hear the sound of a thousand voices all whispering to one another. I knew that they were discussing the magick that was taking place, and what they were to make of me in particular, this medium who sought communion with them. They were as countless spirits, all around me, and the darkness envel

oped me. This went on for several minutes, until suddenly all these voices spoke as one voice to me. What was a thousand spirits chattering together all spoke as one vast spirit. They said, 'YOU!'

Gripped by a paralysing fear and awe, I said nothing. They broke into a thousand whispers once more, and then returned as one voice. 'YOU WHO HAVE SUMMONED US...' again they became many, and again they became one, 'WHY?'

I can tell you that I did not know what to reply to them. The need to commune came from some part of myself I had not questioned, some organic desire I knew no reason for. I remained silent, as much out of fear as anything, and the voices became many once more. I could feel them sniffing around me, touching my body, entering into me and reading my thoughts. I wanted to get up and flee, but instead relaxed and let them explore my soul as they desired. After all, if you are going to perform magical rites such as this, what would be the point if you freaked out and ran away when they worked?

Returning as one voice they said, simply, 'YES. ONE OF US.'

With that, they were gone, and I was back in this material world. I was left with a feeling of awe, a profound knowledge that I was somehow related to this place itself through my bloodline. The mound had contained the bones of my own ancestors, that although we were separated by many countless generations, I had just met the spirits of my own family. You know, suddenly mortality did not seem like such a big deal.

Later, when the sun had risen, I sat atop Silbury Hill and watched a crop circle form in a field nearby, wishing amongst it all that I had remembered to bring a camera.

Chapter 19
NECROMANCY

"Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations."
Isaiah 14:9

The word necromancy literally means 'divination by summoning the dead'. This is not to be confused with the spirituality of ancestor reverence. Necromancy is usually understood to be the evocation of a shade or the reanimation of a corpse in order to ask it questions. This might be for the whereabouts of hidden treasures, concerns of the past, or of the future. The summoning of a shade is achieved through the performance of a witch rite called The Dumb Supper.

The magical principles of this summoning are the same as those for any other branch of witchcraft. Its ritual, with its circles, robes, wands, sacrifices and incantations, follow the same formulae. The spirit is bound either by love, or with will power. Whilst the servant of the ancestors is working with those of their own bloodline, and offering reverence, the necromancer is simply summoning ghosts and controlling them. The major difference can be defined as 'who gets to be the boss'. In very few spiritist traditions do the summoners seek to bully and bind their ancestors. This is usually recognised to be a very foolish act.

Those of your bloodline will, usually, work with you of their own accord, provided that they are not disrespected. What we care to call the Hidden Company are bound by their oaths of service to the witches' craft, and

yet would be a formidable force to offend. There are of course, exceptions that prove the rule.

In fact the word necromancy is often used to mean a wide range of practices. Entire mystery schools have been centred upon it. The witchs' formulae of initiation are commonly recognised as a process of death and resurrection. The practitioners of necromantic witchcraft simply take this formula further. They include the servants of Hecate, Queen of the Crossroads, who eats the flesh of dogs. Their sacred number is thirteen, like the lunar months in a year, or the Tarot Trump of Death. Its paraphernalia is the gruesome remains of the dead; and all things funereal. The greatest meditations of the necromancer are those concerned with mortality itself.

Its philosophy is that of the antinomian, the 'outsider' who is party to secrets others fear to contemplate. Their magick is often of a strictly illegal nature, and includes such things as the famed Hand of Glory. This is a talismanic candle made from the severed hand of a hung criminal, most likely to be found at the crossroads. Its magick was to protect against discovery during law breaking activities. Often, indeed, the shade to be summoned is itself the spirit of some form of criminal. The magick and philosophies of the cunning have always included necromancy in one form or another, even if it repels many modern neo-Pagans.

Speaking for myself, whilst I am not confessing to anything quite so gruesome or illegal as this, there are certain aspects of the necromantic arts that form a part of my most personal workings. I have spoken to the spirits of the dead in the past, and no doubt I shall do so again. At times I have summoned them, at others they have come of their own accord. Ghosts and poltergeist have intruded upon my life on various occasions, as I have intruded upon theirs.

The central fetishe of many of my workings include a human skull, which I believe to be haunted in itself. Sometimes I include various other pieces of bone in my workings. I have met others who have inherited their witch traditions, or claimed the more obscure initiations, and I know this is not so unusual. However, to include this chapter is sure to place my book into the category of 'black magick' or 'left hand path'; its practice runs contrary to what wider society considers acceptable behaviour.

Death presents us with the last of our modern taboos, for it was the first we acquired. It is the philosopher's obsession, a big question to which every religion offers a different answer. The beliefs we adopt concerning it reflect and dictate the way in which we choose to lead our lives. Often, they are also those beliefs we will argue the most emotively about, and defend with the most passion. It is these same taboos, obsessions, questions, fears and attractions that are confronted by the witch in the practice of necromancy. Its greatest magick is in acquiring the strength to face these honestly.

I include here an example of a necromantic act of ritual possession sorcery, as it is included in my own personal record. This takes place some years before the events of the previous chapter. It will be seen that a completely different dynamic exists between the sorcerer and the spirits. In the events detailed above, contact is made between myself and the ancestors that I have come to serve. The ritual I include here, however, is one in which various shades are summoned, and bound to obedience with magical devices and weapons.

From my Magical Diary, 31.10.92

The central assumption of this rite of necromancy is that the dead are connected, beyond time and circumstance, and thus may answer any question put to them whatsoever. Its performance on the night of Halloween is of great significance, for this is when the veil between our world and the next is said to be at its thinnest. The magick of the ritual serves to open up a way to the Coffin Paths.

Around thirty of us are gathered, deep in the woods. The purpose of the ritual has been discussed, and agreed by all. All are robed in black. The circle has been cast, and a fire roars at its centre. From here I conducted the ritual, a human thigh bone, inscribed with signs of power, held in my hand as a magical weapon. In preparation for the summoning, I have worked for thirteen nights a devotion of Thanatos. Also by my side, I have the waters of exorcism, previously blessed in a rite of the Horned One as the Pangenitor, and Giver of Life.

The modus operandi was as follows:

I proclaimed the statement, and this was repeated by all present; 'This is our will, to connect with the Pathways of the Dead, that their knowledge may be tapped for our benefit.'

All participants apart from myself had their arms crossed over their chests in the traditional posture of the corpse. Their eyes closed, and they rock back and forth, gently putting themselves into light trance. For myself, I walked the circle, casting an inner protective circle, to separate myself from the other participants. During this, all were silent.

I recited the following guided meditation; 'There are infinite ways to die, or to have died. Some go violently, some in peace. Some struggle to hold onto life, others resign themselves and slip away in calmness. Some die old, and some die young. Some die just as they learn to walk, some just as they learn to live... Our attitude towards Death must surely reflect and dictate the manner in which we choose to lead our lives. In the mind's eye... allow images of Death... of the ways to die... to form... Contemplate... the hour of Death... of those you have known... of your own.... Catch upon Death... in any of its forms... imagine yourself into Death... Die.

'Discorporate. Arise from the corpse that was once your body... Before you, in the distance... see the gateway... beyond which lie... the Corpse Paths... the Highways of the Dead... Feel yourself drawn inexorably onwards... nearer... nearer... nearer still... towards the gate... It opens around you. Enter!'

I then began the group chant. This consisted of four line proclamations by myself, calling on the Dead of various places around the world, ie; 'Dead in Hiroshima, Dead in Nagasaki, Dead in London City, Dead in New York...'

In all, fifty place names were called, spanning the globe. After each four lines, all proclaimed together; "We are connected!"

All participants, rocking back and forth, began to give an eldritch wailing. During this, I performed the following call; "Oh ye Spirits of the Dead, hear me now, for we are connected you and I. I, (magical name and coven status), bid you welcome to this place, on this night of Samhain. (Call omitted according to oath). I request this of you; cause

no harm unto my companions or unto myself, be friendly unto us. Answer the questions I put to you accurately, and in a language I may understand.'

The call was successful, and participants slipped into a trance of possession. I found myself at the centre of a circle of wailing, angry sounding spirits of the dead. They called out ridicule, saying such things as 'You do not know Death, tho' you have seen the dead, have touched the flesh of corpses, you do not know death!'

I stalked around the circle, calling out the questions I wished to ask. These questions, and the answers I could hear and understand amongst the cacophony are recorded as follows;

Q: How may a living magician enter the Pathways of the Dead?

A: Narcotics. Chod ritual. In the East. In the West. In your Ka. In sleep you die.

Q: How may a magician defend himself on the Pathways of the Dead?

A: There is no defence against death. May his body be interned for thirty days. May no man speak his name.

Q: What signposts are there on the Pathways of the Dead?

A: There are none. Crossroads. Graveyards. The gallows.

Q: Have you anything more you wish to say?

A: Wailing, ridicule.

I then performed the exorcism, as follows; 'Spirits of the Dead, the time of questions has passed. Go peacefully, return to the graves from whence you came. By these words (omitted in accordance to oath) I bid thee depart.'

I moved around the circle with the water, splashing it upon the entranced faces and bringing them to consciousness. Finally, we banished, and everybody roared in laughter at the absurdity of what we had just done.

Devil candle holder. Perhaps once the focus of many deep meditations. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, courtesy of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, Cornwall.

Chapter 20
THE PERSECUTION

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"
Exodus XXII, King James

In 1482 a Papal Bull was passed by Pope Innocent III. In it, the practice of witchcraft was condemned as a heresy, and the holocaust began. In 1484 Giovanni Battista Cibo was elected to the Tiara, and issued his manifesto against the witches, sorcerers and heretics. To make the Bull effective it was followed by the appointment of judges with powers of jurisdiction over various areas. 1486 saw the first publication of the famed and dreaded Malleus Mallificarum, the title of which is normally translated as The Witches' Hammer. This was authored by the German Dominican Father Henry Kramer, appointed inquisitor in 1474, styling himself 'Institoris'. He was aided in this by Father James Sprenger, who later repudiated and testified against him when he was zealously tried for witchcraft himself.

The Malleus was to become the standard textbook for the whole campaign, setting out the accepted procedures for examination and extermination of those suspected of membership within the witch cult. By 1520 it had reached its fourteenth edition. The work is in many ways a justification of Kramer and Sprenger's appointments as Grand Inquisitors, roles which were not at the time gaining general acceptance. Perhaps most importantly, they had to overturn the Canon Episcopi, and that the belief in witchcraft was itself considered heretical. That they

managed to achieve this represents an important turning point in the persecution of the Old Ways.

Prolonged by the malefic self interest of the Church, the persecution lasted nearly three hundred years. During this time some 200,000 accusations were made across Western Europe, leading to torture, hanging and burning. The confessions made under these circumstances are hardly reliable, yet we see here the attempted eradication of one spiritual tradition by another. The persecutors believed that they were stamping out a world wide conspiracy by the servants of Satan, yet these were nothing more than simple folk, who had gained the distrust or plain unqualified spite of their neighbours. Although their conspiracy theories spoke of dark powers in high places, the people murdered for their part in it were invariably powerless and poor. They were also almost invariably women.

The Malleus is amongst the most misogynist texts ever penned, stating that the reason why women are more likely to practice witchcraft is because they are more stupid, fickle, lighter headed, and seething with carnal desires. The all pervading woman fear of the age cannot be laid entirely at the door of its authors, however. The Protestant reformers, who sought to avoid the mistakes of the Catholic Church, were no better. The writings of Martin Luther are a prime example. Women had always been particularly vulnerable to accusations from the very beginnings of the witch hunts, particularly midwives, single women, lesbians, and widows. All considered, quite rightly, to be likely witches simply because of whom they were.

For example, in 1407 a trial in Basel involves several women accused of employing a variety of spells and potions, details of which were put before the municipal court. Some of these spells invoked images of piety, such as the saints, the wounds of Christ, and the nails used in the crucifixion. Others called upon all manner of demons and werewolves to perform terrible deeds, such as sucking the blood from a victim's heart.

In 1522, Martin Luther criticised the legal system and its requirements for proof in the persecution of witches and heretics, calling them 'the Devil's Whores'. However, witchcraft itself was not made a capital

offence in Britain until 1563, although in Scotland to have made a pact with the Devil already incurred the death penalty. The usual practice in Europe and Scotland was to burn those convicted of sorcery and heresy at the stake. It became customary to temper the severity of this punishment by strangling the accused with a garrotte before they were set aflame, or to hang them first. This allowed an additional refinement to their torture, for in the cases where a supposed heretic recanted their confession and repentance before their execution, this mercy could be neglected.

The persecutions were a widespread epidemic of blood lust, taking on frightening proportions. Six hundred were said to have been burned by a single bishop in Banberg. Nine hundred were burned in a single year in the bishopric of Wurzburg, and in Nuremburg there were one or two hundred burnings a year. In his book Demonolatry, Lyon, France, 1595, Judge Nicolas Remy claims to have personally sentenced to death nine hundred people in the course of fifteen years. The most cynical of historians have put the figures at closer to one seventh this amount, yet we are still talking about sanctioned mass murder. In the district of Como, a thousand people were put to death in one year. According to Delrio, Geneva saw the execution of five hundred people in three months of 1515. The Inquisition at Toulouse saw the execution of four hundred people in one day. In Paris, executions were continuous.

In 1573 we saw the trial of the famed Gilles Garnier. There were fifty witnesses and a rack, with Garnier being accused of witchcraft, werewolfery, and cannibalism amongst other diabolical crimes. His sentence concluded that; '...the said Gilles to be taken on this day in a cart from this spot to a place of execution, accompanied by the executioner, where he, by the said executioner, shall be tied to a stake and burned alive, and that his ashes be then scattered to the winds. The court further condemns him, the said Gilles, to the cost of this prosecution.'

Records show that in Jura alone over five hundred people were put to death between 1598 and 1616, with the figures claimed by the Witch Finder of the area, Henri Boguet, being higher still. His Discours des Sorciers became a standard text for the witch hunters, with twelve editions in twenty years. Boguet includes many supposed werewolves

in his list of victims, this being the crime you were most likely to be executed for if you were male. Werewolfery was a popular crime in the Pyrénées, and De L'Ancre at Labout burned two hundred.

It was only fairly late that the campaign of witch hunting came to England, with no official laws against sorcery as such until the influence of the Reformation in 1542. Prior to this, laws existed against the specific use of witchcraft for mallefic ends, against sexual depravity, swindling, poisoning, and heresy. The degrees of punishment varied. For example, in the mid fifteenth century Henry Hoigges of Bodmin had 'brake his legge and foul was hert by the sotill craftys of enchauntment wyccecraft & sorcerye' of Sir John Harry, who boasted of having done just this and threatened to break Henry's neck by the same means. Poor Henry Hoigges, however, found no protection in recourse to the common law.

It was in 1563 that Mary Queen of Scots passed an act which decreed death to witches, and all who consulted with them. The fear and persecution quickly spread, and it is estimated that from the passing of this act until the ascension of James I, some 70,000 executions took place in Scotland.

Much of the ferocity of the Reformation was most likely to have been contributed by the Marian exiles, who returned to England on the accession of Queen Elizabeth. Many of them had been to Geneva, and had been infected with the craze of witch hunting there. These people settled in the Eastern Counties, where there were no doubt a large number of those who did indeed continue to practice the Old Ways, segregated as they were by the landscape of undredged fen. Burning was not so popular in England as it was across the channel, with alleged witches being more commonly hung by the neck. In the two hundred years between 1563 and the repeal of this act in 1736, around one thousand executions were carried out in this manner. In the Channel Isles and Scotland the Church was far more enthusiastic, bringing continental savagery into their tortures, and employing the stake to burn in excess of four thousand four hundred people.

Undoubtedly, there was also a political angle to many of these persecutions. For example, in 1591 a group of witches were tried and killed for

attempting by magick to bring an end to King James I himself, and also his bride, Anne of Denmark. The instigator was said to be none other than the Earl of Bothwell, Francis Hepburn, heir apparent to the throne should James die without an heir, and notorious for his obsession with sorcery. The Earl was also suspected of being the 'black man of the witches'.

In this we have the testimony of Gellie Duncan, who under torture named the leaders of the conspiracy, as well as Cunningham, also called Dr. John Fienne, and some sixty-odd others. Although five members of his coven were executed, most of them respected people of the Edinburgh district, the Earl himself fled to Naples, where he is said to have continued practising sorcery until 1624, when he died in poverty.

The personal views and strong beliefs of King James concerning witchcraft may be found in his own book, Daemonologie. As the Bull and the Malleus Mallificarum were the text books employed by Germany, France, and the disintegrating Catholic Empire, so this work became the official guide to persecution within Protestant England. In the first bill of his first parliament, James introduced legislation against witches far more severe than those of his predecessor, Elizabeth, making for the first time execution upon first conviction the law. For shrewd political reasons, James I later recanted most of what he had said about witchcraft, his Stuart successors displaying considerable scepticism in the existance of witchcraft at all.

The same year Margaret Read was burnt at the stake in the middle of King's Lynn market square, one of the three women to die this way in England. The crime she was burnt for was the murder of her husband, which was a capital offence, rather than the witchcraft she allegedly used to do away with him. Legend has it that whilst she was burning, her heart exploded from her body and hit a nearby wall in the market square, where a heart is carved in commemoration of her.

Two other women were burnt as witches in England, both of them in East Anglia. They were Mother Lakeland of Ipswich, in 1654, and Mary Oliver of Norwich, 1659. Both were also accused of murdering their husbands through witchcraft. The site of Lollard's Pit in Norwich, where Mary died, is now a public house.

There is a sharp rise in the number of executions from 1600 onwards. By 1640 a witch could be brought to trial by an anonymous and unsupported accusation. With evidence in the defence being twisted and corrupted to suit the death lust of the Church, such accusations were all but impossible to defend against.

This was a symptom of the political and religious climate of the time. In the run up to the Civil War between King and Parliament in 1642, the citizens and common folk had already chosen their sides. They were fervently Puritan, and easily roused by the rabid bigotry of preachers who were so keen to point the finger and cry heresy. Parliament displayed a ferocious obsession with seeking out and destroying the witch cult, and it was between 1642 to 1649 that their armies were spreading throughout what had previously been the territories loyal to the King. In Scotland, the influence was bolstered by Covenant and The Solemn League.

Especially murderous were the efforts of the notorious Mathew Hopkins, self appointed 'Witch Finder General', who operated during this second and worst phase of the persecutions in the British Isles, and was personally responsible for over three hundred executions in Essex alone. Evidently, Hopkins had been greatly influenced by his reading of the Daemonologie of James I, and the pamphlets that were generated by its publication. He was the pioneer of a new trade of Witch Finders, who earned around 12s. to 20s. for each witch tried and killed. The son of James Hopkins, a Puritan minister of Wenham, around eight miles from Ipswich, he studied and practiced law in that town, and worked there as a 'lawyer but of little note'. He then moved to the town of Manningtree, in Essex some time around 1645, where he 'discovered' eight witches who practiced the arte somewhere in the region of his home every sixth Friday. Apparently he heard them talking to their imps and making sacrifices to the Devil.

The first of these charges was made against one Elizabeth Clarke, alias Bedinfield, an extremely old one legged woman who lived in poverty. She was arrested and charged before Sir Thomas Bowes and Sir Harbottle Grimston, at the Chelmsford Assizes between March and May. According to the records left by Hopkins, and his accomplice John Stearne, when she was physically searched, she was found to have 'three teats

about her, which honest women have not.' The evidence also shows that she was subjected to the ordeal of being 'watched', a kind of torture permitted in these trials at the time.

Having been terrified, made to walk up and down the room on her one leg until exhausted, and not allowed sleep for four consecutive nights, it seems likely that if she was not in any way fragile or disturbed before her trial that she was by the time she made her confession. In the company of ten men, and by now suffering physical and mental breakdown, she confessed to having had carnal knowledge of the Devil for six or seven years. He appeared to her once a week, in the form of a 'tall, proper, black haired gentleman,' saying 'Besse, I must lie with you'. When Hopkins asked her who she would rather lie with, the Devil or himself, she replied 'The Devil!'

She confessed to possessing several familiars, and apparently summoned one to visible appearance in the room before all the witnesses. When Hopkins asked her if the spirit, or any of her imps, would do them any harm, Bedinfield replied, 'What, you think I would be afraid of my own children?'

She named the other coven members, and their familiars also. Elizabeth and these other women were sent to the assizes. They were Ann Weste, who 'hath been suspected for a witch many years since, and suffered imprisonment for the same', her daughter Rebecca Weste, Elizabth Gooding, 'a lewd woman', Anne Leech, and her daughter Helen Clarke.

Rebecca Weste was tried in Colchester, and confessed that she had attended a meeting at Elizabeth's house, where she became initiated into witchcraft. They had spent some time 'praying to their familiars' and reading from a book of spells. The familiars then appeared, and the witches told them what things they desired to effect. These familiars were a horde of spirits, one witch confessing to command of twelve familiars in all. The bodies of all women were searched for 'bigges', the extra teats or witch marks that familiars suckle upon, which of course were found on all but one of them. According to the records, she had cut her bigges off and laid plasters over them.

In the summer of that year Hopkins and Stearne tortured, tried and murdered twenty more alleged witches, all of them women. They then

turned their attention to the surrounding towns and counties. The searching for bigges remained their central method in the discovery of a witch. Although the layman might mistake them for a wart, or some kind of natural blemish such as a mole, to Hopkins and his cronies they were sure signs of guilt. These marks would be tested by pricking, and pierced with a three inch long needle. The witch would feel no pain from this, and the piercing would not bleed. Many of these trials and tests would be in public, and the onlookers would be convinced by what they saw. The possession of familiars seems to be a persistent presence in the confessions of the East Anglian witches, as was sexual intercourse with the Devil. Hopkins and Stearn recorded them all.

By the end of August, as many as two hundred accused witches were being held in Bury Saint Edmund's Gaol. Amongst them was the Rev. John Lowis, who had been tried and found guilty of being a witch thirty years before. He, too, was found to have bigges upon which his familiars suckled. He was submitted to the torture of 'watching', enforced sleep deprivation, and thrown in the river with his thumbs and big toes tied together. This was a favourite test of the Witch Finders, if the accused sank and drowned they were proven to be innocent, since the witch would have the power to float. Poor Rev. Lowis swam, as did many of the others thrown into the river with him, and was consequently hung by the neck later that evening.

The importance of this particular trial lies in the fact that it has a pre-Christian origin, and was not invented during the persecution. It was a favourite punishment for loud or lewd women, and ill behaved wives, with many villages having their own 'ducking stools', a kind of see-saw with a caged chair at one end, which could be lowered into the river. It seems they viewed it as some kind of poetic justice to use the methods of the Old Ways against itself. It is particularly spoken against in the Malleus Mallificarum, but was very popular in Scotland and England. If the witch sank, but did not drown, the test would be repeated, the whole ordeal degenerating into a continuous ducking and re-ducking. It is clear that James I believed in the validity of this ordeal, for he records in his Daemonologie; '... it appears that God hath appointed for the super-natural signe of the monstrous impietie of witches, that the water shall

refuse to receive them in her bosom, that have shaken off them the sacred water of baptism, and wilfulie refused the benefit thereof..'

Other trials favoured by Hopkins and Stearne, besides watching, walking and swimming, also included starvation, solitary confinement, weighing against the Bible, the test of their ability to repeat Psalms or the Lord's Prayer, knowledge or ignorance of the Bible generally, and tying the victim in a cross legged posture for days. Those that were not hung invariably died whilst in confinement. The list of victims goes on and on, and Hopkins continued his purge until August 1647, by which time he had earned enough reward money to retire. In the Essex folk memory, he becomes accused and tried of witchcraft himself, 'or else how can he have done it?' Unfortunately the historical facts do not bear this poetic justice out, and an entry in the parish register of Mistley-cum-Manningtree of his burial there in August 1647 suggests rather that he died in his bed.

Having been to Manningtree, and had relations with witches there, I can say that these events have left a scar on the place that is visible even today. Ironically, but perhaps not surprisingly, there are more than a few families there who see it as their spiritual duty to pass the witch knowledge, preserved in secret bloodlines.

It is interesting to note that the witchcraft persecutions of America also begun in Essex County, this time in New England, at the famous Salem Village, when the Puritan settlers there brought their laws and prejudice.

Witchcraft ceased to be a capital offence in 1736, when the Act of George II swept away the penal laws. Yet the Witchcraft Act was never repealed in its entirety until 1951. It still remained a crime, punishable by fine or imprisonment, to pretend or attempt 'to exercise or use any kind of Witchcraft, Sorcery, Inchantment, or Conjuration, or undertake to tell Fortunes, or pretend, from his or her Skill or Knowledge in any occult or Crafty Science, to discover where in what manner any Goods or Chattels, supposed to have been stolen or lost...'. In Scotland and Europe the Persecution had far from burnt out. The last sanctioned execution seems to have been that of an old lady of Dornoch, in 1772.

The actual number of people who died during the persecutions is problematical. Some say it was in excess of nine million, whilst others say that the numbers are far less, with the records being exaggerated for

reasons emotive or financial. As to the nature of it all, those who have written concerning the witchcraft persecutions tend to take two camps; those who believe there really was a world wide 'Satanic' conspiracy, and those that believe the persecutors to be indiscriminate killers. I stand somewhere between the two, taking my inspiration from more recent events in our history.

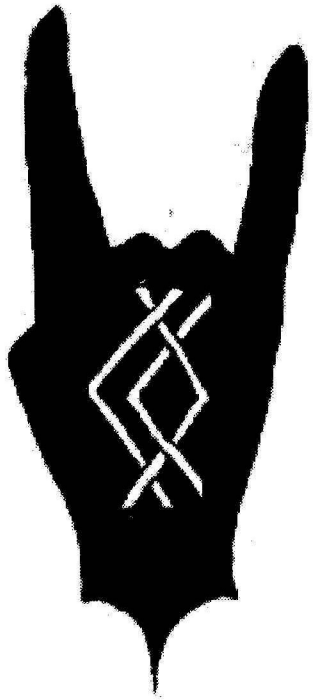
Occasionally, the craze of the witch hunt raises its ugly head in Britain, even in the modern day. In the late 1980s we saw the campaign of the Rev. Kevin Logan, who claimed to have evidence against a conspiracy of Devil worshipping witches who practice sexual child abuse as a part of their religion. He managed to sway the social services, and several families had their children removed from them as a result, despite the complete lack of corroborative proof beyond the 'confessions' of the children themselves. The press took to these stories with dangerous enthusiasm, creating a new myth of witch fear amongst the people. The papers were much quieter when the social services were forced to return the children to their parents. None of these people were actually involved in anything even remotely resembling the practice of witchcraft, let alone satanism. As with other witch hunts, the accusers rarely have the courage or conviction to go after the real thing.

The late Gerald Suster was exposed for his interest in magick and witchcraft on national television by The Cooke Report, implying that he had some involvement with this mythical satanic child abuse conspiracy. Since he worked as the head teacher of a school, he found himself unemployed with no compensation forthcoming.

Another to suffer from implication in the satanic child abuse conspiracy was the sorcerer-artist-pop star Genesis P. Orridge, who co-ordinated the formation of Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth. After the Channel 4 Dispatches team, no doubt encouraged by fundamentalist Christians, showed a section of one of his 'art films' on national television. They claimed that what was on screen was a ritual abortion, and his house was raided by the police. That these films include many occult related scenes, such as the performance of various incantations, combined with scenes of consentual sadomasochist play, which at the time was the subject of a House of Lords hearing, did not help his situation. Fearing further harassment from the police and the public, and the possible

danger to his own daughter, he and his family were forced to flee the country to 'voluntary exile'.

This outbreak of supposed anti-witchcraft persecution, although particularly widespread and well covered in the press, is simply one of many. Although the practice of witchcraft may no longer be illegal in itself, allegations such as these are extremely serious. The climate is still one where many covens require secrecy, where people fear the loss of their jobs if involvement becomes discovered, and where parents can find themselves defending against absurd allegations in the family law courts. The days of Hopkins may be long gone, and the extremes of his methods may seem like elaborate fantasy, but the days of persecution are far from over. Its ugly head can raise itself anywhere, and at any time.



Chapter 21
WHERE SLEEPING GODS LIE

"Whether God is a metaphor or a fact cannot
reasonably be argued."
The Vision, W.B.Yeats

"Let us likewise be discreet on the subject of the Goddess."
Robert Graves, lecturing in New York, 1957

The way of the witch is an esoteric, spiritist, and pantheistic world view. There is no one god or goddess that exists as any kind of 'ultimate truth', and all things living and dead can be considered to possess their own spirit and sentience. Nothing is irrelevant. Nor are the gods, goddesses and spirits seen to be in any way transcendent of human consciousness. Rather, the spirits are immanent and our experience of them is very much an experience of our own selves. Indeed it is taught; there *is* no other god. For the benefit of those to whom such thinking is alien, let me attempt to explain.

Modern psychology presents us with a language with which to describe the mechanisms of magick, and the experience of other worlds. We are given the concept that consciousness may be conveniently divided into two; that of which we are aware, and that of which we are not. That which remains beyond our awareness is called the subconscious or unconscious mind, and it is generally accepted that this part of us thinks in symbols, such as when we dream, rather than in linear terms, such as the language with which I communicate with you now. This is also the realm where we meet the spirits.

This basic division of the mind is itself rather arbitrary, since there is no one particular point at which we can say the division lies, in much the same way there is no specific point at which we can say that a tadpole

becomes a frog. Rather, it is like the transition between night and day. Our dreams are like stars, they are there all the time. Yet also the daylight mind is like the sun, and when it shines its light obscures the dreams and the stars. The psychological metaphor remains useful, however, and has certain parallels with the language used by our ancestors, and with the beliefs of many societies that continue to practice similiar forms of magick today.

In Voodoo, for example, we find the practitioners locate the spirit realm in 'the waters beneath the earth'. This metaphor bears a great similarity to that of the subconscious. The spirits of voodoo, called lwa, are experienced through the trance medium and possession workings. We may say that the medium gives up the control of their body to the impulses of the subconscious.

The lwa, and indeed the gods and goddesses of any tradition, may be likened to the concept of the archetypes, as spoken of by the psychologist C. J. Jung. These are images and characters that lie within the humanity's collective unconscious, and which act to give us patterns of behaviour and expectation, and symbolic meaning to our dreams and art. Every cosmology embodies a psychology. That is to say, that the pagan gods of war, love, beauty, envy etc., all embody aspects of human consciousness, emotion and concern. These are the raw material of the archetypes that lay within the collective unconscious of all humanity. Thus the pantheons of different peoples separated by geography and time all tend to follow certain essential patterns, so that similarities may be found with the gods of one culture and another, and the way such gods tend to relate.

Similarly, the Celts experienced their deity as existing in the twilight worlds, and offered sacrifices often by throwing cattle, enemies, and their pampered 'chosen' into deep pools of water. These pools were considered to be gateways to the other worlds, waters that lead beneath the earth. The Norse are also known to have performed similiar rites of sacrifice. Little is said as to whether the Celts experienced the gods through possession and trance, yet it seems fairly likely that they did. If not, they would be the only peoples whose spirituality has not moved through this 'phase', where human representatives of the spirits are

considered to speak their actual words and act out their deeds amongst humans of 'middle earth'.

The Norse are known to have communicated with the other worlds through the trance discipline called seiðr, which may or may not have included the ingestion of psychoactive agents. Whilst parallel practices are continued within voodoo, in our own traditions they have fallen away. Only a very few practitioners of our own witchcraft have direct experience of possession, or have even been present when a medium has been 'taken' within a circle.

So, am I saying that what these people took to be the experience of the spirit realms was nothing more than the experience of the subconscious? Am I saying that we now know something that we did not know then, and that these people were primitive and ignorant whereas we now understand ourselves and the world better? No, I am not.

I am merely borrowing from the language of this so called science, in order to explain more clearly concepts which may seem elusive and bizarre to most modern readers. I personally find the paradigms of modern psychology to be limiting in the long run, because they fail to recognise that their world view has become stilted by rationalism, to the degree that it does not explain the whole of our experience. It is also vastly inconvenient to us in the long run. If we encounter the spirits, and we act 'as if' they are real, they tend to act 'as if' they are real also.

Even the psychologist Jung was aware of this, although he was too limited in what he could get away with saying in any of his officially published material, for fear of being ridiculed by the scientific community. In his own private letters, he commented that to consider the archetypes and 'sub-personalities' as being separate entities to ourselves may often simply prove to be more effectively convenient. He concludes that we may as well call them spirits, but knows that his contemporaries would largely be unable to accept this. His papers covering the subject of meaningful coincidence, which he calls 'synchronicity', also start to sound a hell of a lot like magick.

Of further interest when it comes to translating mystical experience into rational hypothesis are the works of Julian Janes, who wrote the cumbersomely entitled book *The Origins of Consciousness and the Breakdown*

of the Bicameral Mind. In this he points out that there is a specific point in human history where we first start to make reference to internal experiences, to the whole process of reasoning things out in our own minds. He conjectures that our own brains have evolved alongside the language that we use to describe the experience of our own consciousness. By thinking of ourselves differently, we evolved to think in completely different ways. These are so significantly different that we have also changed the very structures of the brain itself. We know, for example, that our rear right hemisphere is virtually unused by modern humans. You can literally cut it out of some people, and it makes hardly any difference at all.

He points out that when electrodes were placed on the heads of some human experimental subjects, activating those areas of the right rear hemisphere that now lay dormant, the subjects heard voices. These voices seemed to replace the process of internal reasoning, so that the subject instead heard their own thoughts as external voices giving commands they had no choice but to obey. So, for example, rather than thinking to themselves 'I would quite like a cup of tea', they would hear the voice of a 'god' who would command them to make a cup, and would be incapable of acting otherwise.

Janes reasons that at the point in history when we most believed in gods, and when our own language contained no concepts to describe the process of internal reasoning or emotion, we would experience these voices all the time. Similarly, there would be no 'internal dialogue' of any kind. Instead of reading the pages in this book, and understanding these words by hearing them inside your head, you would instead look at this page and hear these words just as if someone were present and saying them aloud to you. It would be 'as if' there were some kind of spirit in this book, which was communicating to you directly.

If this hypothesis holds any truth, then the theory held by many people that magick is the art of making use of the whole of the brain, whilst most people use under one third of their capacity, might just hold some truth. By abandoning the use of modern psychological jargon, and instead talking and acting 'as if' the spirits are real, perhaps we are in fact playing a 'sleight of mind' trick upon ourselves that reactivates these dormant parts of the brain? Perhaps all the techniques of spiritist sorcery are

nothing but ways of activating our own dormant psychic powers?

So, whether the gods, goddesses and spirits actually exist in any kind of objective sense in many ways proves irrelevant. We may find ourselves agreeing with Jung and acting 'as if' they are real because it simply proves to be more practical to think and act 'as if' they do. As above, so below, as within, so without. Believe what you will, and what you Will.

Amongst the 'psychedelic community' it has become fashionable in recent days to describe the experience of hallucination and drug induced madness as the experience of 'the gods within', with the substances themselves being renamed as 'entheogens'. This perspective would seem to be quite in line with that of many so called primitive magical societies. Well aware of the terminology of modern psychology and psychiatry, these people instead choose to describe their experiences as they are experienced, rather than as they are rationalised. In the same breath, however, such chemonauts may choose to use the language of renegade psychologists such as the now immortal Timothy Leary, who is known to have practiced magick whilst utilising atheist/materialist paradigms such as the Eight Circuit Diagram. This provides a model for understanding how human consciousness has evolved from the basic 'animal" state to what it is today, and how the experience of ecstasy can open doorways to further evolution and personal change.

Whilst remaining aware of all possibilities, we should not allow our obsession for 'truth' to rob our lives of romance or get in the way of effective magick. Nor, however, should we allow our 'religious convictions' to limit us in our rationalisations. The 'beliefs' we choose to explain our magick effects the way we do it and, ultimately, the way that its results manifest. It is as if the magick itself were some unknowable substance that takes its form through our own expectations of it, as if 'belief' itself were shaping the very fabric of reality. Certainly it is easy to see how even a petty belief can effect our perceptions and actions when seen in other people.

For example, someone who has adopted the belief that they cannot paint will find it difficult to even begin to do this simple creative thing, because the belief that they cannot paint will stand in the way. Similarly with the individual who can't cook won't cook, who cannot find the courage to

break free from the limitations of society's taboos, who cannot change their beliefs, or who cannot work an act of magick. All miracles require a leap of faith, whatever it is we choose to put our faith in. It is the leap that is the important act, rather than the faith. Yet the majority of people believe it is impossible to make this leap themselves.

Witches understand this basic point, that anything at all can be true for a time. This is why we do not waste our efforts with theological argument, or making claim to any ultimate realisation. Hindu tantra, buddhist tantra, taoist tantra, Haitian voodoo, New Orleans voodoo, kabalism, Celtic witchcraft, Romani witchcraft, goety, thelema, discordianism, runa, luciferianism, satanism, etc., all work through different premise, and yet the practitioners of each 'system' recognise each other's workings as valid. They may even borrow techniques from each other. That the spiritual beliefs of each practitioner may appear to be different proves no problem to the thinking of the cunning.

That a magical belief provides us with objective results does not, in itself, prove the objectivity of those beliefs. By doing certain things, certain things follow. The mistake of modern rationality is to assume that by doing completely different things, completely different things will not follow.

The way we choose to practice our magick, or indeed the way we choose to define our spirituality in whatever way, is the way that we decide what is permissible in our lives. All our philosophies, then, are little more than the way in which we seek to justify ourselves in the way we choose to live. Those who do not trust themselves will naturally adopt stultifying systems of belief, since this will limit their own 'responsibility'. To really understand the philosophy of another person, simply take a look at what their beliefs allow them to get away with. Then apply this same insight to yourself.

Chapter 22
MAGICAL PRAXIS

'Herein is to be revealed a mystery; not of the seeing leading the blind, for all are ultimately sightless, but of a spirit intangible, mysterious, which impels gross human flesh to flow onwards in streamlets and rivers to some unknown and seemingly unknowable sea. This impulse towards movement, whether it be betwixt star and star, atom and atom, or brain and brain, is the ultimate source of that ancient and yet ever youthful magic which, like a dark and wanton courtesan, decked in immortality, dances down the centuries, luring man through cloud and sunshine Leatheanwards, a shadow cast on a shadow.'
The Black Arts, Major J.F.C.Fuller, Form magazine, 1929

There are five essential ways that magick may be assumed to work, and to consider them in sequence is to consider the history and development of human consciousness itself. The story begins somewhere around the Palaeolithic or Stone Age. In these Neanderthal hunter gatherer communities our existence was nomadic. We were entirely dependant upon what we could track down to eat. Similarly, we were constantly at risk of being eaten by something or someone else. Living by our instincts, it is hardly surprising that we should find recourse to sorcery.

Sympathetic Magick

The most instinctive of all sorcery is what we now call sympathetic magick. Such acts of basic sorcery could explain many of the cave paintings that exist from prehistoric times, depicting for example successful hunts. There are still a few pockets of humanity that continue to live according to such principles. They have found no reason to cease existing as hunter gatherers, remaining hidden from modern 'civilisation' until we arrive to destroy their environment.

I am reminded of a documentary, where a small group of Australian Aborigines were filmed preparing for a hunt. One of them painted a

series of animal designs upon the ground, and made a few strange passes over them. The rest then took aim with their spears, and symbolically killed them all. When the anthropologists asked the hunters what they were doing, they replied that they were simply getting into the swing of using their new spears.

The principles of sympathetic magick may be usefully sub-categorised into the law of similarity and the law of contact and contagion.

The law of similarity, otherwise called imitative magick, works on the basis that a percieved effect may resemble its percieved cause. Like produces like, and an event that has happened once is more likely to happen again. Material objects are employed which bear some resemblance to the intent of the magick. The hunters mentioned above are one example of this. Another is the way that plants, herbs, flowers and animals whose name or appearance have some association with human endeavours. Mandrake roots have power because they sometimes grow in a vaguely human form.

The most classical example is the witches' poppet, or 'puppet'. Here an effigy is made resembling the victim, which is then tortured with pins and burnt with candles. Records of cursing by this form of sympathetic magick appear in the English courts of 1324, when Robert le Mareschal, of Leiceseter, gave evidence against a (male) witch of Coventry. The witch had received twenty pounds, and Robert himself fifteen, to kill the King, the Prior of Coventry, and others. They also cursed one Richard de Sowe, by making a wax and canvas poppet in his likeness. A lead pin was stuck into its head, and as a result de Sowe went out of his mind. When another pin was struck into the 'heart' of the poppet, de Sowe died three days later. It was at this point that Robert le Mareschal panicked and turned evidence.

The common perception that sympathetic magick of this kind works upon the superstition of the victim, who literally dies from their fear of magick, falls down on this point; *it still works if done in secret.* I know it.

How could it be that a gang of primitive hunters could persuade their prey to be killed more easily because they have already thrown their spears at an effigy drawn on the ground? It can hardly be that their prey are superstitious.

The law of similarity also includes such things as omens, and divination by sortilage (Tarot, runes etc.). The practitioner may gain insights into how things are through the fall of a handful of bones, or Tarot cards, or may be reminded of certain principles through the flight of a flock of birds, shapes made in the clouds, or the tea leaves left at the bottom of their cup.

The law of contact and contagion is the principle of the magical link. It is the idea that an object that once belonged to someone may be used as a channel to get at them with magick. The strongest links include hair, nail clippings, and sexual fluids. Another universal practice is the digging up of someone's footprints. Most traditions have it that such links are more powerful still if given to the sorcerer willingly. This principle may also work when a sorceress binds a man to her by giving him food that contains her menstrual blood. A thief may be cursed using the object they had stolen as their magical link. Modern magicians, such as the now immortal William Burroughs, have been known to utilise photographs and recordings to the same effect.

Animist/Spiritist Magick

If the theories of Julian Janes are correct, our consciousness during the Paleolithic era was right hemisphere based. This is in keeping with our model, since such a consciousness is essentially intuitive and non linear. If our cousins' experienced their reality in this fashion, it must surely have played its part in the development of our belief in spirits. The mystery of death, and the inclusive nature of tribal society, evolved into active reverence for our ancestors. The story of the tribe, being inexorably interwoven with the spirit realms, gives rise to our first legends and creation myths.

A central part of early pagan practice, I believe, is the phenomena we call 'possession'. A mortal human enters into trance, and communes with the realm of the spirits. This may take the form of a journey, with no outward signs from the medium giving any clue as to what is happening to them in the other world, or it may take more obvious forms, such as when the spirits take control of the medium's body. Through trance, the medium offers prophetic utterances, commands, wisdom, and performs acts of magick for the benefit of the tribe. The spirits are placated through the

giving of sacrifices for, like us, they need to eat and work better if rewarded.

The belief in spirits continues through the 'animist' stages of human spirituality, becoming what we now call 'paganism'. As we head into the Neolithic or New Stone Age, we cease to live as hunter gatherers and begin life as agriculturists, the first organised religions are formed. This begins as a depreciation of the trance medium's role into the priesthood as the 'earthly representation' of deity now growing increasingly distant. The giving of sacrifice becomes the collecting of taxes, making religion a lucrative business. Indeed the myths of Mesopotamia state quite clearly that this is the way the gods had planned it all along. Government sanctioned Temples sprang up everywhere, and the gods gradually took on forms more flattering to us as civilised and vain humans.

It is supposedly through the keeping of livestock that we recognised the role of the male in reproduction, and this redefined the way we organised ourselves socially and the way that we organised our deity. The head of the family becomes male, and so the 'chief deity' tends also to become male. Since religion has become lucrative, it also becomes competitive. Thus, we have religious conflicts, which are in fact all about the ownership of property. Such is true from the early Crusades to the Gulf War.

Eventually this competition sees the wholesale slaughter of all gods but One, and we enter the age of monotheism. As has been the case with all religious conversions, the 'old gods' are demonised. Thus, for example, the magical rites of Mesopotamia and Egypt provide the prima materia of the Goetia, and much of what the modern student of magick will find themselves studying. As Odin is swallowed by the Fenris wolf at Ragnarok, the gods of the Old Religion are digested by the Church of Rome. The only nod toward the mother goddess is the Virgin Mary, and perhaps the whore, although never openly. The Horned One, being the other principal totem of fertility and sorcery cults, became the Lord of Darkness, a name he has never been entirely uncomfortable with.

Similarly, many of those who continued to practice the hidden arte assimilated the iconography of the Church. This was not necessarily an adoption of the Devil, indeed many traditional charms as known by the

cunning folk call upon the apostles, the saints, Jesus and the Lord Himself. This may come as quite a shock to some modern practitioners, who have come to witchcraft and paganism through post-Gardnerian literature. The idea that there are witches who are not strictly 'pagan' may seem somewhat nonsensical.

Those who have come to witchcraft through this modern lineage have formed a part of a deliberate exorcism of Christian doctrine. However, the recent publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls prove beyond doubt that many of the early Christians, before the rise of the Roman Church, were in fact mystical and magical practitioners. These documents quite literally represent the missing parts of the Bible, and consist largely of practical magical formulae and talismatia. Those magicians who have been moved to reciting the Psalms as a part of their sorcery are in fact using them as they were originally intended.

From the fifteenth century onwards, with the advent of commercial printing, grimoire such as The Lesser Key of Solomon became available to a wider public, and indeed proved to be quite popular. The Goetia remains a popular classic, even in the modern day. The name itself is derived etymologically from Latin words for 'witchcraft' and 'wailing', and its content is entirely Christian in its theology, even if its practice was condemned by the Church. Through the power of the names of God, the sorcerer binds and commands the various hierarchies of Hell itself.

Closely related to this is the more subtle working of identifying and recognising one's own personal daemons. The myth of the 'single self', 'soul' or 'unchanging I' is one that we have inherited from monotheism. Previous models of consciousness known to our forebears present a far more complex understanding. We are not separate entities from the gods, or alienated from our environment. The many faces of deity we include within our experience and definition of the 'self'. This is not to belittle the gods, but to infinitely expand our definition of 'self'. Consciousness as a continuum, all division dispersed illusion.

Energy Magick

Common occultural lingo includes many references to energy. Most of us know what 'vibes' are, and know what an 'aura' is even if we are

adamant that we have never actually seen one. The magical energies that circulate through the body will be known to anyone who has ever seriously taken up a martial art, or interest in oriental healing. Mystics are agreed that this same energy flows through our landscape, and in England of course we have our Ley lines and Corpse Paths.

The reader, witch or not, will already be comfortable with the concept of energy. We all know that when we do not eat our energy is low, and so it only makes sense that the spirits, gods and ancestors will need feeding too. Indeed, one way in which the monotheistic world view came to dominate the pantheistic was through neglecting to feed the spirits. They literally starved them to death. Eventually and ironically, even the One True God ceased to accept sacrifice, until He too was dead.

We know that many of our household items rely on electrical energy, even if nobody is really sure what electricity actually is. We know that energy may be chemical, kinetic, or potential. We know that it changes between these states but never simply vanishes. Whilst the concept of 'energy' may have arisen simultaneously with the spiritist world view, it has outlasted it and remains central in the age of science. It is ironic that the very rationality applied through our need to understand God's creations should spawn a philosophy that would ultimately disprove and kill Him. Its roots lie deeper still in the realms of magick. Its aim, like that of the cunning sorcerer, is to understand the rules the universe plays by, and work out ways of applying such knowledge in our lives.

The physiological energy centres within the body are recognised by most occult schools world wide. In the traditional witchcraft of England they are awakened by the famed osculum infame. The magical energy itself, which flows through the body and along the spine, is also in the blood and the breath. It is essentially the same as what in the Orient is called chi or prana, and in Europe as pnuema, and in the African as ashé.

I have also encountered various methods of singing these centres into activation. These energy centres connect us with our environment, and with one another in those more intimate rites of love. These secrets, being physical in their nature, are difficult to grasp with the mind alone. Their knowledge provides a powerful key to magick.

The witch empowers their spells by charging them with magical energy. This may be released from or channelled through the body by many methods, often concentrated in the form of a cone. This 'Cone of Power' is possibly the reason for the witches' traditional pointed hat.

Amongst the most immediate easy methods of charging is to rub the hands together vigorously to produce heat, and then stretching out the palms over the item to be empowered. It is released with the call of 'Ka!' This may also be seen with the use of the blasting rod, and the manos curnutos as spoken of in a later chapter dealing with malefica.

Psychic Abilities

Another aspect of our scientific age is the quest to understand ourselves, and the nature of consciousness. To this end we have developed the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry, the study of the mind and how it works. Ultimately these disciplines have their roots in a repressive society, seeking to impose its own rationality upon its subjects. Many earlier methods of 'healing' its subjects involve little more than the incarceration and torture of those who deviated from society's moral expectations.

Many psychological phenomena, such as those of hysteria and schizophrenia, were originally attributed to the workings of spirits and witches. This meant, of course, that witches and spirits were also called upon to bring an end to such disturbances. It may well be that many of the apparent victims of witchcraft were merely mentally ill, and that this had nothing to do with remote magick and secret influence. It is simply too late to examine the evidence in any detail. This author has many times been called in to aid the so called 'mentally ill' with magick, such as in cases where the person believes themselves to be possessed or plagued by troublesome spirits. The methods I have used have brought temporary to sometimes permanent relief, and have never simply not worked at all. This is more than can be said for many of the accepted medicines of the day.

That strange things can happen through the power of our minds may never be wholly acceptable to science. Although our universities may receive the occasional grant to perform experiments in parapsychology,

such projects seem only to support the acceptable, rational expectations of orthodox science. Practitioners of witchcraft, however, who trust their own judgement more highly than that of society's white coated priest-craft, have borrowed from the theories and maps of both orthodox science and psychology to great effect.

The mechanism of magick may be described in terms of the activity of the subconscious mind. All the symbols and signs we use for magick are effective because they appeal to the deeper mind, bypassing our conscious awareness and ego identifications. The symbols themselves are arbitrary, what matters is that they are a kind of subliminal code for communicating with our own selves. They may take the form of a glyph, or a gesture, a barbaric incantation, and a great diversity of other forms, in any combination. The symbol is concentrated upon when the mind is otherwise silenced. This state of 'no mind', when the inner dialogue ceases and a clear channel is provided between the senses and the deeper mind, is amongst the most powerful keys to magick. It may be achieved by any means, such as quiescent meditation, sexual passion, dancing, chanting, during the extremes of any emotion, pain, exhaustion, intoxication, or when inspiration takes possession in any of the arts.

It is the beliefs we hold at the core of our self that manifest in the world around us. This is not the same thing as faith, which is a 'surface level' ego identification, and something many people argue over vehemently. Magick works by appealing to this very deepest part of our spirit, and is only ever effective if our ego can learn to 'let it go'.

Chapter 23
ARRANGING COINCIDENCE

The acquisition of magical power is only secondary to the mystical elements of the witchcraft traditions. Nevertheless, it remains the element that attracts most people to it in the first place, as well as that which frightens many others away. Magical power can be a happy side-effect of mystical insight, just as mystical insight can result from magical power. Hence, the workings of magick may never be demystified.

It is as good a place to start as any. The ability to cast spells that effect the material plane serves to demonstrate to the self that it is real, that it actually works. This then gives the faith and courage to create magick with more subtle, less observable results.

There is an old saying, with much truth in it; if the gods wish to destroy us they can do no better than to give us what we ask for. Hence the initiatory mysteries teach Know Thyself, for the acquisition of magical power for its own sake invariably brings misery in the long run. The arte, if not an honest expression, brings disaster upon the artist.

The absolute pure ingredients of spellcasting are as follows, and may be added to as the witch sees fit:

Intent and Desire

Without a well defined intent, there can be no well defined results. The intent of any spell should be declared clearly, even if only to yourself, and such a declaration should be worded carefully. It is all well and good to cast spells and prayers for world peace, but this will be ineffectual if you do not have a sensible plan to achieve it. World peace by what ends? If your spell were to work, based on such a naïve desire, it could well do so by invoking the end of all wars, which can only be achieved through one final act of war that eliminates the entire human species!

On a more self serving level you can say *'I desire money'*, but if the spell works through the death of your nearest and dearest, who leaves you a mere pittance in their will, you have only yourself to blame. To say 'I desire lots of money' may be better, but the same may happen, leaving you financially rich yet broken hearted and emotionally impoverished. Nothing comes for free. A better statement of intent might be *'I desire to be paid well for my work'*. Even better, *'I desire to be paid ridiculously well for my work!'*

This statement of intent should, where possible, be included in the structure of the ritual. It should form the basis of mantras, litanies, theatrical actions, songs, and commands to subordinate spirits. It should be presented in the most immodest and exaggerated terms. For example, any healing ritual, however sick the client, should aim for *complete and miraculous recovery.* A crossing or hexing should involve prolonged indulgence in graphic descriptions of the victim's suffering, immolation and gruesome death. A charm to seduce someone should include ingredients of the most sexual and 'heady' nature. Always aim high, for the best results that can be imagined within the realms of possibility.

Also an important factor in defining intent is the matter of probability. Wyrd may be persuaded, but she may never be bullied. Although occasionally the most outrageous results may come to pass, casting spells for the utterly unlikely may go as far as making them only fairly unlikely, or at best merely improbable. On the other hand, casting a spell for the improbable may promote it to likely, or even utterly plausible. Sorcery is capable of anything at all, but only if approached from the right angle. Where there's a will there's a way...

There are six basic reasons why anyone would want to cast a spell, or request of a sorcerer that a spell should be cast on their behalf. These are:

Healing & Protection: Magick against illnesses physical or spiritual, and bad relationships. Most illness has its heart in some form of bad relationship, with other people, spirits, ancestors, one's own past, or one's self in the present.

Love & Sex: To draw the attention of someone specific and summon him or her to your bed, to meet someone suitable and willing for sexual congress, to heighten the experience of love, to keep a lover happy and faithful, to bring back a lover that has strayed. For the professionally cunning, such spells may make a great trade.

Persuasion & Control: To bend another to your will, usually in order to satisfy one or more of these other desires. This may include becoming their friend, harassing them with nightmares, the placing of a geise or the taking of an oath, hypnotism, or binding them from doing you harm.

The Gaining of Material Wealth: Money, business plans, objects of desire, secure accommodation etc. There are those cynics who might ask why, if the witch is so cunning, they have not made themselves rich. Having met many sorcerers who have done so, for example marrying into millions and other such unlikely stuff, I can only reply that it is because they have never tried.

Crossing and Hexing: To cause fear, spiritual pain, bad relations, illness, poverty, actual physical harm or death to one's enemies. This is what most people would recognise as 'black witchcraft'.

Self-Change: To cast spells upon the sorcerer or client's own self, that they may become more capable, confident, knowledgeable, cunning etc.

Imagination

The reason why the witchcraft supply stores make a living out of selling their coloured moulded candles, astrological incense, strangely named oils, various kinds of Tarot card, embroidered robes, magical rings and wands is that these things appeal to the imagination. Equally, this is the reason why such kitsch artefacts can actually work. The realm of the

spirits, and the realm of magical power, lies in what psychologists call the deep subconscious mind. The symbols and tools of magick appeal to the primitive imagination, to those deeper levels of consciousness that are the root of all psychic ability.

The most powerful magical objects are often those that we create through our own art. These wax dolls and glyphs, these weapons and fetishe we have made for ourselves. The educated cynic may scoff at such things and dismiss them as childish indulgent play and superstition, and rightly so. Most children are capable of quite powerful magick, because their imaginations are active, and yet to be subdued by conscious doubts born of cultural conditioning. As a result they are 'more wise', as one particularly talented witch and artist once said.

The power behind magick does not lie in how much we pay in coins; or else the rural shaman who collects his ingredients from all around him would possess no power at all. The right herbs may indeed possess medical qualities that alleviate the symptoms of illness, its own spirament, but the actual psychic worth of any spell ingredient also lies in its appeal to the deep mind. To encounter the spirit of a herb means to communicate with it through the power of the dreaming arte; visions, voices, impressions welling up from the greater soul. The more meaningless, bizarre and unlikely it seems to the conscious mind, the less likely it is to get in the way and prevent the magick from happening. The most effective ingredients are those whose symbolism is most readily recognised by that part of the mind that is not afraid to dream, and stir something within us that we cannot easily explain away.

Belief

As the witch and sorcerer Austin Osman Spare said in The Book of Pleasure, 'anything at all can be true for a time.' The methods we create for ourselves may be just as valid as anything passed down the generations. However, when we create our own formulae from scratch, we are experimenting. Our subconscious knows that what we are doing may never have been attempted before, and thus it may not actually work. When we use traditional formulae, we are doing something that has been done many times before, and after all why would it become traditional if it did not work?

Right at the roots of our consciousness we find the gods. Whatever we may choose to believe about them, our experiences of them are unarguable. It may well be that their form, force, and name are dictated by our beliefs, but it may also be that they are truly preaternatural, perhaps even extraterrestrial, and that our human consciousness is descended ultimately from them.

The creative use of belief provides a core and essential key to effective magick. The seasoned witch, having belief in their own self, and thus their own freedom of belief, has attained the most powerful key of all.

Trance

The methods of trance, of silencing or distracting the conscious mind, are employed to allow our deeper mind to focus upon the symbolic part of the spell casting, and get on with the work. The more aware we are of what we are attempting to do, the *less* chance a spell has of producing any results.

There are two routes into trance. The first may be called the Path of Death, which includes quiescent meditation, mantra-yoga, emotional exhaustion, inhibitory narcotics, and techniques such as the Death Posture. When teaching or advising witchcraft, this has been the route into trance that I usually recommend that they focus upon, at least in the earlier stages. This training takes a fairly simple form, yet requires determination and persistence on the part of the student if any success is to be achieved. Firstly, they are to practice remaining completely still and relaxed for at least five minutes a day. It is amazing how many people find this difficult. Once they can manage this, we move on to focussing awareness upon the breath, upon repeated patterns of chanting, and upon image concentration. These practices make for personal discipline, encouraging 'centredness' and a level head. These in themselves are major requirements in an effective witch.

The second is the Path of Sex, which includes all excitatory methods such as drumming, dancing, singing, disinhibitory narcotics, and copulation. These are the methods we tend to employ more readily at the sabbats and in orchestrated ritual, although it would be unfair to give the impression that all coven meetings are wild parties of abandon. When the conscious mind is silenced by whatever means, all focus is centred

upon the symbolic acts and ingredients of the magick.

Similarly with spells of manipulation and persuasion, it is simplest to cast a spell upon someone when their attention is elsewhere. The best times are when they are sleeping or otherwise open to suggestion, such as during intense orgasm, or placed under some form of fascination or hypnotic trance.

What is required is a clear channel to the deeper mind. The most ultimately powerful trance is when the conscious mind is completely silenced, and the spirits possess the witch and do the magick themselves. Such complete self identification with the spirits may be achieved through the mechanisms of invocation, or may happen through the choice of the spirits themselves if the relationship with them is good. 'Wild talent' without training may result in extreme distress on the part of the medium, not to mention diagnosis as mentally ill.

It should be noted that some forms of spellcasting, such as talismanic magick, work subliminally without the use of trance because they are carried or worn in a manner that does *not* attract conscious awareness. Through the rituals of charging and consecration, such items are embedded with significance and power.

Timing

Whatever the school of magick, the importance of timing is always stressed. Depending upon the beliefs and intentions of the practitioner, attention is paid to the positions of the stars, the phases of the moon, the passing of the seasons, the days of the week. All things are connected, all Wyrd is one Wyrd, and there is no event or condition which may be considered wholly irrelevant to any act of sorcery. The how and the when are of equal importance.

Consider that enchantment (spells to make things happen) and divination (spells to find out what is going to happen) are polar opposites. The meteorological office, with their *magical* machines for predicting the weather, are limited in their success by the constraints of time. Whereas it is possible for them to predict with some certainty what the weather will be like in two hours, they are less likely to be right about two days time, and attempts to depict the weather in two weeks time are nothing short of guesswork. This is because the different possibilities of the

elements' behaviour increase as time goes on.

Conversely, the witch trying to make it rain in five minutes time when the sun is shining brightly is asking for much more than if they enchant for it to rain in five days time. The same increase in possibility that makes divination easier in the short term and harder in the long term conversely works in the favour of conjuration. This holds true from manipulating the weather to getting rich.

Non-attatchment

One of the greatest secrets of success in spell casting is simply not to care. Once a spell has been cast, and the message has been sent into the deep, it is best simply forgotten. As Jan Fries points out in his excellent work *Visual Magick*, if you plant a seed and continuously dig it up to see if it is growing you will kill it. To worry about the desire is to bring it back into consciousness, and to reattach itself to the petty ego. Hence people who tend to stress about things also tend to be unlucky. Condemn your desires, for you are chained to them.

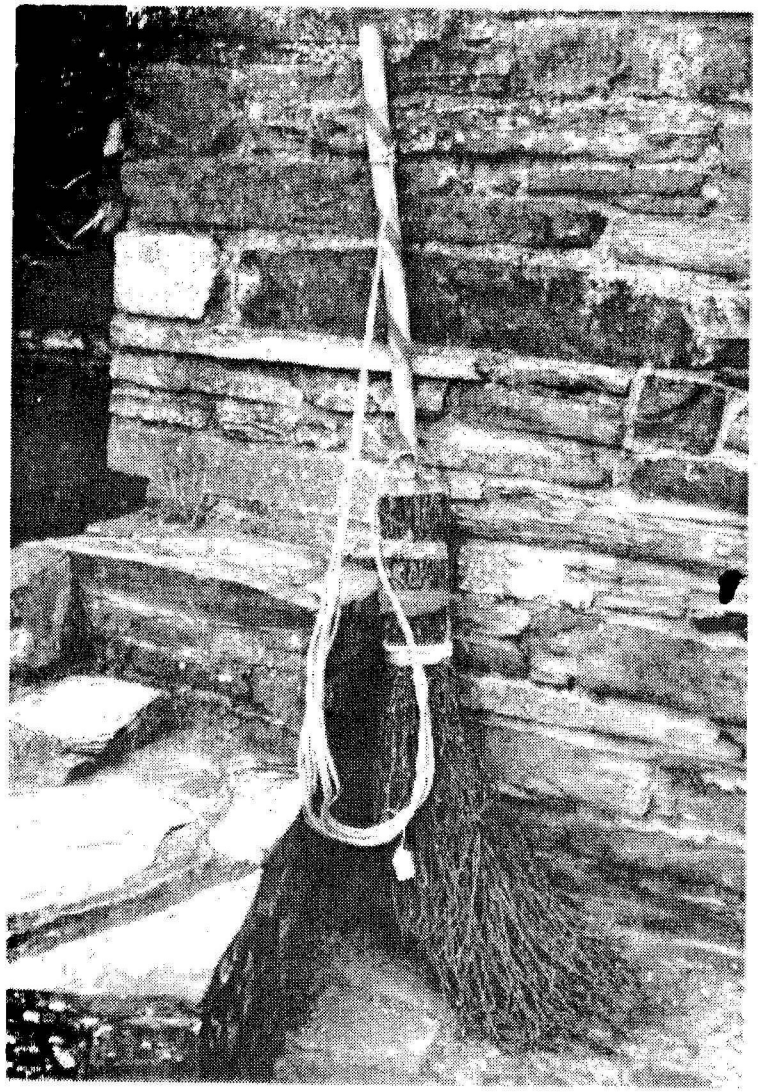
Here we have the greatest reason why psychics' intent of proving their powers to parapsychologists tend to fail. Sorcery works most effectively when our attention is elsewhere. The trick is to intensify the desire during spellcasting, and then simply trust in the spirits and get on with your life without paying it any more thought or attention at all.

With some desires these methods are less practical, because they prey on the mind. At such times power may be channelled through the *Exhaustion of Desire*. Here, the magical intent is associated with some other form of desire at least equally powerful, and difficult to forget. This 'substitute desire' is then denied for some period of time, so that its associations with the magical intent become reinforced. For example, a heavy smoker, well and truly addicted to nicotine, may place their tobacco on their altar alongside some request from the spirits, making the oath that they will not smoke any more until their request has been granted. This creates a kind of displacement within the witch's consciousness, because what will then be in their mind foremost will be the desire for a cigarette. The magical intent becomes submerged within the subconscious, empowered by the addiction to nicotine.

This is also the principle behind the dreaded *Black Fast* of the elder lore,

spoken of later.

Alternatively, intent may be linked with some other powerful desire, which is then satiated. For example, sexual sorcery may be performed over a prolonged period of time, continued beyond satiation until physical exhaustion.



Besom, or witches' broom. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, courtesy of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, Cornwall. (See, 'Tools of Cunning'.)

Chapter 24
A BAG of CHARMS

I include here a few of my favourite spells, as examples of how objects and actions may be combined to produce magical effects. Some I know through my mother and my grandmother, a couple are from my father, some are completely my own creation, some are simply tradition, and some are gleaned from grimoire. However, I offer no guarantee that just because a specific formula works well for me, that it will do so for you. We each have our own 'arte', and magick is something that cannot so easily be taught to a student as it can be encouraged to come from within.

An effective witch will always read different spells, always try different techniques, and find what feels right and works for them, personally. Most witches borrow and adapt, depending on what works and appeals. An example is the creation of the classical 'charm bag', which is usually red. Red is the colour of witchcraft, and was worn by the cunning that they may be recognised by potential clients. Hence the traditional title of a female witch, 'Mother Red Cap'. Some practitioners might use different colours, perhaps based upon the Saabaen planetary scheme, or the kabalistic Queen scale.

The life of the witch can be very beautiful and happy, and at other times very trying and hard. People come and ask for spell casting, but they do not want to look at their own lives and help themselves. Such people can

be lazy, and very demanding on your time. It is good Wyrd to give to people who are in need, but not to people who are too dependant.

By far the greatest of all magical powers is the ability to 'see what you see', to be the master of your own emotions and remain level headed. This includes the wisdom to know when to intervene in a situation, and when to cast no spell at all. The hidden arte is ultimately the witch's means of honest, direct self expression. This is not an easy thing to achieve. A spell that is cast from a position of doubt, however deeply buried such doubts are, is more than likely to rebound or corrupt in some way, if it has any effect at all. As with any act of magick, it is usual practice to perform some manner of circle casting before and after any spell work.

Chapter 24
SPELLS OF LOVE & SEX

Love, and especially sexual love, is essential to our well being. There is very little that demoralises us and drains us as much as the feeling that we are unappreciated. For this reason, people often get quite desperate about the idea of 'being in love'. They get quite strange thoughts into their heads, and on occasions may even become quite unhealthy through yearning for an unrequited or impossible love. At such times, they may turn to the supernatural in order to win love through underhand and quite dishonest ways. Many witches and their like make quite a tidy little side line out of selling love spells to these unfortunates. It is always handy to have one or two of them up your sleeve.

Amongst the most often requested spell-castings are those to cause a wayward lover to return, and bind them to prevent their leaving. Magick and the spirits may bring back your lover, but you had better do something about keeping them. If you take them for granted, or act meanly, then your lover will leave again. When the spirits bring them back, you had better take a good look in your mirror and see what it is about yourself that made them leave in the first place. If they are bad, and you ask the spirits to bring them back, and they are mean, you have got what you deserve. You should have worked magick to heal them of their

hurtful ways, or to find someone new who will make you happy and who will be kind to you.

The most effective spells for love and sex are those that are cast upon the self, rather than the object of desire. To have won the affections of another through magick rarely brings satisfaction, because there is still that feeling of demoralisation, that you would not have won their affection without it. Also, of course, spell casting is only ever a temporary solution. Spells tend to wear off.

Enchantments of this nature are commonly performed upon the new or full moon, depending on the 'phase' of the relationship itself. The colours most associated are purple for sex and 'Saturn', green for love and 'Venus', red for passion and 'Mars'.

The Heart to Heart Spell

Two heart shaped pieces of red cloth.

Embroider or inscribe the initials of the two people you wish to bring together upon the hearts. Attach any links, such as nail clippings, strands of hair, their signature, photographs, or anything else they may leave behind. Conceal the resulting talisman somewhere it will never be found.

The Happy Lover Spell

Parchment, Poppet, Red Candle,

A photograph of your lover,

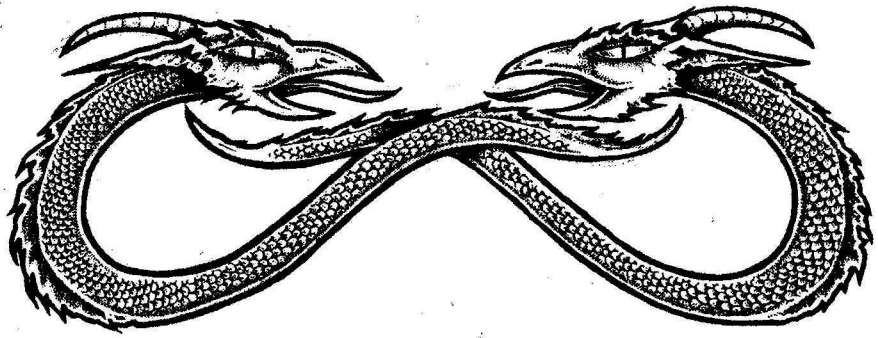
Magical Links (hair, nail clippings etc.)

String. Patchouli Oil.

Light the candle. Write your lover's name upon the parchment, and the desire that you shall be happy together. Place this, and the photograph and links, inside the doll. Wind the string three times around the doll, and tie three knots one upon the other, saying;

' Spirits of witchcraft, I call upon your aid, to help me keep (N.) happy. As the flame upon this candle burns bright, so does the flame within my heart. Help me keep the flame of love burning bright!
So mote it be.'

Seal the knots with the wax of the red candle, so that they remain tied. Sprinkle the doll with patchouli oil. Leave the doll in the light of the full moon for one night. On the following night, burn the entire poppet to cinders. Scatter the ashes in your lover's shoes, in the pockets of their clothes, and under the mattress of your bed, or even better, theirs.



Chapter 25
SPELLS OF PERSUASION & CONTROL

The quest to gain power over those around you is a far less worthy quest than that to find power within and of the self. For one thing, it means that you are not relying on other people. This is not a moral judgement, or some attempt to make witchcraft seem like a socially acceptable practice. It is merely a practicality.

Nevertheless, there are times when we may feel the need to 'pull a few strings' here and there. It is worth our while to have a few sneaky tricks to back us up. Moreover, there are always those who will attempt to persuade and control us, by many different means. It is as well to consider these means.

These are a variety of spells, calling on different forces. There are many ways to persuade and control...

Pouring Oil on Troubled Water (To end conflict)

A bowl of water, oil

Perform upon the waning moon. Tell the spirits about the situation of conflict that you wish to cease whilst stirring up the waters in the bowl.

Put down the bowl, and pour oil upon the water, asking the spirits to use their power of healing relationships.

Beneath My Heel Spell

Signature of Victim A pair of shoes

Take a copy of the signature of the person you wish to dominate and control, and one of your shoes. If you cannot obtain their signature, write their name nine times on a piece of paper and fold it in upon itself. Place the signature within the shoe, and place this on your foot so that their signature is under your heel.

This was one of my favourite spells for a while, and seemed to work very well. I discovered the formula after casting a possession spell to control someone, and having their signature stick to the sole of my foot by 'accident'. I later discovered that it was a popular technique employed by the ancient Egyptians!

Nine Nails Charm

A burning brazier Nine nails

Call upon the spirits to witness and empower your magick. Cast the nails one by one into the brazier, whilst enchanting;

'Its not these nails I wish to burn
But (victim's name)'s heart I wish to turn
May they not sleep and have no rest
'Till they have granted my request;
(Voice your request).
So mote it be.'

There are many variations upon this spell in different areas of the country. Sometimes it is salt that is thrown upon the fire, and the number of nails can also be seven. I have come across variations that call upon the Norse gods, sometimes combining them with goetic names, or angels, or the holy trinity.

The Blown Out Spell
(To evict a property)

1 egg Paint Large sharp needle

In the presence of the spirits, paint the egg with the address from which you wish to evict an unwanted guest from, being sure to tell the spirits exactly what your desire is. Take the painted egg to the property itself. Standing outside the house prick the egg and blow the contents into the gutter, blowing hard and fast so that you enter into gnosis. Leave the empty eggshell on the doorstep.

This is traditional. I think perhaps you are supposed to leave the eggshell for the victim to see. However, the most magicaly effective time that I cast this spell, the egg actually broke into the gutter.

The Drink to Silence Spell
(To shut someone up)

Take a glass of water, and drink it in three mouthfuls. Say,

> 'By the name of the Lady of Silence, (N.N.) be quiet and shut your mouth.
> So mote it be.'

Then turn the glass upside down and tap its bottom eight times.

Chapter 26
SPELLS OF HEALING

The Abracadabra Triangle Talisman

Virgin parchment, Ink pen

This spell is actually Kabalistic in origin, but many forms of it apear in other traditions. As well as that given below, the Abracadabra triangle may be forged as a talisman from metal or wood. It may be used to banish illness, amongst many other things.

Invoke the spirits for their witness and aid in this work. Voice clearly your desire, and what it is you wish to rid yourself of.

Meditate upon the thing that you wish to rid yourself of, be it a person, an illness, a situation, or bad luck, whilst chanting the word ABRACADABRA over and over. Call up all associations of vision, sight, smell, feeling, and memory that you can. Keep this up for at least five minutes, without the mind being allowed to wander, longer if you can.

Take the parchment and ink, which may be coloured if desired according to the nature of the spell. Write the word ABRACADABRA upon it, and intone it once with all the force of your will. Then remove the last letter, and intone the word ABRACADABR beneath it. Remove the last letter, and intone again. Repeat the process, removing the letters one by one until left with only the letter A. Then sit in mental silence.

The resulting talisman, to be carried, placed upon the wall, or thrown into the river to be carried away, should appear as follows;

A B R A C A D A B R A

A B R A C A D A B R

A B R A C A D A B

A B R A C A D A

A B R A C A D

A B R A C A

A B R A C

A B R A

A B R

A B

A

The Healing Doll

A poppet of white cloth.

Photograph and links to the person who need healing.

White tipped pins. Two white candles.

Many forms of 'poppet magick' exist in traditional witchcraft, and most people assume that they were only made to hex and harm. This is patently untrue, as some of the 'healing dolls' on display in the Museum of Witchcraft prove. The following spell is a modernised formula.

Place the photograph and links inside the poppet, baptise and name it as the person who is in need of healing. Light the two white candles, and place the poppet between them. Taking the pins, stick them into the doll in the area that the spell's recipient has an illness, say ing:

> 'By the Mother of Mothers, by the Father of Fathers, by the power of my ancestors and the spirits of witchcraft, I exorcise from (N.N.) the spirits of sickness. By the holes I make with these pins, the spirits shall leave (N.N.) and shall not return. So mote it be.'

Repeat this daily until the person is well again.

The Piss Test

To test if a hex has been put upon someone, immerse a nettle in a urine sample for twenty four hours. If the nettle withers, the client is under the influence of malign forces threatening to kill them.

To Remove Headaches, or a Curse Upon the Head

Take hair clippings from the head, and put them in the client's urine. Boil them together and throw them on a fire. This will destroy the spell.

Charm to Banish Illness from the Home

After sunset on Saint Agnes' day (19th January) the oldest female in the home calls this traditional charm into the chimney flue;

> 'Tremble! Go!
> First day, shiver! Burn!
> Second day, shiver! Burn
> Third day, tremble! Die!
> Third day, Go! Never return!'

Charm Against Cramp

This charm is found in the diary of Samuel Pepys, II, page 415;

'Cramp, be thou faintless,
As our Lady was sinless
When she bare Jesus'

Charm Against Skin Complaints

This Cornish rhyme shows how an ailment may be considered as a spirit, and may thus be bound by spiritual and magical means. A tetter is a word meaning 'skin eruption'.

'Tetter, Tetter, thou hast nine brothers,
God bless the flesh and preserve the bone;
Perish thou, Tetter, and be thou gone!'

Charm to Cure Burns, or a Scold

Although drawing on Christian symbolism, the identification of elemental forces as angelic is more magical than pious.

'There came two angels from the North
One was fire and one was frost
Out fire! In frost!
In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost'

Chapter 27
SPELLS OF PROTECTION

Horseshoe

A well known tradition is to nail a horseshoe above the entrance of the home, combining various magical elements such as the power of iron, the symbol of the crescent moon, as well as the power of horses as a totem animal. In England it is traditional that they are placed two points uppermost, although I have been informed that in Ireland the shoe should be the other way up.

House Guardian

This is an effigy, usually made of clay, which has been constructed, blessed, baptised and doomed (destined) to protect the home. It is also considered to be the material basis for the traditional 'house sprite', that may be summoned and earthed within the effigy. Formed and charged by ritual, this spell is traditional in East Anglia and many guardians have survived since elder times. During renovation work on Billericay Hospital, Essex, in 1981, two such effigies were found alongside fragments of human bone, a notched wooden rune tine, and a piece of coal.

The Decoy

Make a poppet of yourself, using all the genetic links that you can. Bless and baptise the doll with your own name, and tell it that it is the decoy

for all mallefica cast against you. Its job is to absorb ill wishes and bad luck. Keep it for no more than thirteen cycles of the moon, after which it should be incinerated.

The Scissors Spell

A large pair of scissors, or shears

The power of iron is traditional considered to be able to banish magick and malefica. When an enemy sorcerer has tried to cross you, take a good pair of sharp scissors and present them to the spirits. Consecrate the scissors by passing them through incense smoke. Tell them about your enemy, and how you wish to break their spell. Make cuts in the air all around yourself and your home, saying:

'These magical links, they are broken.
You cannot reach me, your magick cannot harm me.
Your power is cut away. So mote it be.'

Defence Against Witchcraft

The following charm dates from the 19th century.

'He who forges images, he who bewitches
The malevolent aspect, the evil eye,
The malevolent lip, the finest sorcery
Spirit of Heaven, conjure it!
Spirit of the earth, conjure it!'

The SATOR Square

Although numerous attempts have been made to translate the Sator square, it remains obscure. Inscribed on walls and vessels since the days of the Roman Empire, it is a traditional amulet against malefic sorcery, poisonous air, colic, pestilence, and protection of cattle against witches.

S A T O R

A R E P O

T E N E T

O P E R A

R O T A S

Witch Bottle

A bottle (green is best). Thistles. Thorns. Nettles. Nails.

Nasty, spiky, dangerous and poisonous things. Red thread,

Your own urine, plus hair, nail clippings etc.

Everything goes into the witch bottle, which may be decorated with a face in some of its most classical traditional forms. The result is a talisman and a bud-will, whose destiny is that of protecting you and your home against malefic intentions. Bury it somewhere by your front door, brick it into the wall of your new extension, or hide it beneath the floorboards. It is also traditionally valid to hang a witch bottle by a door or window by red thread.

A similar bottle may be made, doomed and destined to turn back malefica that has already been cast. In this case, the bottle is put on the fire, having had an airtight seal placed upon it, so that its contents boil and expand, breaking the bottle- and the curse. This technique is recorded in Sadducismus Triumphatus - or Full and Plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions, by Joseph Glanvil, 1681. It is known throughout the kingdom.

The traditional witch bottle of the seventeenth century commonly employed the use of the Bellarmine. These are clay jugs around 9" high, displaying a bearded face, which is supposedly the face of Bellarmine

himself, who was a notorious Catholic Inquisitor. Many of these have been found, containing the traditional pins and sharp implements.

The Phaerie Stone

Should you come upon a phaerie stone, which is a stone with a hole that passes through it, you should immediately thank the spirits and place it in your pocket. Paint the stone white all over, and tie a ribbon or string through it. Hang it in your home to protect against malign spirits. Phaerie stones also make powerful amulets, and may be carried in a charm bag or worn around the neck. They are most easily found in the shingle at the beach.

Charm Against a Nightmare

Recite the following North Country poem, nine times, or 'thrice times thrice' as we say in the Old Ways.

'The mon o' micht, he rade o' nicht
Wi' neider ne ferd ne licht.
He socht tha Mare, he fond tha Mare,
He bond tha Mare wi' her ain hare,
Ond gared her swar by midder-micht
She wold nae mair rid o' nicht
Whar aince he rade, thot mon o' micht.'

An alternative, Christianised version of this spell is put into the mouth of Edgar, as Mad Tom in King Lear :

'Saint Withold footed thrice the wold;
He met the Night-mare and her ninefold,
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!'

The Wash Away Evil Spell

(To Protect the Home)

Sulphur, Myrrh, Sandalwood, Vinegar, Spring Water

Mix together the ingredients and mop the floor of your home, saying;

'Bad spirits and foul magick flee!.
I wash you away. So mote it be.'

The Hold Away Evil Spell

(To Protect the Home)

Two nails for each window and door into your home

Call on the spirits; ask them to bless the nails to prevent malign spirits and bad luck from entering your home. Pass the nails through burning incense and splash them with fresh spring water. Drive two nails, one nail either side, of every window and door leading into your home.

Similarly, it is traditional to bury or display objects of iron and steel around the home, such as scissors, shears, horseshoes, and even magnets.

Circle of Salt

The method of casting a 'banishing circle' by throwing salt, or by using salt to mark it out. This is used to negate magick, rather than to prepare for a spell casting, and is used when there are troublesome sprites about. The use of salt in this way is entirely traditional, as well as highly effective. Packing in salt, traditionally for one cycle of the moon, may negate cursed, haunted, or otherwise suspect objects. The salt absorbs the malefica, and is disposed of at the crossroads or by throwing into running water.

Chapter 28
SPELLS FOR MATERIAL GAIN

What is the colour of money? Generally, green, but sometimes it has the hidden colour of red. Such spells as those cast for material gain might be cast upon the waxing moon, for new beginnings and growth of any kind.

There are those who consider it 'against the witches creed' to perform magick to gain money, either directly or indirectly. This opinion is not born out by history, since many witches and cunning folk worked magick for exactly such ends, and no 'threefold law' came to get them. Money equals power, therefore witches and sorcerers have always lusted after money.

The I Love Money Spell

A large amount of money.

Collect together a good sum of paper money, and present it to the altar. Anoint a candle with Frankincense Oil and Myrrh Oil. Call upon the spirits for their witness and aid in this act of sorcery, telling them your desire to attract money. Offer up a prayer to Mammon. This may be in general, or to say that you need a certain amount of money by a certain date.

Chanting 'I love money and money loves me!' rub the money all over your body. Strip off your clothes, and treat the money as if it were your lover. Continue with this until you enter a kind of trance, and until the release of orgasm.

The Money Wichta

A poppet made from green cloth.

A coin. A magnet. Two green candles.

Sew the money and the magnet inside the doll. You will also have to think up a name for the wichta you are creating (you might do this by creating an anagram of your desire). Mark the poppet with the rune 'Fee', nine times. Place it between the two candles, and light them saying;

> 'By the power of the Father of Fathers and the Mother of Mothers, by the power of my ancestors and the wichta of witcha, by these words hocus pocus, tonus talontus, vade celeriter jubeo; I give you life and name you (N.N.). There is work that you must do for me, which is to bring me money, as much money as you can.
> So mote it be.'

Say this, burning the candles, once each day. Offer any other sacrifices to the bud-will you see fit, to make it more powerful. Keep it well fed!

Chapter 29
SPELLS FOR SUCCESS, GENERALLY

The Good Luck Garlic Talisman

A bulb of garlic, Nine pins, A tack, A nail, White thread.

Garlic is traditionally used in many forms of charm to keep away evil spirits, particularly vampires. Stick the nine pins into the garlic bulb, arranged in a circle. Put the tack into the bottom of the bulb and the nail into the middle. Tie the white thread to the top of the nail, then wound around a pin, and back to the nail. Repeat this process until the bulb is completely encircled three times, and tie back to the nail, creating a white wheel with a cone at the top. Hang near a window.

Good Luck Bath

Lemon juice Basil Spearmint A pinch of flour Power Oil

Mix the ingredients together in a bottle, and leave it overnight upon the altar to be infused with power by the spirits. Add three teaspoonfuls to a tub of warm water. Wash yourself from the feet to the top of the head.

Hogs-Turd Charm

Recite the following charm;

> 'The fire bites, the fire bites;
> Hogs-Turd over it, hogs-turd over it, hogs-turd over it;
> The Father with thee, the Son with me,
> The Holy Ghost between us both to better.'

Next, spit over each shoulder and three times forward. This traditional charm is supposed to deter the spirits of misfortune.

The Witches' Ladder

Chord, of appropriate colour if desired.

Having invoked the powers, the witch ties three times three slipknots in a piece of cord. Whilst enchanting by words and visualisation, the magical force to achieve success in your endeavour is sealed within each knot. Nine more rituals follow on each night, with one knot being untied at each. According to other traditional formula, the cord is tied into a circle.

The Wizard's Box

This is a box, usually wooden, that essentially acts a 'house' for the spirits that a sorcerer chooses to work with. It may be decorated with signs of the spirit powers, my own being marked around its base with the runic alphabet. Equally valid is to make an 'ancestor box', which may contain objects once belonging to blood relatives now dead. This form of Wizard's Box has its parallel in Southern Hoodoo, where I am told it is called an 'Atua'. A mirror attached to the inside lid reflects the power inside the box back upon itself, preventing it from escaping. The floor of the box may be lined with white sand, salt rocks, or similar. Requests, prayers and commands are made to the spirits in the form of letters which are placed within it. Other objects of power may also be placed within it, such as stones and found objects that are of appeal to the spirits. The top surface of the box acts as a miniature altar, upon which candles and incense are burned.

Charm Bag

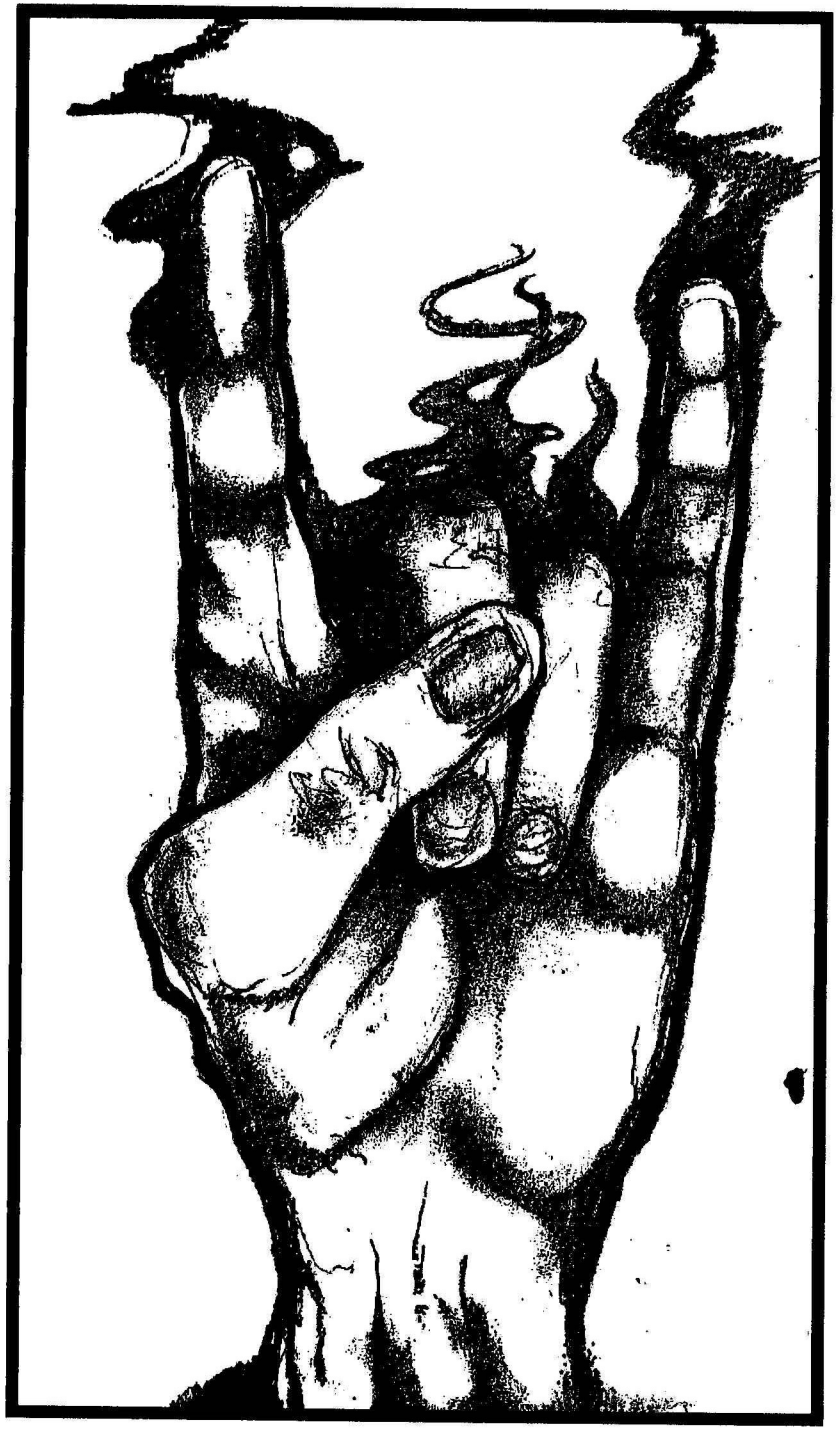
This is a small talismanic pouch worn around the neck or waist, or perhaps concealed within the clothes. It contains objects of power and luck generally such as elf stones, mandrake root, horseshoe nails, trinkets, moonstones, quartz, glass marbles, acorns, beans, rowan twigs, fossil echinoids, written sigils and Psalms copied or torn from the Bible etc. Usually such a bag will also contain links to the maker such as hair. It may be made as an 'all purpose' object to give power to the witch, or may be made for a specific purpose. Traditionally the bag is made from red cloth or leather.

Chapter 30
MALEFICA

I'm not going to make any moralistic comment here, except to say that of all the spells that might backfire and do the caster harm, those that are intended to cause suffering to others are the most dangerous. The caster should always spend some time to ensure that what they are doing feels right 'from the heart', and that the spell's recipient deserves what is being wished upon them. Either that, or your client is paying you enough cash to make the risks seem worthwhile. If you are not completely emotionally comfortable with what you are intending to do, the operation should be abandoned.

I have heard all kinds of people say all kinds of things on this subject. We are warned of the 'threefold law', which as I have already stated I find to be a distorted misrepresentation. The law of Wyrd is all encompassing, and whilst we may direct it to some extent, we remain always its subject. Magick of any kind is merely a manipulation of probability, of giving a little push towards something that might well happen anyway.

Nor should it be considered that 'cursing' is in any way an act of weakness. It is the slave that turns the other cheek, the fool who lets others walk all over them. There are always those who will seek to take advantage of some perceived opportunity, and sometimes we find ourselves having to fight for our territory. Diplomacy is not always the best option, and there are occasions where it is no option at all. Morals



go out of the window when your enemy has none of their own. Cursing is always an option at such times.

Of all the practitioners of magick that I have met, regardless of creed, many have told me that they have never, and would never, cast a curse. At no time have I ever looked into their eyes and found that I believe them. We are all capable of wishing ill on others, those that deny they ever have dark feelings merely repress their desires and make them subconscious. This darkness then finds expression in the most uncontrolled and self destructive manner.

I guess what I am pointing at here is that in my own view, the odd curse here and there is perfectly normal behaviour for any witch from time to time. There is nothing distinctly unhealthy about it, and so there is no point in being a victim or spending too long feeling guilty. Sometimes people just bloody well ask for it. All things in moderation, of course. To go around hexing and vexing too much makes for a pretty miserable existence. The mind becomes increasingly focussed upon the darkness, and becomes unbalanced. Such people tend to suffer from persecution complexes that very quickly become true.

Spells of crossing and hexing generally use the colours black, for night and death, or/and red, for more threatening martial behaviour. They are performed on the waning or dark of the moon.

Mano Cernuto

This is the sign made with the left hand, two fingers raised to make the Devil's salute. Used in the deliverance of a curse, the witch stands on their right foot only with the sign extended before them pointed at the victim. The right eye is closed, the left glares down the length of the arm. The curse is vocalised evenly and deeply, specifying misfortune and misery, and the blast of witch power is delivered as the hand is circled three times widdershins.

The Aiguillette, or Ligature

A knotted loop of thread, a coin.

This traditional spell may be employed to curse the union and marriage of a couple. As the priest blesses the couple, the witch slips behind the husband, knotting the thread and tossing the coin as payment for the Devil. It is said to cause impotence in men, barrenness in women, and discontent within the union.

The Visitor That Never Called

Of those who are particularly cunning, a simple spell is to make a special journey from your home to theirs. When you arrive, place your foot upon their doorstep. Do not ring the bell or knock. Then turn about again for home.

The Screw and Mess With Your Head Spell

Hollow clay head, Dried dog faeces, Screws, Nuts, Gravedirt, Parchment, Black candle

Link to Victim (signature, hair, nails etc.)

Obtain or make from clay a hollow head, and baptise it in the name of the person you wish to hex. Present it to the altar, and call upon the spirits of the dead to witness and empower your sorcery. Inside the head place your material links, dried dog mess, screws with drunken threads, nuts, and graveyard dirt. Also place any ideas or messages you wish to put into the victim's head, written out on small pieces of parchment. Whilst doing this, talk to the head as if it were the actual person, telling it that it is crazy, insecure, and voicing the ideas you wish to place in their head. Seal it all with the wax from a black candle, and bury it in the cemetery. Offer a sacrifice of some kind to the spirits that reside there.

This spell has been used once only by this author, the results took less than one week.

The Head Against Head Spell

(To Create Conflict)

Stones Paint

Create sigils of the names of those you wish to be in conflict, and paint them on the stones. Baptise and name them as the people they represent. Take the stones and bash them together violently whilst making a lot of noise, saying;

> 'May pain, anguish and confusion be yours. May you not seek out the pleasure of one another, may you find only anger. You who were friends, may you become enemies! So mote it be.'

The Crossed Path Spell

A pot of black mustard seeds, Graveyard dirt,

Parchment and ink.

Grind the grave dirt and mustard seeds together on the altar, telling the spirits of the misfortune you intend to cause. Write the victim's name on a piece of paper thirteen times, set fire to it from an altar candle, and add the ash to the mixture. Use the resulting powder to draw big 'X' s on the ground outside your enemy's home, or upon some path they are known to walk.

The Pendle Witch's Curse

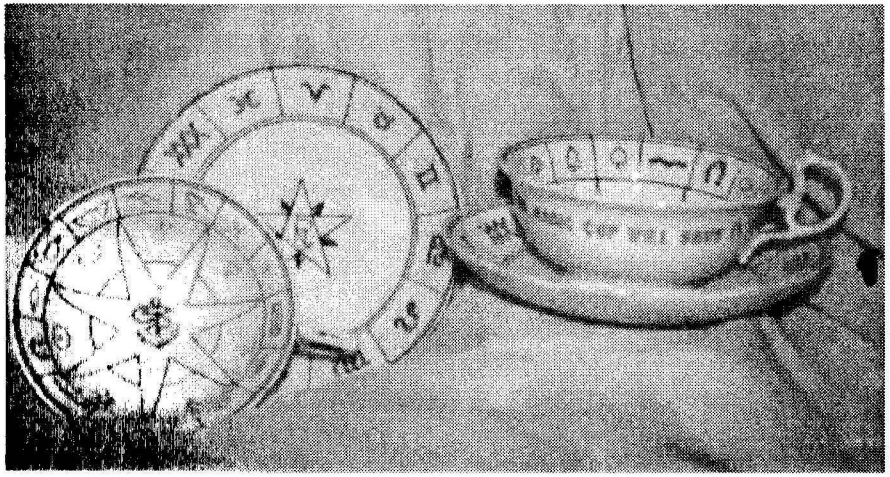
> '... the speediest way to take a man's life away by witchcraft is to make a picture of clay, like unto the shape of the person they meant to kill, and dry it thoroughly. And when you would have them be ill in any place more than another, then take a thorn or pin and prick it in that part of the picture you would so have to be ill.'
>
> Elizabeth Sowtherns, 1613

The Black Fast

This is the terrible method of malefica for which Mabel Brigge was executed at York in 1538. It may also be used to make a thief restore stolen goods, and Mabel's defence was that this was the comparitively

innocent end to which she used it. One witness, however, claimed Mabel had confessed to her that she had indeed used it to kill a man, who had broken his neck before she had broken the fast. The crimes for which she was executed included treason, for she was said to have fasted upon King Henry VIII and the Duke of Norfolk. Neither were actually harmed, although rumours as to the King's death were spread throughout the neighbourhood.

The method is simple. The witch states that they will not eat other than bread or drink other than water until 'so-and-so happens to so-and-so' or 'so-and-so comes to pass'. Each time they drink their water or take a bite of their bread, the curse or spell is reiterated. The mechanism, so to speak, seems to be a form of desire displacement, as described at the end of Chapter XXIII.



Tea set, for divination by tea leaves. Once owned by Cecil Williams. Photograph by Adrian Bryn-Evans, courtesy of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, Cornwall. (See: 'Divination")

Chapter 31
THE EVIL EYE

I remember fondly the cottage my grandmother lived in. It had all the glamour that a witch's home should have. There were two stone gargoyles sat guard either side of the entrance to the garden. Stone skulls lay concealed in the flowerbeds, and stone frogs stood in line along the garden perimeter. A witch doll on a broomstick hung in the window, eyes were painted on each outside wall, and a sign on the door proudly proclaimed the dwelling as The Dog House. Trees overhung the garden, giving it a dark and spooky feel, especially during winter.

It is a wonder that the Jehovah's Witnesses ever had the courage to reach the front door, let alone to knock upon it. When they did, she would answer the door and peer at them over the top of her half-moon spectacles. They would ask her if she believed in Jesus, and she would reply by shaking her twisted pointing stick at them saying, "Of course I don't believe in Jesus. I'm a bloody witch, and if you don't bugger off right now I'm going to put the evil eye on you!"

Not surprisingly this usually did the trick.

The belief that some people can 'overlook', and throw a terrible curse just with their gaze, is quite universal. In France this power is called mauvais oeil, meaning 'evil eye', as it is in its German name boser blick, and in the Italian malocchio. The Latin name of fascinum, from whence

we gain the English fascination, gives a hint at the power of the witch to bind with their gaze, reminding us perhaps of the power of the hypnotist.

In folklore and mythology, it appears again and again. We have the basilisk, the cockatrice, the snake haired Medusa, and in Celtic myth we have Balor of the Evil Eye, whose gaze was so harsh it could lay waste to an entire army or town. On a more immediate and rather less epic level, the power of the evil eye is attributed to jealous and unhappy people, especially if they happen to suffer from some form of physical deformity, such as a hunched back, dwarfism, or eyes that are set strangely in their face.

During the persecution, the supposed power of the evil eye was used as a ready excuse to kill hundreds of people. The event of someone dying, or falling ill, becoming impotent or frigid, was commonly blamed upon some witch whose bad tempered gaze had fallen upon them. Judges were so fearful of this witch's power that it were not uncommon for the accused to be led into court backwards. Rather ironically, it was not just witches who possessed such a power. Pope Pious IX (1792-1878) was believed to be born with the ability to kill those upon whom his gaze came to rest. Unlike the witches, however, he was allowed to live despite it.

The belief in this power has not died out. For example, King Alfonso of Spain was said to possess the 'evil eye', and furthermore he was not in control of it. Perhaps it was all a political propaganda stunt, but this superstition concerning him seems to have been borne out during his famous visit to Italy in 1923. Several sailors on the fleet sent to meet him died by being washed overboard, and there was an explosion in a submarine that killed a handful more. An ancient cannon fired in his honour also exploded, killing all its crew, and a naval officer who had the honour of shaking his hand collapsed and died shortly after. During his tour of Lake Gleno, a dam burst killing fifty people and making around five hundred people homeless. Benito Mussilini was absolutely convinced that this was all down to some inherent evil within the soul of the king, and refused to meet him in person. All negotiations with him were made, rather conveniently, through an intermediary.

More recently, and echoing perhaps the trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the 'hippy' sorcerer Charles Manson was refused a proper court hearing against allegations of mass murder because 'the power of his gaze was deemed too dangerous to the court'. It was believed that he had the power to hypnotise and bend other people's minds when he looked into their eyes. Although the power to hypnotise is scientifically recognised, the American government and its judicial system came dangerously close to admitting to a belief in magick and the evil eye.

So, is there anything behind such beliefs, or is it all simply propaganda, and an excuse to persecute those we do not like? Is it actually possible that some people may possess the ability to fascinate, control or curse other people through the power of their gaze? My own personal answer has to be that it is. I believe wholly that an envious and bitter onlooker may bring disaster upon others through their subconscious desire to see them come to harm. Just as surely, there are those who possess the skills of the hypnotist, even if called by another name.

The ability to fix the gaze unwavering upon another person or an object forms an important part of many forms of spell casting. An example is the acquisition of the toad bone, which is a powerful talisman and magical tool of the Toadsmen fraternity. Here, the bone of a toad is fixed in the gaze for several hours, and if the sorcerer looks away even for a fraction of a second the whole operation is to be abandoned, and a new bone must be found.

This ability to fix the gaze, and to not allow the image seen to be distorted by the mind, can provide a powerful route to magical trance. If practiced with enough determination it can provide the key to the ability of gaining psychic information from objects. The witch who seeks to train themselves with this ability is recommended to pick at first meaningless objects, rather than significant and symbolic ones. The ability to fix the gaze of others may be practiced upon one's reflection in a mirror, or in the game of 'staring out' a friend.

To have someone fix their gaze upon you without blinking or looking away naturally produces a feeling of unease. Perhaps this has its root in the mammalian brain, and our deep rooted fear of predators. Certainly

eye contact forms an important part of our communication, whether this is the vindictive glare of the witch or the seductive eyes of a lover. A fixed gaze gives a message of inner certainty whereas a liar will instinctively tend to look away. It is much easier to convince other people of even the most absurd idea if you can convince them that you believe in it yourself.

An example of the power of the witches' gaze came when one of my brothers was taunted at a house party. Someone challenged him to cast a spell upon them, and he replied by telling them that they were now incapable of walking down the stairs. When this person then found his statement to be true, that they had somehow been 'hypnotised' into freezing with fear every time they tried to take a step downwards, they became hysterical. The spell was not broken until my brother left the party.

Chapter 32
DIVINATION

' All divination resembles an attempt by a man born blind to obtain sight by becoming blind drunk'
Aleister Crowley

The very meaning of the word divination means to ask the gods, and the witch who chooses to work with the spirits will find many occasions to do so. They may ask concerning likely events of the future, the motivations or thoughts of other people, events of the past, or for advice in how to improve their own self and their service to the spirits. Divination provides the easiest way for this to be achieved, and is thus an essential skill to be cultivated by whatever methods the witch finds most suitable.

Human beings naturally fear the unknown, and thus desire to know what the future may hold. Particularly insecure individuals may become increasingly obsessive concerning acts of divination, especially during times of crisis. They find themselves performing its operations before making even the most trivial of decisions, always hoping to know what the effects of their actions will be.

It is worth recognising that there is a 'grey area' between the realms of divination and enchantment. When we seek to divine the flow of Wyrd, we may in fact be defining it. A simple Tarot reading, for example, may in fact be a kind of random spell, a self fulfilling prophesy, so that things actually turn out differently than if the reading had never been made at all. Hence, it is not an uncommon trick to lay out a Tarot spread by design, and to stare at it entranced, as a method of influence. With runes

this 'grey area' might seem more obvious, since the same symbols are use in divination and enchantment. Direct clairaudience or prescience and empowered visualisation are the most immediate, using no symbol system at all, but being much the hardest to achieve.

Whilst many people may consider 'fortune telling' to be little more than a harmless parlour game, the more adept practitioners of magick are agreed that divination may in fact be the most dangerous of all the magical arts. This is also why the cunning man of old who persistently prophesised doom (defeat by one's neighbours, failing crops etc.) would tend to find themselves murdered by the very people it was their responsibility to serve.

The techniques of divination may be arranged neatly into the two categories of sortilage and scrying.

Sortilage

This includes all those techniques of randomly choosing signs and symbols, such as the use of the cowries, Tarot cards, dominoes, throwing the bones, I-Ching using yarrow stalks or the throwing of coins, and the throwing of dice (cubomancy). The most important technique from the viewpoint of this particular work is the use of the runes.

When I teach rune-magick, I always advise the student to create their own set of runes, inscribed upon discs of wood or painted upon similar sized stones. These are then kept in a bag, so that they may be drawn out 'at random' whilst the mind is completely taken up with asking the spirits the question. This might be a single rune, if the question is a simple one, or a 'spread'. For example, a single rune might be cast to represent each of the following factors in a situation;

1)PROBLEM

2)PAST 3)PRESENT 4)FUTURE

5)HOPE/FEAR

6)SOLUTION

Many other spreads are of course possible, and indeed the same spread could be used with Tarot cards, or a hexagram of the I-Ching could be thrown for each position. Experimentation will prove what works best for you, personally.

Scrying

This relies on the witch's own ability to enter into trance and to 'see visions'. Techniques of scrying include such things as the use of the crystal ball, the black mirror, the Ouija board, astral travel or the spirit quest, the reading of auras, receptivity to geomantic vibration, sexual vision trance, reading tea leaves, dripping hot lead into water, the use of the pendulum, the arte of dreaming, the reading of entrails, automatic writing or drawing. The real skill required for such techniques is essentially the same as for divination by sortilage, except that the deep mind is relied upon to provide its message without the intermediary of randomly selected symbols.

A simple scrying spell would be to take a small bowl of water, and a single lit black candle. Cast the widdershins circle, invoke suitably, and when you sense the presence of the 'great grey shape that makes men shiver', ask it your question out loud. Then focus all your attention upon the flame of the candle as you drip hot wax upon the surface of the water. Do not look at the result of the wax dripping until your intuition tells you

to stop. Then, look at the shapes made by the black wax upon the water and see what they remind you of.

If the relationship between the witch and the spirits is cultivated and strong, if they are experienced and open to the subtle shifts in their own consciousness, the techniques of divination described above may become unnecessary. Feelings of congruity can evolve into the magical skill of direct prescience, powers of spirit knowledge, extrasensory perception and intuition. The spirits may speak to the witch directly through materialisation, vision, audio hallucination, or as knowledge that seems to come from nowhere.

Divination through sortilage or scrying provides the easiest link for communication between you and the spirits, whoever you are working with. The wise witch will always give the spirits the opportunity of communication before and after any major workings. Some important questions that should be asked, periodically, regardless of what spirits the witch chooses to serve and work with include;

' Are you willing to help me with this spell? Why?'

'Are you happy with the way I have been of service to you?'

'What are my successes and failures?'

'How would you improve me, that I may increase in power and serve you better?'

'What is your opinion of this rite I have composed

in your honour ?'

'Is there anything else that you would choose to tell me?'

Chapter 33
AUTOMATIC WRITING & DRAWING

Automatic drawing and writing are methods by which the conscious attention is diverted, and the deeper mind is allowed expression. The drawing is allowed to create itself, the writing is allowed to flow without conscious intervention. Sigil magick or some minor ritual may be employed to direct the wandering line to dance according to the magical will, or the words to flow freely along a predefined course. It takes some practice as a technique before meaningful communications with the subconscious or 'forgotten arcana' may be achieved. It is a method I make much use of myself.

In the human body there are two systems of nerves. These we shall call the 'voluntary' and the 'involuntary'. The involuntary is by far the older of the two, and governs the automatic processes within the body such as breathing, the pumping of the heart, and the digestion of food. The voluntary, or cerebral spinal system, is the expression of the conscious self, and is of a more recent stage in our evolution.

When you move your hand it is a voluntary action. However, the ultra complex activities of nerves and muscles, the redistribution of blood and the discharge of chemical/electrical signals along the nerve paths causing your hand to move, are all controlled by the involuntary system. As the conscious mind is expressed through the cerebro-spinal system,

the subconscious (deep mind) works through the involuntary nerve system.

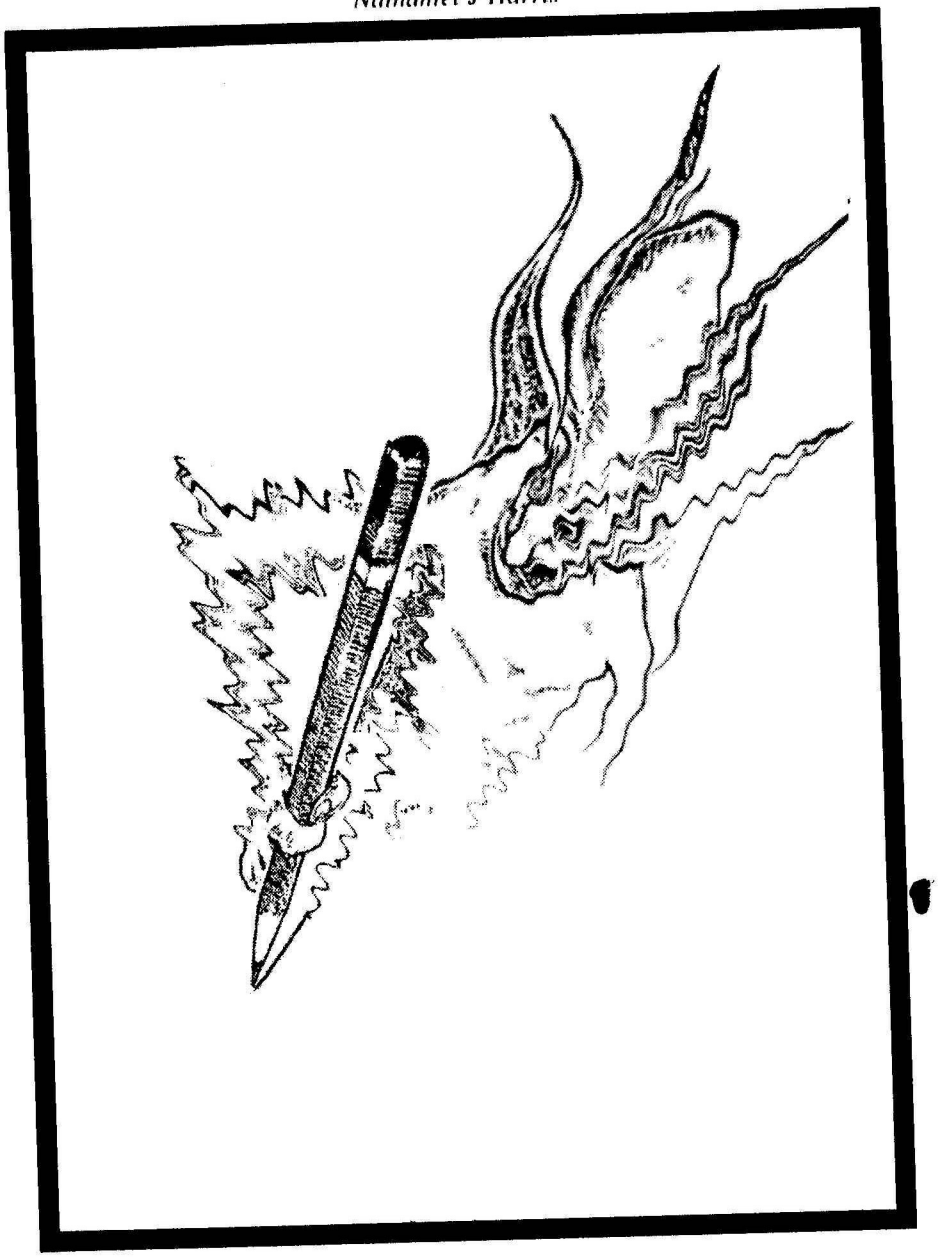
The subconscious mind has aspects that reflect the consciousness of prehistoric times. It is also linked with that part of us existing on the 'inner planes', the spirit world. All psychic experience is transmitted to our waking consciousness by these areas of the mind.

Just as you cause your hand to move at your will and perform a desired task, the subconscious may move your hand without the attention of your conscious will. So, for instance, you may write or draw a picture that you have composed with your waking mind. Whilst the idea of what you seek to express may be fully aware, the muscles in your hand are moved by the involuntary and subconscious mechanisms to make the right shapes with your pen, arranging them to make a picture or a series of words. These actions are carried out 'automatically' and through habit. Much of our lives are lived this way.

The mental machinery may run itself 'robotically', without the attention and guidance of the will, bypassing the psychic censor. This is where we come across the phenomena of automatic writing and drawing. Much of the subconscious babble revealed to our waking minds in this way is of little use to anyone, except a crazy artist or psychiatrist. Mixed with these outpourings we may find evidence of psychic activity. With disciplined practice, automatic drawing and writing may prove a powerful technique of divination and spirit communication. It takes some practice as a technique before meaningful communications with the forgotten arcana may be achieved. 'Warming up' exercises can help enormously.

Start by taking a wad of rough, cheap sketching paper. Do not be at all precious about what you are about to do. Nobody is to judge the results, including you. There is no right and no wrong. Make a couple of simple marks without thinking at all what they are for. Now look at these marks and see what they suggest. There is no reason to be critical in any way. There is no such thing as a mistake.

Keep on making additional lines and marks, allowing each one to suggest itself rather than from any idea held in the mind. Take as long as you like over this, taking as many breaks as are desired, but do not give up. A lot



of patience and persistence is required. Eventually, you will be surprised by what you see.

Automatic writing is a way of drawing inspiration from the deeper mind, and allowing the spirits to have their say. It has been employed by spiritualists, surrealists, siderealists, and by magicians such as the surrealchemist and hereditary witch magus Doc Shiels.

Possibly the easiest way to enter into an automatic writing trance is to start writing faster than you can think. Let each word suggest the next in a stream of consciousness word association game. Do not stop to seek meaning in any of the text until you have written your last word. Make a bit of an endurance test out of it.

You may find some of these early automatic writings surprising. Some may even shock, disturb or disgust you, so that you say, 'Did I really write this?' Once you have started to produce text in this fashion, you are ready to begin using automatic writing as a divinatory technique. Symbolic actions and ritual are employed to direct the flow of the trance, keeping the results within certain parameters. An example taken from my personal records is given in a later chapter.

Chapter 34
THE ARTE OF DREAMING

'And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.'
Genesis 4:16

In sleep, our spirit (astral body, fetch, shadow) enters another dimension of existence. We find ourselves surrounded and immersed within the material of the deep mind, and, if our dreams are profound, the collective unconscious of our species. This is the realm of magick. In the same way as we use symbols in our spells, we dream in symbols that may be interpreted to reveal to us all kinds of things. The magical abilities of the witch are focussed through the process of dream incubation. Here we find the elder law that teaches the summoning of the incubus. They may inform us of inner troubles that need righting, and the way this righting may be achieved. They may warn us of events to come in the future, provide us with solutions to problems in our lives, or inspire us to new acts of creativity. This is why we have the saying 'I will sleep on it'.

In the interpretation of dream material, the many books of symbolism and meaning available are best avoided. Instead, break the dream down into its components, and ask what these components represent for you as an individual. Often the first thing that comes into your head through lateral association will be the most useful. Avoid at all cost interpretation according to the theories of new age quacks.

The deeper mind is where the spirits dwell, and in our dreams they may come to us. This is why in nearly all cultures it is considered unwise or

even taboo to awaken a sleeping sorcerer. The spirits may wish to inform us of something, or discuss some new form of observance they would like to see added to the rituals of service. They may appear in forms that are easily recognised, they may be disguised as someone that we know, or they may take on some new form for some reason of their own.

It is possible to become possessed by the spirits during dream. The witch may summon the spirits through invocation and prayer before retiring, and by visualising the image or sigil of a spirit, by holding an image of their domain in their mind, or by repeating the spirit's name as a mantra, or any combination of these things, as they drift from waking into sleeping. A request to meet the spirits in dream, plus a small offering of some kind, should be placed upon the altar before retiring.

Similar to possession is the ability to change form in dream, usually into the animal that is one's fetch or familiar. Here the witch transfers their consciousness into an astral body of inhuman shape, to travel upon the spirit plane or even in the world as we see it during our waking life.

The witch may choose any subject for dreaming by similiar methods, with simple visualisation of the subject matter or place they wish to visit usually proving sufficient. This may include visualising some part of a previous dream, in order to explore the imagery further.

The witch strives for discipline in the arte of dreaming. I recommend that a 'dream diary' is kept by the side of the bed. This is to be written in immediately upon awakening, every morning without fail, before the memories of dreams are allowed to slip away. It may sometimes seem that we do not dream at all, but in fact this is not the case. All that is happening is that we are not trained in remembering. Therefore, should the sorcerer awake to find they have no memory of their dreams, they should take note of this fact in their diary. This is to maintain the discipline of recording our dreams every morning, and also to impress upon our subconscious that it is our desire to do so. After a few days of writing 'No dreams to recall', our deep mind will get the message, and allow the dream imagery to linger a little longer.

There are self-hypnotic techniques the witch may find useful in remembering dreams. One of the first problems of recall is that our waking minds tend to think in linear terms, whilst our dreaming minds do not.

Thus upon awaking, we may have some memory of dream that makes little sense, because that part of the dream that is freshest to us is its end. So, we try to make sense of it by thinking back to the beginning of the dream, which is that part which is furthest from our memory. In our minds, we then form some construct of our experience which makes sense to waking consciousness, but in the action of thinking back to the beginning of the dream and working from there, we run the risk of forgetting how it actually ended. What we will then do is imaginatively reconstruct the end. The result is that we create for ourselves some new experience, which is not actually what we dreamt at all, although we do not know it.

The trick is to record the dream backwards, so that the first thing we write about is how it ends, and the last thing we write about is how it begins. In this way we can help to ensure that we are more honest with ourselves. The trouble is that we are not used to thinking backwards and making sense of our experiences in this fashion, and so we must train ourselves to do so. The way to do this is to meditate on the day that has passed as you are sliding into sleep. Try to recall every event that has come to pass, but backwards, so that the first thing you think of is lying your head upon the pillow, and the last thing you think of is getting out of bed that morning.

A further exercise, also useful to insomniacs, is to practice counting from one to a hundred, and then from a hundred down to one. The aim is to be able to count backwards as easily and as quickly as you are capable of counting forwards.

Since dream is the realm of spirits and of magick, the sorcerer may cast spells during sleep. Success in this requires the ability to recognise that you are dreaming, rather than being swept along by the experience, to enter the state of lucid dreaming and to take control. Again, this is where the tool of the dream diary comes in useful. There are places, events and encounters that take place in dream and recur from one night to another. Normally we would remain unaware of them, but since we have been keeping a disciplined diary, dragging the material of dream into waking awareness, we are far more likely to be informed by the recognition of these things.

The very act of keeping a dream diary may provide keys for entering the state of lucid dreaming all in itself. I have had various experiences where certain dream images have recurred, and because I have consciously recognised these elements of dream through recording them, I have been triggered into lucid dreaming through their recognition. A few years ago I even encountered a spiritual and magical teacher on the dream planes, who claimed to be of a prehuman species of sorcerer who had become immortal by escaping into the dream worlds. Whenever they appeared, and on the occasions where they decide to get back in contact, I became instantly lucid through the recognition of them.

Furthermore, the material recorded in a dream diary may provide the raw material for further astral exploration. The witch may create 'pathworkings' from such material, meditating upon the images of a dream so that they may return there. Such workings, when performed at the onset of sleep, may lead to serial dreams, where one night's dreams provide the starting point for the next.

A powerful technique for gaining control of dreams is to seek out and fix attention on the hands. This may be combined with the above exercise to produce good results. The attention is fixed upon the hands, and then upon the surrounding environment, then back to the hands, and back to the environment several times. What you will find is that your powers of 'dream perception' will increase. An awareness of the dream environment may result that is actually far superior than that experienced of the waking world. It is not uncommon in my experiences to gain incredible power of dream-vision, so that the smallest details even some distance away can be seen clearly, or stranger things like being able to see the liquid qualities of glass. Returning attention to the hands and fixing it there, decisions can be made concerning the deliberate manipulation of the dream environment, including such things as teleportation to a different places real or imagined, or the manifestation of desired or required objects such as the blasting rod.

During the state of lucid dreaming, the sorcerer may act out events that they wish to occur in waking reality and this in itself forms the basis of powerful sorcery. Such events, if not too fanciful from the outset, have a bizarre liability to reoccur in the waking world.

Chapter 35
ELEMENTAL SPIRITS & BUD-WILLS

'Every desire is a spirit waiting to manifest'
Austin Osman Spare

The English sorcerer Austin Osman Spare is sometimes consid ered the 'Grandaddy of Chaos Magic', because their entire doctrine is based upon a page and a half of his writings. He is also associted heavily with the O.T.O., through assosciation with his literary executor Kenneth Grant, and this despite Spare's open disapproval of ceremonial magick. Spare considered himself to be a witch. He expressed his own unique approach to sorcery, and was the principal initiator of the Zos-Kia-Cultus. In his Book of Pleasure (1913) he speaks of the process of atavistic resurgence, by which he means that the magical part of human consciousness lies deeply buried, like a distant memory, and rises to the waking mind in the form of symbols, dreams, and passions. He possessed the ability to see into other dimensions, was a highly accomplished draughtsman, a personal friend of Aubrey Beardsley, and an official war artist to the Queen.

The deepest secrets of his magick may be perceived in his paintings and drawings rather than his writings. He was wholly aware of what we care to call the gods, and was in constant communication with them. Many fantastic stories are told of his abilities to summon the spirits, control the weather, and cause strange events to come about. Gerald Gardner is known to have employed him on at least one occasion to cast a spell, and the Great Beast Crowley condemned Spare as a 'brother of the left hand

path'. Whilst many sorcerers clamour for attention and fame, Spare went to great lengths to stay out of the public eye. There have been many who have attempted to emulate his crooked style. In almost every case they lack his subtle irony, and the humour that marks Spare out as a genuine adept.

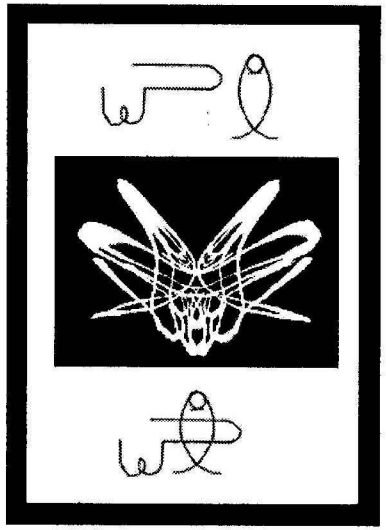
He believed, as does this author, that the nature of eternal spirit is fluid and ever changing, and the power of magick must be discovered from within the self rather than learnt parrot fashion from exoteric teachings. Whilst paying all respect to the wisdom of the traditions one must not be afraid to strike out on one's own and defy convention. This is the nature of true magical ability.

Austin Spare developed the following technique of sorcery to summon the spirits of desire that they may manifest in the actual and physical world. In essence it is a method of creating what are known as elementals or bud-wills. It is a method of abstracting a desire so that the conscious mind does not interfere with the powers of the deep mind, thus creating an open gateway to the spirit realms and calling upon quite specific forces to do the sorcerer's bidding.

The first stage is to define your desire simply and succinctly as a statement of intent. This is then written out, and the letters of the sentence are rearranged to form an abstract glyph:

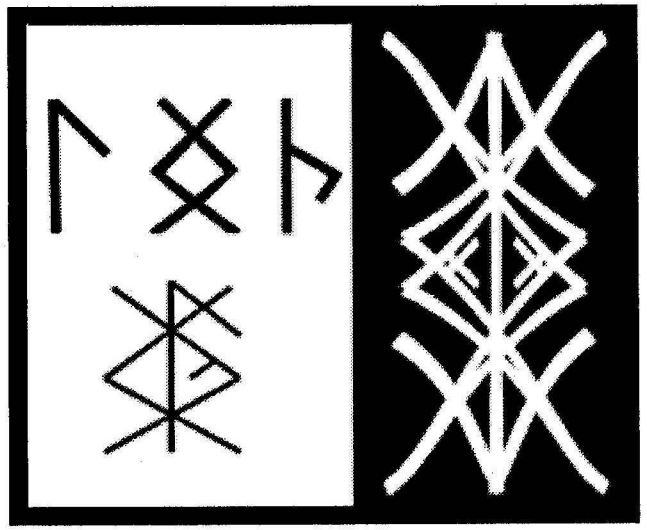
The result is treated as the 'signature' of a spirit, whose raw nature is the desire itself. The original statement is then lost to the mind through the act of deliberate forgetfullness. Any additional information, such as a name or image of the spirit's appearance, may be created as desired according to the sorcerer's own artistry. This method of evocation is perhaps amongst the most 'natural'. One of my brothers, at the age of eleven, began experimenting with techniques such as these simply by drawing a picture of the spirit he wished to create, calling it forth at his own altar within a triangle of evocation. Although he was very young, and his modus operandi simple in the extreme, his results were nevertheless highly effective.

Similarly, a pictographic representation of the desire's achievement may be simplified and abstracted, so that its meaning becomes purely subliminal. For example:

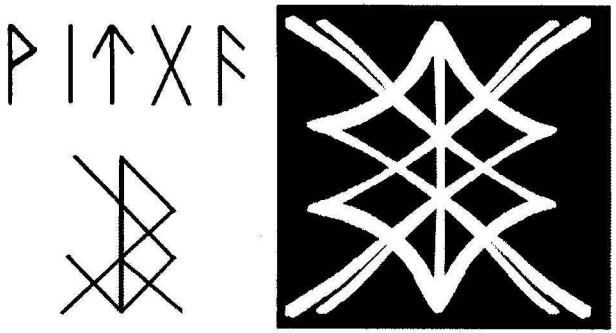


This is in fact how the runes were originally created, by obvious symbols becoming simplified for convenience over hundreds and thousands of years. It is worth noting that all such alphabets, indeed the art of writing itself, were at root considered to be magical. Relevant symbols from any such alphabets may also be incorporated into the design of a bud-will.

The combination of runes into a wichta (Old English meaning 'spirit'), uniting their meanings to form the intent of a spell in a manner more or less identical to the above, is a traditional practice. For example, the runes of Laguz, Inguz, and Kennaz can be combined to form a wichta, the raw desire of which is the initiatory knowledge of the people of cunning.



Similarly, it is also perfectly acceptable to write your desire in runes utilising their phonetic value. The results are combined and stylised in much the same way as the method given by Spare. In the following example, I have created a bind-rune from the Anglo-Saxon word 'witga'.



This sigil (a contraction of signature) then becomes the focus of trance. By concentrating upon it whilst the normal mind with all its complexes is silenced, the image may be percieved by the deeper strata of consciousness and transmitted to the realm of spirit. There it will be recognised for what it is, even though to the mundane human mind the symbol is meaningless.

Traditionally, the magical focus is aided symbolicaly by placing the sigil and material base within the triangle of the arte. It may be called into existence through chanting, drumming, as the focus of meditation, at a time of mental and emotional exhaustion when the mind is a blank, when belief is freed by the destruction of expectation and hope, through sexual energy, during possession by the spirits, or by any other method which produces vacuity of mind. Energy raised is then earthed into the triangle, feeding the manifestation of the spirit.

Once the wichta has been charged, the sigil should be destroyed to prevent its reattachment to mundane consciousness. Again, the sorcerer actively forgets about the entire operation.

If the desire is long term, some material basis should be employed to house the spirit of the desire. Such a basis should be in some way representative of the nature of the spirit, as with the traditional ju-ju doll, amulets, a painting, drawing, grimoire, or fetishe. Once the bud-will has been baptised with its witch name, it may then be fed and communicated with in the same manner as any other spirit. An interesting piece of etymology is that the origins of the word 'mascot' may be from the Portugese mascotto, meaning 'witchcraft' (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Long term bud-wills that are created and charged through the physical love of witches, be this between a couple, a group, or self-love, are otherwise known as magical children. Like familiars, they feed from the life force of the witch, and their power must be replenished regularly if they are to continue to survive.

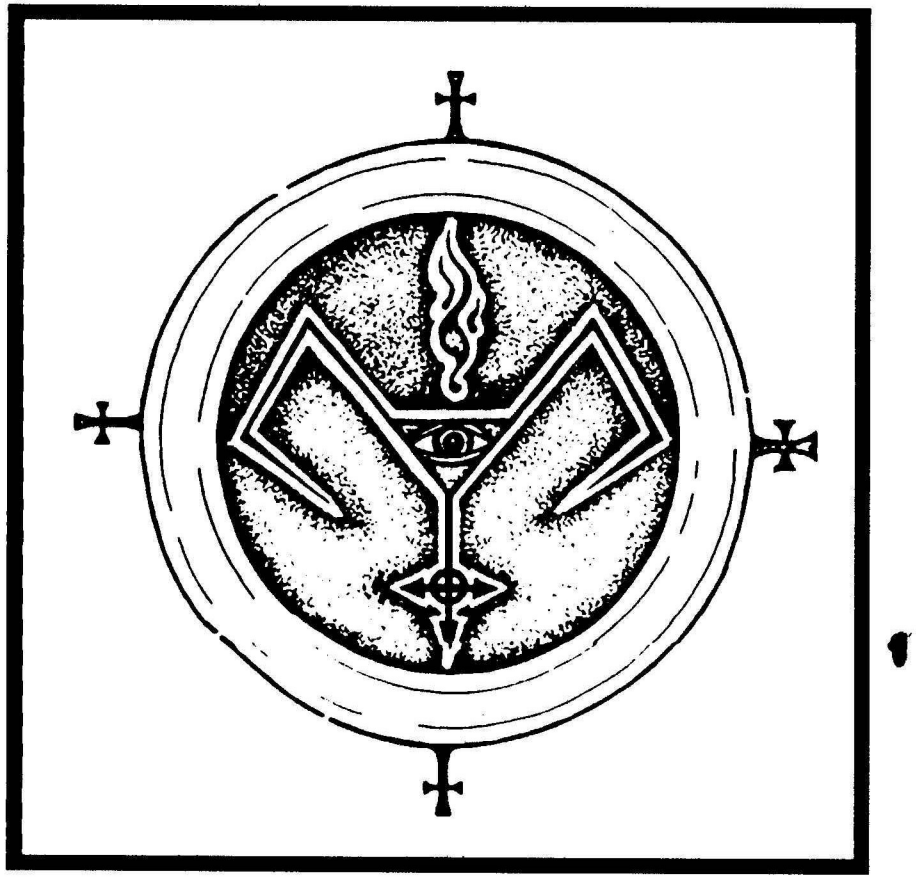
Unlike the children of Middle-Earth, the spirit children of the witches do not require heterosexual coupling to be conceived. The hollow wand has already been spoken of earlier, and this chapter provides the classical formula of its application. The sigil of the spirit to be created and born from this method is concealed within the phallus, and merges with the aetheric force of the witch at the moment of her orgasm. An equally legendary and powerful formula of use to male witches is the Earthenware Virgin. This is a soft clay vessel, which acts as a magical vagina and womb, within which the desire form is similarly concealed. Fertilised by the sorcerer on a waxing moon, it is buried in a secret place in the outside world, to grow like a seed.

The alruan is a personal spirit created by the witch, taking its name from the German and Scandanavian word for a shape changing sorceress or demon. The male equivalent is called a mandragore. It is a figurine carved from a mandrake, its spirit given face and life by magick, and given offerings of food and drink. They are named, and spoken to for purposes of divination, answering with movements of the head. If they are not cared for they can become troublesome, and bringing great misfortune upon the household.

Once the bud-will has achieved its task it may be given a new one to which it may be suited. If not, it should be reabsorbed and banished. The desire fulfilled, its material basis is destroyed, and its' life force is reabsorbed by the witch, or sacrificed to some other spirit force.

This act of sacrifice may itself hold power, and witches may conceive of magical children simply to sacrifice them to other spirit forces. Traditionally, and according to more strictly heterosexual formulae, these are conceived through copulation during the menses. Blood and sperm are then taken from this union, and formed into a cake of light. This is then crushed and burned at some later time, to release the magical life force that is contained within it.

Magical children and long term wichta tend to become more powerful through time, because they acquire their own Wyrd and cunning. It is thus inadvisable to create too many, since they can become rebellious and troublesome, just like mortal children can. Similarly, the witch should remember that since they have created this separate consciousness, they are responsible for it. Yes, I am saying to treat these spirits with love and respect. Even the 'evil' ones.



Chapter 36
SPIRIT FORMS FROM NOTHING

From my Magical Diary, 4/9/91

My mind swims in the dark seas of Chaos, where nothing has any distinction unless I choose to give it. Here I can play at being a god, create landscapes (or 'inscapes' as Sidney Sime put it) and creatures to amuse the mind of this would be artist with no canvas but himself.

However, it would apear that I am not alone in my folly. There are... others that clamour for attention. As yet they have no form that I can recognise but there is a feeling that I cannot ignore. These things demand recognition but are unlike anything I have experienced in the past. I would turn and run but in this fertile void there is as yet nowhere to go but here.

'Give us form!' they cry, but I would rather that they were without. 'Or we'll huff, and we'll puff, and we'll blow your house down!' I may have been clever and built my house of bricks but unfortunately for me the mortar is still a little wet behind the ears, and already these oh so well balanced walls begin to fall.

At last they do, and from clouds of dust they emerge in shapes I can just begin to comprehend. Still there is no order. Surrounded by a thick fog of ever changing form I still do not know these beasts for they are seemingly external to me.

'You think you big magician- pull us out your hat!'

Now I must finally let them in as they evoke themselves into this frame of flesh I usually equate with me. Ask any voodoo priestess and she will tell you that it is impossible for her to imagine a religion without possession. Now I begin to see why.

I am pulled into a twilight world, but that is neither here nor there. Only by visiting their domain can I ever expect to play the host. It is soon obvious that these things I am creating have been here far longer than I, they could tear me apart if they so wished but for now they seem content to make a deal.

But I'm no fool. Remembering all the good advice I've had from friends and books of weird lore, I stand wavering and cry, "Give me your names!"

So they do, and I immediately regret it. This is the first half of the deal, and is just what they have been bargaining for all along. Their names are as unpronounceable as their forms are incomprehensible, and must be sounded with more than just the mouth, rather with the whole mind.

This manner of calling names it would appear is a technique in itself. No need for complex Enochian incantation here, just network your mind and go. After a few practice runs and complete mispronunciations I soon start to get the hang of things as demon after demon pushes its way through the lungs and vocal chords and into my head. Some are less than pleasant, others consist of more than just pleasure. An insect god I have met before amongst typed pages introduces itself and the name nearly has me vomit there and then. A close associate, Death by Choking, fortunately leaves before I get its name right.

Then comes the mystery herself. Her name is more than a feeble mind like mine could take. To call upon her in entirety would be total abandonment, literally. I may decide to give it a try another day. She is the mother and lover to all these others, and she teaches me that I may only experience the smallest portion of being at any one time. It is for this reason that she has so many names- for she is so many names. But don't get me wrong, this might start to sound monotheistic. She is many, but not and never a one. Thus there can never be one way to invoke her.

Suddenly all this seems pretty ridiculous, and I feel my body shudder at the entrance of an old friend. Laughter. That formless lover favoured by many magicians of late. Its arrival startles the others and they are gone, leaving me to write my hurried notes to jog my creativity should I need to call on them or others of their like again.

Chapter 37
GOETY

The importance of the classical grimoire, and the more personal books of spells attributed to various witches and cunning folk, has been greatly undervalued in more recent studies of the craft. Nevertheless, the knowledge of the black arts and the important place of the grimoire has been well documented since before the Middle Ages and we have a great storehouse of records at our disposal, both from the sorcerer's themselves and those who persecuted them.

The classical grimoire may be seen as presenting a comprehensive and generally consistent pantheon of magical belief; masks beneath which the service of the Old Ones has been hidden. Since the Christian Church has demonised the deity of the witches and magicians, so it is only natural that the witches' response should be the deification of the Church's demons. The result is an organic syncretism quite in keeping with the survival and evolution of witchcraft and sorcery throughout the ages and civilisations of mankind. When strangers ask me my religion, I often throw them off track by telling them I am Catholic. Someone told me that the etymology of this word traces back through the Greek Katholicus; meaning to believe in a little of everything, or more precisely as 'universal belief'. I am given to understand that this approach might also be described or likened to Neoplatonism, and is pre-Christian in origin. Of course, I do not always explain that.

Yet this is more than just me trying to be clever. This fluidity of expression is a central part of spiritist witchcraft. The gods and goddesses that are the mysteries couple and breed incestuously, and our familiars copulate with everything all the time. Many of the genuinely old spells of English witchcraft call as readily on the power of Odin as they do upon the saints, apostles and martyrs. Hell, some even call on devils and demons. People are sometimes a little baffled by this.

Whatever our interests and spirituality as adults, most of us have been subjected to Christian brainwashing of one sort or another since early childhood. As such, its iconography and mystery are imprinted quite thoroughly in our deeper minds. Hence our asylums have more patients who believe themselves to be Christ, or speaking to Mary, or receiving transmissions from the Antichrist, than they are Pan, or Hecate's daughters. I'm sure they do pop up in such places occasionally.

Living as I do in Norwich, I cannot help but be awaree of the awe and majesty that the Church once held over England's populace. Yet also, I cannot avoid awareness of the pagan mysteries and their survival under Christian masks. In the cathedrals here there are some of England's most famous Green Men, sometimes identified as none other than Cain himself, who hide amongst the cloisters and grin at us from beneath the misericord. All around are the gargoyles, fear inspiring and atavistic.

East Anglia generally is often referred to as witchcraft country. The memory of Mathew Hopkins ironically helped to keep witchcraft alive, providing those of witchcraft lineage with more determination in its passing. The events that took place, with especial reference to the trials of Essex, England, were a direct inspiration to those of Salem, Essex, New England. And so the trail leads onwards.

The merging of Catholic and pagan beliefs in witchcraft and magick generally may also be observed in voodoo, macumba, the sorceries of Malaysia, in the secrets of the Romany, in the observances of the Bonesmen, Horse Whisperers, blacksmiths, toad witches, the satanic cults of Russia and Teutonia, the luciferian traditions, Brujeria, Stregeria, Rosicrucianism, The Golden Dawn, thelema, and (according to some) in the rites and observances of Freemasonry.

This same syncretism is evident in the classical grimoire in the rites, signs, seals; even in the names of the angels and devils. Here we find numerous survivals of Assyrian, Babylonian, Hebrew, Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Norse and Celtic gods, yet given new existence and identities as the denizens of Pandemonium. These arts have their roots in pre-Christian magick. In the words of Arthur E. Waite, 'it is Croquetemaine explained by Diabolus, the Runes of Elf-land read with the interpretation of Infernus..' (The Book of Ceremonial Magick, 1911).

The classical grimoire have also shown their influence in more recent times. It is told that the magician Allan Bennett, upon first meeting the student Aleister Crowley, greeted him with the words 'Little brother, you have been meddling with the Goetia.' Crowley, who later went on to publish his own version of this text, denied the charge. Bennett's reply was to state simply, 'Then, little brother, the Goetia has been meddling with you!' Note that Crowley later identified himself as the Beast 666. Although he may have insisted that his transcendental philosophy was essential white magick, his Holy Guardian Angel nevertheless turned out to be the Devil.

Others who have been known to practice this goetic witchcraft have included W.B. Yeats, MacGregor Mathers, Cecil Williams, Charles Pace, and a few others that we shall be taking a look into before this book is finished. The influence of the classical grimoire may even be seen in the ritual tools and circles as described in the Wiccan Book of Shadows. Chiefly it is the practice of evocation, of summoning and binding spirits by means of their names, signatures, by words of power, by magical glyphs and talisman.

The powers and knowledge these devils grant is that of herbs and stones, the giving of imps and familiars, the location of riches, the healing of illness, of slaying at a distance, reconciling broken friendships, and bringing back strayed lovers. The classical grimoire of tradition may be composed and copied by cultured and educated hands, yet they give form and expression to desires and beliefs that might otherwise be described not merely as primitive, but even atavistic. Its seemingly anti-Christian theology and ceremony are in essence the same ante-Christian pagan witchcraft as has condemned the souls of many an assumed illiterate peasant. The 'evils' are entirely and in every sense identical.

What must also be understood is the reputation of the books themselves as objects of the arte; consecrated and embued with a spiritual power in their own right. Their mere presence could bring good or bad luck. In the circle the grimoire is just as much an integral part of the summonings and dominations as are any other ingredient listed within their pages. Its place is on the altar itself, like that most profound and famous yet much bastardised of all grimoire in the West, the Bible.

Like the wand or sword, the powers of the grimoire were applied with conviction. It is not merely the formulae, names, signs and prayers, or the astrological charts and recipes for spells and potions that provide the value of such a work. In the rites of black magick, the grimoire were understood to be inhabited in themselves by devils.

The actual grimoire were often considered to be teachers; spirits capable of creating change or imparting knowledge like any of the devils described in the binding rituals they contain, or any mentor a student might otherwise learn from. If a grimoire let a sorcerer down, they would not simply blame the author or otherwise assume inauthenticity of the text itself. Instead, they would take it to a priest to be 'blessed'. (Indeed, there are many grimoire that have been copied and composed by the hands of clergymen, or written with the assumption that the diabolist has been ordained).

These grimoire were as essential to the passing on of the black art as any initiatory lineage, and were not easy to come by. The quest to obtain such would often involve long journeys to foreign lands, the exchange of quite vast amounts of money, and occasionally the loss of life. Hence the devils and angels summoned by them, like the sorcerers that used them, had great respect for the mere possession of such a volume. This in itself would be enough to create a powerfully charged object.

Yet even more literally, there were grimoire that actually stated their own sentience, giving instruction as to its awakening, binding to the summoner's will, requiring sacrifices and prayers for the spirit's 'care and keeping'. This is a portion of glamour sadly missing in the modern age. It is the spirit within which the original hand bound edition of 'Witcha' was originally offered, with each edition being ritually consecrated by myself.

We may celebrate that many of these classical grimoire, along with more recently authored texts such as this one, have become so freely available. However this also means that such texts contain no secrets that our neighbours might not also easily acquire. Speaking personally, I have found great inspiration in studying these texts, and have gone as far as perform to the experiments and rites detailed within them. However, it is more my practice to create my own unique formulae of sorcery. These draw heavily on the traditional grimoire, but are also entirely modern and unique. These personal rituals and procedure combine what I believe to be the most powerful elements from almost every 'school' I have had contact with. Like all the most successful witches and magicians that have gone before me, I have developed my own system. I have no name for what I do other than 'witchcraft', which might cause some confusion with the more modern pagan religion, but is otherwise a fair description that will be understood anywhere in the world.

Indeed, the belief that the average rural cunning men and witches of old were illiterate is now considered to be largely error. That these operations of black magick are otherwise known as goetia, meaning 'witchcraft' or 'the howling of the witches', goety being an obsolete English word derived from the Latin to mean the performing of magick by summoning spirits, should be clue enough to their origins. Indeed, before 'conversion' a huge portion of pagan gods could easily have been described as devils anyway - however benevolent they were to those who appeased them.

It matters not if the spirits employed be in truth forces beyond the nature and rule of either God or science, flights of imagination or the product of the deeper strata of subconscious mind. The ancient kabalists and magicians were aware of these ideas we now call the psychology, which we like to believe to be modern and progressive. The texts and systems of such practitioners speak freely of such concepts as male mind (active, rational, consciousness aware of consciousness) and female mind (passive, intuitive, dreaming awareness), and the concept of Heaven and Hell itself have direct parallels with the metaphoric language of superego and subconscious. As it says in the Kybalion, 'The All is Mind; The Universe is Mental'.

Indeed any of these 'systems' might provide alternative explanations for the products and manifestations of the others. Both the medieval mystic and the modern Jungian psychologist might both agree on this; that the symbolism of the black magicians, may be likened to a code describing ideas more profound than their absurd and laborious rituals seem to describe. Many Illuminating comparisons may be made with the classical works of the Hermeticists, texts which are commonly accepted to be metaphorical.

The same may be said of their close relatives the Al-Khem-ists, alchemy being translated to mean the 'black science', and having its origins in Egypt. No moral implications are intended by the word; indeed it was several thousand years before anyone saw the need to invent a 'white magick' to balance the 'black'. We might like to think that modern chemistry is progressive, and that alchemy was in some way 'primitive', or that modern astronomy is an improvement upon the astrology of the ancients. Yet this is not really so; the ancient Egyptians possessed knowledge of chemistry that is only now being verified by modern science. Their astrologers were aware of the Dog Star Sirius long before modern astronomers were.

The difference is that these schools also possessed the esoteric wisdom, of which modern science recognises only the outer forms. So it is with the Hermeticists, who were well aware of much that we now call psychology, yet also recognised that the human mind is not the limited faculty that modern man supposes. The cracking of this code, through the performance of rituals of incantation, might be self hypnotic psychodrama or actual gateways through which travellers between the dimensions may pass. It matters little. The procedures and *results* are the same.

Through the study of the angelic and demonic forms, we can begin to see the traces of a strange evolution of belief. What began on the whole as spirits of nature grew to become the gods of the pagan age. These in turn were reinterpreted and demonised as one culture dominated another. The most ancient gods become the giants and Titans, whilst younger conquering religions build new temples. These in turn became subjugated to monothiesm, and their nature is reinterpreted yet again. In our modern day we no longer like to speak of God or the Devil, and perhaps

even feel a slight embarrassment at the superstitions of our forebears. Instead we are more comfortable to reduce such ideas to psychological concepts. Modern magicians and witches, even those who consider belief to be a working tool rather than an end in itself, find no less difficulty than our cowan (uninitiated) contemporaries.

It may seem a little unfashionable and unacceptable to state such a thing, but I have concluded that if spirits are not actually real, whatever phenomena it is that we have mistaken for them in previous aeons in fact behave exactly as if they are. As a child this did not seem particularly strange to me, especially since I had witchcraft in my family.

There is very little that I can say to convince any reader that has never been smacked across the room by an errant spirit that such things might actually happen. All I can say is that if the 'psychological paradigm' is the only approach you feel comfortable with, then you are welcome to reinterpret all I have to say according to your limited and stunted belief system. For my own part, however, I have absorbed the language of rational psychology and employ it readily to describe various process and phenomena wholly unacceptable to modern 'rationality'.

It is my opinion that spirits do indeed exist externally and independently of the human psyche. However it is also my experience that such phenomena, when encountered, create their forms through the raw material of the imagination and cultural expectations of those with whom they interact. Hence they are less stable and more transmutative than humans or animals. Existing as they do without the precepts of the material plane they most often remain beyond our perception. Those who are able to sense or commune with them tend to be themselves of a more aetherial nature. The 'gift' of second sight is strongest in many children, who are less likely to banish them through what I call active disbelief. Amongst adults we find those who continue with even the vaguest sense of other worlds tend to become magicians, witches, artists, poets, and/or madmen.

That spirit takes its form through a syncretic relationship with the human psyche does not mean that they are any less real than we are. The effect may be likened to our concept of what we more comfortably think of as objective reality. Our visual perception results through a complex

relationship between a physical object, light, the lense of the eye, and a series of electrical signals sent to the brain. It is arguable that the resulting impression is no less objective or subjective than the subtle impression of a passing ghost, or a dream. Indeed all of reality, whether we practice witchcraft or not, seems to comply to some extent with what we expect from it. What we experience in turn reinforces those things we believe and expect. This is something with which our modern rationalist, with all their active disbelief, might agree with.

The words on this page also gain their meaning through a similar process of interpretation in the mind of the reader (i.e. you). In this sense they are a form of enchantment. Indeed the written word has always been considered as magical.

For the sake of context I shall say a little about those written works which have had the greatest influence on the traditions of witchcraft and magick generally. Where possible the student is advised to seek out copies of these works, although some are usually only available to academics of high standing. An extremely valuable and easily available published text to aid in the study of the traditional grimoire is Arthur Edward Waite's monumental text currently available as The Wordsworth Book of Spells (ISBN 1-85326-355-9).

The Picatrix

This book was originally of Arabic origin, being translated into European languages around the thiteenth century. It was amongst the most commonly owned by the cunning men and witches of the United Kingdom. It deals less with devils and demons, and more with astrology and the making of talismata. The general attitude of the work is one of piety, and the secrets it contains are far more sacred than diabolist. Much of its information, however, later becomes reproduced in those works that might more properly be described as necromancy. It had considerable influence upon the traditions of witchcraft and magick transmitted through the classical grimoire.

The Bible

Although some readers may be a little surprised and possibly even upset to see the 'Good Book' included in a list of grimoire, its use as a source of witchcraft has a long tradition. In particular the Psalms, hand copied, torn out, or recited aloud, have been used in many spells throughout the ages. Examples of the use of Psalms and other biblical passages apear in the other grimoires, such as the Key of Solomon and the Method of Honorius.

In those traditions where the worship of the goddess has continued, often under the guise of the three Marys, the Song of Solomon has particular importance.

Whilst modern witches are lucky enough to have all the theological history books at their disposal, and may thus consider themselves to have 'rediscovered' their pagan heritage, the witches of the Middle Ages had only those few snippets that were preserved in their lineage. Much of their theology was thus Christian and drawn from the Bible, even if interpreted in ways that the Church would strongly have disapproved of. Many modern practitioners have not even read this work, whilst in the past we were all made once a week and by law to listen to vast passages of it recited by their priests.

Various spells use the Bible as a ritual object in its own right. Bibliomancy is a form of divination through which a pin is stuck at random into a page of the Bible, and the result interpreted as the answer to whatever question. An alternative is to tie the Bible up in a garter, which is held at the top by the ring. This is then used like a pendulum, with answers being interpreted from the direction that the Bible begins to turn.

The Book of Enoch

The greatest single source of angelology as recognised in orthodox Christianity and the tradition of goety are the three Chronicles of Enoch. Although declared apocryphal and thus destroyed by the Church these were most influential from around the 13th Century onwards. A full version only appeared around the 18th Century when an original copy was discovered which had been preserved by the Ethiopia Church. According to this text Enoch had been chosen by the Lord as a writer of

Truth. In an early passage of the Chronicles, he is transmuted into angelic form and allowed to visit Heaven, receiving his information first hand.

> 'Then the Lord said to Micha-el: "Go and strip Enoch of his own clothes; anoint him with oil, and dress him like ourselves" and Micha-el did as he was told. He stripped me of my clothes, and rubbed me over with a wonderful oil like dew; with the scent of myrrh; which shone like a sunbeam. And I looked at myself, and I was like one of the others; there was no difference and all my fear and trembling left me.'

Dr. John Dee was obsessed by the idea of the Book of Enoch, but was unable to obtain a copy. His system of 'Enochian' magick was created when he and Edward Kelly were attempting to divine its contents.

Clavicula Solomonis

Otherwise known as the Key of Solomon the King. The first English translation of this theurgic text was made in 1889, although the British Museum possess a Greek version dated 1100-1200 e.v. It is known to have existed since the first century, and is an important text in the study of Kaballa. In 1310 the Pope Innocent VI ordered all copies destroyed, and a similar order was made in 1559. In the 17th century, thanks to the new technology of the printing press, this work and its companion The Lesser Key became best sellers.

Lesser Key of Solomon (The Goetia)

This work is also attributed to the legendary King Solomon, giving details of the seventy two devils that were bound to his command, as well as to how the reader may summon and command them. It forms the blueprint upon which most other grimoire are copied.

It is mentioned by the Venetian Inquisition, when found in a witch's possession.

Grimoire of Honorius

Widely circulated in the 17th century, first published some time between 1629 and 1670. Attributed to Pope Honorius, the text is highly Christianised and contains aspects of Kabalist lore. It was described by Eliphas Levi, in Key of the Great Mysteries, as 'a veritable monument of human perversity'. This is of the classical Catholic variety, requiring that the sorcerer be also an ordained priest, or has the aid of one. Levi further claims that the instruction to 'sacrifice a live kid' is an instruction to sacrifice a human child, as opposed to a male goat as most have presumed. It is just possible that Levi was continuing, with this claim, the symbolic tradition that obscures the sexual elements of goetic sorceries. Instructions to 'sacrifice children' may in fact be instruction to the magical use of non-procreative sex, classically either masturbatory, homosexual, or during the menstrual cycle of the sorceress.

Although these are perversions of Catholic theology and ritual, they are not inversions in the satanic sense. The power of God, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, the Archangels, Thrones, Dominations, Powers, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists are called upon to bully the demonic forces into submission to the will of the summoner. The danger of the heresy here is that it is not seen as at all incongruous that a holy man might also be conversing with the powers of darkness, even if it is to subordinate them.

The Book of Abra-Melin

Sometimes called the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage, the text claims to have been written by a Jewish magician in Wursburg for his son in 1458. It is considered more likely to date from the 18th century, the oldest known version being in French and preserved in La Bibliotéque de L'Arsenal, Paris. The art described within is called the Attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, which later became the principal goal of the thelemic current, as inspired by Crowley.

True Black Magick

This 18th century grimoire follows the basic formula of the Key of Solomon. It deals primarily with acts of malice and spite.

The Fourth Book of Agrippa

This text has for centuries remained a favourite amongst country wizards. However, the claim that its author Cornelius Agrippa is generally accepted as spurious. Agrippa did write and publish, however, and his works include On the Vanity of the Sciences, 1530. In this he attacked the wisdom of the sciences exoteric and occult, expounding the view that these schools simply served to show how little about the world we really know. For this he was jailed for one year on a charge of heresy. Upon his release, he produced a trilogy of books On Occult Philosophy, completely contradicting the opinions he wrote of previously. The fourth assumes to conclude this series.

Grand Grimoire

French, dated perhaps from around the 17th century, with many spurious forgeries bearing the same name. It is in two parts, the first dealing with the evocation of Lucifuge Rofocale by means of the blasting rod (wand), the second dealing exclusively in the making of pacts. It is the most classical of all grimoire, and that most likely to have inspired the story of Faust.

The Black Pullet

Rome, probably late 18th century. Also called the Screech Owl, or Treasure of the Old man of the Pyramids. Places particular emphasis on talismanic magick, and includes some great designs for occult jewellery.

The Heptemeron

Known otherwise as *Magical Elements*, attributed to Peter de Abano, dates probably from around the fifteenth century. It is thus not the work of the author claimed, who died in 1250. The work contains detailed and straight-forward instructions by which spirits may be summoned and

drawn into communication, and detailed concourse upon the subjects of geomancy and astrology. Its two major parts are firstly concerned with summoning the Angels of Air, who are bullied and treated as the demons in any other classical grimoire, and a sequence of daily meditations clearly based upon the observances of the *Essenes*. The second deals purely with the summoning of various spirits, each with their own 'specialities' not unlike the *Goetia*.

Reginald Scot's 'Discoverie of Witchcraft'

The first edition of this work was published in 1584. According to historians, it was amongst those most commonly found upon the bookshelves of practising witches and cunning folk. It is particularly ironic that Scot's intent was a debunking of magick and witchcraft generally, revealing the secrets of stage conjuring employed by charlatans, and the absurdity of those rituals employed by the serious practitioners. In doing so, Scot provided the first English translations of the contents of classical grimoire, which had to this point largely been delivered in Latin. As such, he published the only readily accessible collection of ritual formulae available in its day. These primarily originated, according to Scot, from the works of John Cokars and 'T.S.'

These rituals were augmented and expanded upon in a third edition, 1665. What remains specifically interesting is that these rites combined 'diabolist' formula with folkloric content, so that the practitioner was provided with classically Christianised goetic style sorcery, with its planetary tables and circles of evocation, combined with phaerie lore. It is thus unsurprising that it should have become such an influential text to the practitioners of its day.

The Necronomicon

'La mayyitan ma qadirun yatabaqa sarmadi
Fa itha yaji ash-shuthath al-mautu qad yantahi'

That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And in strange aeons even death may come to die.

This grimoire has its origins in the fictional horror stories of H.P. Lovecraft, published in the 1920s. Strangely, various claims have been made that the book has been discovered. It has been published in various editions, and modern practitioners of the arts of delusion and illumination have performed successful sorceries based on these fictional ideas. It has thus become an issue of some controversy. Yet, from another perspective, we know little of the true histories of any of the classical grimoire.

What is significant is that the magick works... even if the rituals are based on complete fraud. Their formulae have been copied from the goetic, 'merely the names have been changed'. The symbol system of the Cthulhu Mythos, spliced with these basic techniques of sorcery, yields results. Something very strange has happened here, illustrating a basic principal of the cunning; just because a belief brings results in the objective world, does not necessitate the objectivity of that belief.

The key to this mystery may lie in the sorcerers' arte of dreaming. Aside from theories as to the source of the Necronomicon in a document of esoteric Freemasonry owned by his father, Lovecraft was himself a very strange man. The ideas he expressed as fiction originated in the nightmares by which he was plagued.

Through dreaming, fiction, speculation, and magick, this infamous grimoire has earthed itself. This is purely in keeping with the goetic tradition, and many sorcerers strive to manifest material by similar means. The spirits speak to us through our dreaming minds, this they have done from the beginning. Such have been the origins of the deepest, most profound initiations.

Chapter 38
FAMILIARS

The term familiar is commonly used to mean the animal spirit that is in service to a witch. During the persecution this spirit was considered to be an imp or demon given to the witch in return to their allegiance to the Devil. According to many of the ancients grimoires, familiars might also be granted by any of the hierarchy of Hell. The idea of a personal spirit, a servant in animal or heraldic form, was common everywhere in the sixteenth century, especially in Germany.

Familiars are mentioned several times in the Bible. In 2 Chronicles 33:6 we learn that Ma-nas-she, having erected temples and altars to the Ba-a-lim (Baal), '..observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards:'. There is a warning in Isaiah 9:19 against those that tell us to 'Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter'. In 1 Samuel 28:7 of the Old Testament Saul instructs his servants, having failed to find the answers he sought from his court prophet and lot throwing; 'Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her.' The woman his servants found was the unnamed Witch of Endor, who complains to him that Saul 'hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land : wherefore thou layest a snare for my life, to cause me to die ?'.

They are mentioned again in the Bible in Jeremiah 20:10. Here it is a prophet of God that possess familiar spirits. When being mocked for prophesying he replies; '...All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventures he will be enticed...'

What appears most commonly in the United Kingdom is the familiar in domestic animal form, especially in the Eastern Counties. Amongst the most famous of these are the familiars of Elizabeth Clarke, tried by Hopkins in Chelmsford, Essex, in 1566. They were two things like dogs, called Jarmara and Vinegar Tom, a white kitten called Holt, a black rabbit called Sack and Sugar, and a polecat called Newes. She named also the familiars of the other coven members as Elemanzer, Pyewacket, Peckin the Crown, Grizzel Greedigut, &c., 'which no mortal could invent.'

The forms taken by familiars covered most of the known and rarer domestic animals, such as ferrets, rats, cockerels, even butterflies and wasps. Naturally, cats and dogs appeared commonly. Toads were often mentioned also, presumably for their connection with various kinds of poison, particularly the 'many clawed toad' that is amanita muscaria, as well as the Toad Witch traditions. In Germanic, as in most Romany tongues, the word for toad and for devil are the same. Witches and toads are traditionally 'aligned, and not that wide.'

The domestic familiar of the persecution had a variety of names; imp, fury, little master, maumet, nigget, bid, or one of the terms of endearment equally reserved for pets. Amongst the first thing that Hopkins and his crew would look for as evidence against a witch were the teats or 'bigges' upon a witch's body, from which the familiar would feed. No doubt these were often common blemishes, or indeed extra teats which are far more common on women than many suspect. It does not seem unlikely, however, that the genuine initiates did indeed bear some kind of mark such as a tattoo or brand as a sign of the allegiance to the Old Ways. The transcripts of the witch trials make particularly horrible reading, and the material dealing with the torture and confessions concerning the receiving of familiars amongst the worst.

The presence of 'sacred house animals' was once quite common across Europe. A certain number of rural folk have had, and will always have,

a natural affinity with animals that to others might seem strange and uncanny. Even in the modern day, there are farms that keep an animal, such as a snake, for the simple reason that it is considered good luck.

There is another pre-Christian origin to the belief in familiar spirits, which is related to the Norse idea of the fetch, also called the falgyr. This is a spirit guardian that is also a part of your self, the form of which is inherited from the fetch of your own ancestors and family. This spirit acts as the guardian of your own luck or haminga. Many hereditary witch families still remember some trace of this tradition in their beliefs concerning familiar spirits. These are considered to be inherited rather than necessarily gained through any pact made with the Horned One, with some witches having more than one animal spirit passed down to them. In the Rental of Sir Edward Moore, 1677, Margaret Ley and Widow Bridge of Liverpool confessed that; '... since the death of her mother, who died thirty years agone, and at her decease she had nothing to leave her and this widow Bridge, that were sisters, but her two spirits, and named then the eder spirit to this widow and the other spirit to her, the said Margaret Ley.'

However, those who are born outside the traditions will not consider themselves to have a personal familiar spirits at all. Consciousness itself seems to change with the ways in which we choose to describe it, and so we can say that these people have lost their animal spirits and need to regain connection with them.

The form or forms that one's own personal familiar may take, if not already known to the witch, may be divined through dream or during ritual. An elemental may be created according to the above method, whose task or 'doom' it is to reveal the forms of one's familiar spirits. To communicate freely with one's fetch is to gain mastery over one's own magical power, because the fetch is the carrier of this power.

The witch may find that they have a strange affinity with some kinds of animal, the qualities of which they admire in some way. My own family all seem to be 'animal people', domestic and wild creatures tending to be less afraid and more friendly towards us than with other humans. Perhaps our family have some honour and virtue after all, since we are told in the Eddas that the fetch flees the wicked.

A SPELL TO DIVINE THE FAMILIAR FORMS

From my Magical Diary, 7/1/93

The following formula was created by my spirits;

An ink is made, from the black of the flame of a white candle, from the urine of a day without food, from a little blood from the right thumb, and from Gum Arabic.

Place this in a bowl in the centre of the circle. Seat yourself beside it.

Take a brush, with which to inscribe the automatia. This brush is to be marked with the words of your Will. Place before you a parchment suitable for your words and images on which to manifest. This shall be of the colour red. Say then aloud these words;

'Spirits of my mind, of the depths of dream, this is my Will;
To depict your forms, to spell out your names,
To divine the sigils that embody your secret selves.
Come! Give me your forms!
Through this hand, empty and yet holding this brush,
I shall depict them!'

These words shall be addressed to the bowl containing the ink.

Let the voice sing and speak as it will, and the hand draw as it will.

Let the mind be singular in the harmony of its song. The hand shall dance to this song. This dance shall be the manifestation in movement, that the secrets may be told in lines.

The forms of the spirits shall dance also, within the eye and before the I.

Observe.

Nathaniel J Harris

Chapter 39
THE ARTE OF INVOCATION

Central to many forms of witchcraft worldwide are the rites of invocation, where the sorcerer enters into trance and invites the spirits to possess them. Such is the purpose of rituals such as Drawing Down the Moon, detailed in other books on the subject of the craft, and of the Call of The Horned God. The sexual mysteries celebrated within the Great Rite would have no real significance without such phenomena.

The gods exist at the roots of human consciousness, at the deepest levels of mind. Possession occurs when they choose to 'rise up' and envelop the medium, displacing their own consciousness, directing them and gaining control of their body. Rites of possession were common amongst the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians, with much evidence suggesting that the earliest forms of kabalist magick were directed toward these phenomena. The Delphic Oracles of ancient Greece are also manifestations of possession phenomena, as are various rites of Hindu and Buddhist tantra still practiced in the Orient today, in the voodoo of Africa and Haiti, as it is also common to all tribes people from Australasia to America. The Norse pagans practiced the 'shamanic' trance of seiðr, and those records, however exaggerated, of the European witchcraft cults also speak of possession in many forms. Even the early Christians had their moments; consider St.Paul's experience on the

road to Damascus, Corinthians. 'Talking in tongues' has never lost its popularity with the wilder strains of their religion.

The experience of possession is an extremely rare one for most of us living in the twenty-first century western world. The act of letting go and allowing the normal personality to be displaced by something 'other' is an extremely difficult and frightening experience. It is entirely inconsistent with our normal drives to stay in control. The idea of surrendering to passions of any kind is neither socially acceptable nor sanctioned. Our expectations as to how to behave have been built up over a lifetime, and even within the specially constructed space of magical ritual may rarely be easily shed. Even with liberal doses of sacrament, success cannot be assured.

If this were not enough in itself orthodox Christianity, by which most of us are influenced even if we were not brought up into its fold, associates all possession phenomena with devils and demons. The forces of light are always distant, and it is only the forces of darkness that seek to speak and act through us directly.

Yet the phenomena is much wider than many would first assume, and has in fact been amongst the most popular forms of communion with the spirits practiced throughout human history. The purposes of such rites include oracular utterance, receiving of advice from the spirits, the delivering of spells whether they be boons or curses, illumination and personal empowerment, the charging of amulets and magical weapons, to gain mastery over lesser spirits, or to give force and form to bud-wills. Possession in itself is a cathartic experience, providing creative inspiration and enhanced magical ability through negation of personal inhibitions.

To an outsider the bizarre behaviour displayed during possession may seem quite childish. To all appearances some kind of spontaneous improvised role-play is taking place, with the actors being so totally immersed in their roles that they have forgotten who they really are. It seems that permission to act in this way is sanctioned by the indulgence of the officiating witch, the coven, and any other audience. As an example of this effect, consider the following simple experiment;

Whilst you are entirely on your own, play as a child and pretend to be a bird. Flap your arms as if they were wings and fly around the house, making the appropriate sounds. Try to immerse yourself utterly in being a bird, without allowing your normal self to 'cut in' and direct your behaviour in any way. See if you can keep this up for a full ten minutes.

The second part of the experiment is to play exactly the same game in the company of friends, who are also to fly around and interact with each other as birds. Try and keep this up for a full ten minutes. The most likely result is that in the initial experiment there will be a burst of enthusiasm, after which you will simply feel a bit silly and get bored. It is improbable that you will continue for the full ten minutes.

In contrast the second part of the experiment is likely to start slowly, taking a little time before everyone involved gets over the immediate fear of looking ridiculous and start to get into the swing of things. After a while it may even be fun. It may even become socially unacceptable to stop playing the game and to start acting like a normal human being again. There may be points where you start to believe that you really have turned into a bird, and think and feel as a bird would. It is not at all unlikely that the game should extend beyond the suggested ten minutes, and may easily continue for much longer.

This is not to say that all possession and spirit phenomena is mere 'make believe', for it has the addition of trance and magical intent. Nor is it necessary to hold any kind of religious conviction as such. Unwavering belief in the gods may only occur at the moment of magical 'gnosis', yet this is enough. I was once asked by a Baron of the Cemetery whether I believed in him, all I could truthfully and honestly reply was that I did right then. This was the reply he was looking for.

The invocatory rites of the solo witch rely on this sudden burst of enthusiasm, with self identification being powerful but fleeting. It should be understood that the sustained possession experience is rarely a private affair between one person and a spirit, but most easily arises in a coven or group through the interaction of all present, and is context derived. The effect of being amongst other people allows for the dominant persona (ego) to be more effectively shed. Dancing, singing, chanting, drumming, flashing lights, intoxication, incantations, prayer

and sacrifice, paraphernalia, costume and props all build toward altered states of consciousness and increased suggestibility, attracting the attention of the gods and helping to ensure that everyone involved is swept up by the spirit of the ritual.

Magical possession may come as an unwanted 'gift', an accident of birth. Yet it is also a skill that may be nurtured and developed over time. A medium's first experiences may have the furthest reaching effects, acting as a powerful agent of change within their life. It may occur gradually, or it may happen spontaneously and suddenly. The result may be anything from an experience of 'passing through', where the spirits seem to be guiding the medium's actions yet the normal mind is still in control, to total possession, where normal consciousness is entirely eclipsed. In some cases this may be agonisingly painful, as the will of the spirit battles with the psychic and physical resistance of the witch. At other times the experience may come as a rush of ecstasy, in the true and original sense of the word.

The formulae by which invocation may be achieved are many. The simplest is to compose a ritual in three stages of progressive self identification. The first stage is to make declarations concerning the nature and mythology of the deity in the third person. This usually takes the form of a story with the deity as a central character. The second stage is to make declarations concerning the abilities and powers of the deity in the second person, and should be written in the form of a prayer flattering to the spirit, bidding them to enter the circle, and stating the magical act requested of them. The third and final stage is performed in the first person, the witch identifying themself with the deity as wholly as possible. The whole creates a kind of ritual drama, to be enacted by the entire coven, progressively focussing upon the priest or priestess and identifying them with some specific spirit.

A less controlled, but sometimes more effective attitude to possession, is for the medium to open themselves up in trust. In this sense, the witch is called by the spirits, and not the other way around. So called 'passive mediumship' is often scorned by the more ceremonially inclined magicians. It is true to say that in many ways it is more dangerous, because all manner of vampiric or delusional forces may come to the medium. However, most traditions that approach possession in these terms teach

that the medium must first strike up a relationship with some kind of guide, familiar, or 'patron demon'. The whole process then becomes anything but hit or miss.

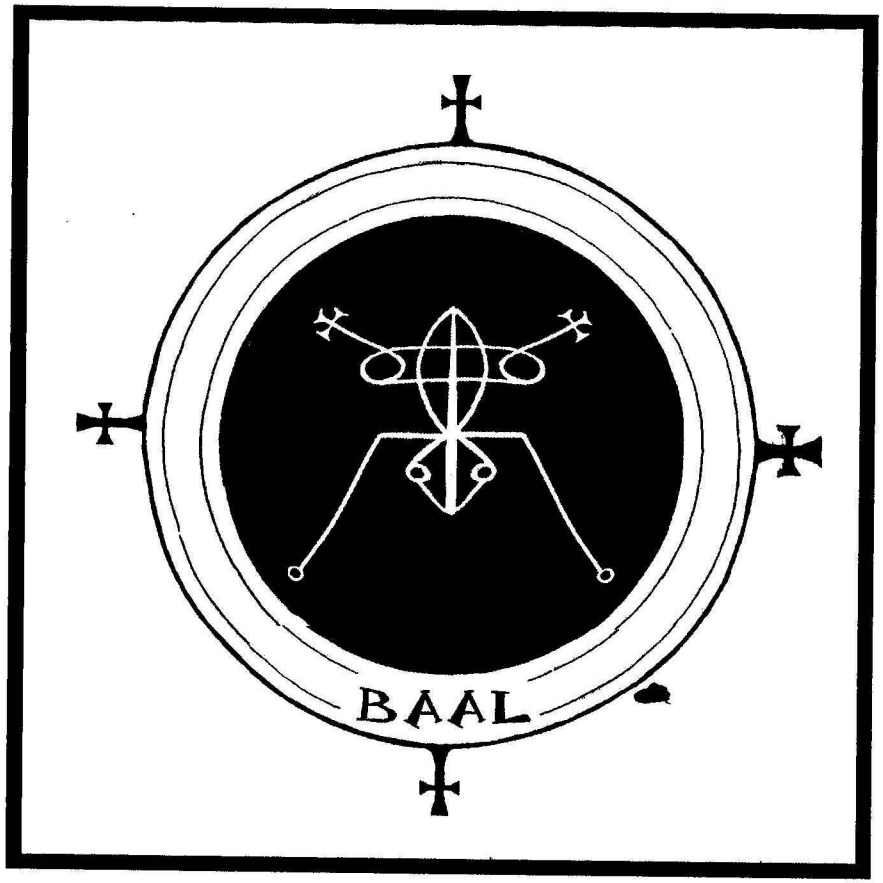
The natural resistence between ego and spirit provides the key to the mixed blessing of the medium's power. Although there must be the ability to finally submit, the longer one fights of the onset of possession the deeper it becomes. It is a little like being brought close to the point of orgasm again and again and then finally released. The result is far more powerful than if orgasm were hurried and lusted after. Similiar parallels may be found in the psychedelic experience, where a dose has been administered large enough to dissolve the boundaries of the ego. The longer this is fought off the more intense the psychic pressure becomes, and the more incredible the eventual sensations of 'letting go'. These two parallels are not coincidental. The more experience and discipline the celebrant has to draw upon, the more effective the results.

As with all works of witchcraft a well-defined context is essential, and this should be clearly understood by all involved. If expectations conflict too heavily the intended results are unlikely to be achieved. It seems essential to possession work that the medium has at least some knowledge shared with the spirit 'riding' them, and it is extremely unlikely that manifestation will occur through a medium who is entirely unprepared. This becomes especially relevant in working with spirits who possess specialist knowledge. Even in the most powerful rituals and societies it would be entirely unusual, say, for Twisto to possess a witch who has no knowledge of the runes, or for Brigid to possess a witch with no poetic flair or knowledge of her myth cycles. Although it is occasionally possible for a medium to be taken by spirits of which we know absolutely nothing, such a possession is unlikely to be sustained for long, and will be harder to control. Occasionally new spirits may be discovered in such a manner, with which the medium and kin may choose to work. For the inexperienced, however, opening the psyche to completely unknown forces is extremely dangerous.

It may be that once a spirit has gained possession of a witch that it becomes reluctant to leave. It is not uncommon for a medium to remain under the influence of a spirit for some time after the ritual has been concluded. Relating the experience to the accumulation of tension, we

can understand how the problem may be dealt with. Exhaustion and collapse are their own natural forms of exorcism, although the stamina of the possessed are often well beyond the normal.

Should the spirit absolutely refuse to leave, the medium may be captured and lustrations of cold water administered to rouse their mundane consciousness. Once the spirit appears to have left, the medium should be asked for their mundane name, and for details such as their age and address, to help remind them of who they are and ensure that the spirit has actually gone. If required, further rituals of banishment and exorcism may be performed by the officiating priest/ess.



Chapter 40
ATAVISTIC SORCERY

In my family it is not the black sheep who stand out, but the white lambs. During my teenage years, as my 'blood' reawakened, I was plagued by a Christian great aunt intent on saving my soul. Family lore has it that she converted out of fear for her own talents, especially for malefica, which certainly seem to be quite awesome despite her denial. She would always say to me, "God bless you!" in a most patronising tone. I would reply in kind, and she would ask "Yes, but which God?", to which I would answer "Yes, that's right."

The rites of Drawing Down the Moon tend to be a receptive appreciation of the mysteries, where we learn of our place in it all and how magick works. It is quite literally an act of divination, of asking advice of the divine. The Call of the Horned One, on the other hand, is an aggressive act of sorcery to force and direct the flow of Wyrd. It has been rarely written of in the published books of witchcraft, and thus rarely performed in most revivalist circles.

The beast god of our ancestors has many names, the most commonly known being its Christianised form as Lucifer, the Devil. It existed in ancient times, however, and its nature has been perverted by their theology. His earliest known representation is seen painted on a cave wall within a system of caves deep beneath the Pyreneés. The Sorcerer of Trois Freres is a late Paleolithic representation of an antlered man

with owl like eyes, a wolf like tail, and a high and proud phallus. His most commonly known signs are the pentagram reversed, and the mano cernuto horned salute made with the forefinger and index fingers raised on the left hand.

The anthropomorphic witches' god has survived since the dawn of magick. Whilst the many names and faces of the gods of one culture defeated and incorporated another, its image remained beneath them all; a common denominator in the fertility theme that lies at the roots of the witchcraft cult. Amongst its names we know Old Chiel, Cernunnos, Lugh, Crom Dubh, Herne, The Phairie King, Oberon, Azazel, Azael, Azoth, Jack-o-the-Green, Spring-Heeled-Jack, Gwydion, Robin, The Lord of the Hunt, The Lord of Misrule, Ooser, Mamilion, Dumus, Hu, Barabbon, Barabbas, Janus, Janecot, Tubal-Cain, Skratte aka Old Scatch aka Old Horny, Old Nick, Old Poker or just The Old One. In Greece he is Pan, Priapus, Dionysos, in Africa and Haiti Exu-Elegbara, the Norse knew him as Odin/Loki, the Egyptians knew him as ass-headed Set and as the goat of Mendes, the Western Mysteries representing it as the hermaphroditic and goat headed Baphomet. He is the 'great grey shape that makes men shiver', the dark man of the witches, and the embodiment of the power of sorcery.

He exists at the intersection between the worlds, the god at the crossroads. Often it is represented as having two faces, such as in its form of Dianus, Janus, or Janecot. This second face is often upon its rear, the costumed priest wearing two masks, one on his face and one hidden beneath his tail. It is possible that the famed Devil's Kiss or oscullum infame of the medieval sabbat was in fact given to this second face.

There are those who conjecture from the trials of the persecution that the costume would often incorporate an artificial phallus, as is employed in various Oriental sects. This was carved from stone or bone, which would explain its coldness. This phallus was likely to have been hollow, so that spells could be placed within it for empowerment by the sexual servicing of the coven. It is usually described as 'cold'.

Possession by the witch god is to allow its power to take control of the medium's body. It is not an abstract symbol or a transcendental ideal, but a condition of consciousness achieved through emulation. All

communication to and by the possessed witch is a communication with the deepest realms of mind, those realms that are the keys of sorcery. Through identifying the medium with the form and names of the beast gods, we bypass the censor of the rational mind.

It is 'as if' whilst we reach back to our subconscious selves, the dark man of the witches reaches upward to us in reply from the collective unconscious. In an alchemical sense, our own spirits draw down the crown of Heaven from above our heads, and the dark force of the Devil reaches upwards from Hell itself so that the two are united within us.

In the witchcraft traditions of Essex they tell of a time when people and beasts were inseperable. The distinction between us was ill defined, we were as much subject to our instincts and drives as any of the beasts of forest and field. It was, and remains, an accepted part of these traditions that witches and sorcerers practice the art of 'shape shifting', possessing the ability to change into animal form. This is common to witchcraft across Europe.

Even if only a metaphor, or the description of drug induced experience, such practices provided a way in which we could commune with the world around us for mystical and magical ends. Then, of course, the Church came along and tore the beast from within the witch through a regime of torture and murder, enforcing a rather different world view where humanity is seen as 'holier' than the beasts. They taught us to 'rise above' our instinctual natures, indeed to feel shame and guilt for them. The Lord of the Forest they redefined as the enemy of all that is good. Hell itself is 'surrounded by a very thick woods' as one eleventh century poem puts it, and Dante's vision of the inferno included la dolorosa selva, a similarly dense forest. As the Arcadian highlands harboured the last dim memories of the Old Ways in ancient Greece, so did the uncleared forests of medieval Europe.

These same anthropomorphic forms may be seen in early mythologies the world over, from the animal aspects of the Crete, to the beast headed gods of ancient Egypt, the totem forms of native America, the were-wolves of Europe, the loup-garou sorcerers of Haiti, in the abilities of shape shifting attributed to Odin and Loki, in our own traditional folk tales, and songs such as the Coal Blacksmith, Tamlin, Taliesin, etc. etc.

Since the decline of Christianity and Darwin's theory of evolution, we can perhaps recognise that these 'primitive' beliefs embody a sophisticated understanding of our own deeper nature.

Humanity can indeed take its ancestry back to a time when we were all running around on four legs; man and beast are indeed one family. Our forebears were aware of this even if the later theologies flatly denied it. The difference between the witch lore and modern science is that rather than see evolution as 'progress', we consider that animals are closer to the source of all creation, and are thus more divine.

Our evolutionary history may be observed in the development of the human foetus, with premature children sometimes retaining their tails and bodies of fur. The human brain has its origins in the basic mammalian brain; its deeper structure is therefore common to all mammals. Regressing through our own consciousness, through the different branches of the evolutionary family tree, we can see that we hold the blueprint for all creation, right back to our own cells which reflect the earliest and most basic forms of life. Through exploration of the deeper mind we can make contact with their Wyrd, and to conditions of gnosis applicable to acts of magick.

Since these deeper strata of consciousness are common to us all, we are not contacting merely our own subconscious, but the 'collective unconscious' or 'egregore' of all that lives upon this planet. Sorcery performed under such a possession will therefore be far more powerful than the lesser trances of ceremonial magicians, or more intellectually based formulae. As a practice it forms the polar opposite of those rites that seek to transcend human nature and deny it. Rather, it is a descent into our own being and an indulgence of all that the Christianised society has learnt to fear. Thus to some, the names of Satan and Devil may be as relevant as any of its other names, even if they are witches who do not ally themselves with the practices and philosophy of Satanism, and gain no thrill from adolescent acts of pointless blasphemy.

Witches from the Middle Ages onwards have identified their own god with the Evil One of Christian theology, because their god accepted this name. Thus it has been called Satan, which means 'the opposer', as it has taken the name Old Nick, Lucifer, Baal, Beezlebub, Asmodeus,

Abaddon, and The Lord of Darkness – a title already accepted in pre christian times. Indeed, this can be seen in many of the old grimoire, for example the Icelandic Galdrbok, where the names of the infernal ones are called upon amongst those of the old pagan gods. The Church, having defined the old gods as devils, inspired the response of the devils being proclaimed as gods. There is plenty of historical evidence that suggests that the rites of witchcraft incorporated theological parody, which has always been the stock in trade of the peasant theatre. Many festivals centred upon the principle of inversion, with mock mayors and black masses aplenty. Those who claim that witches have never recognised the Devil are being historically selective, which may be politically shrewd but is nevertheless inaccurate. This has very little, if anything, to do with the likes of Anton LaVey and his circus show, although it does validate to some degree his stance as 'Satanic Witch'.

I present here a ritual formulae I have used to achieve possession by the Horned One, which may be performed by the solo witch to create a brief charge, or aided and in service to the coven to produce more prolonged possession. If other coveners are present, it is usual and traditional for a Hand Maiden to aid in directing the activities of the celebrants, acting as intermediary between the spirit and the group.

The Call of The Horned One is best performed at night time, out in the wilds, as far from the ears and eyes of the profane as is possible. Its purpose is to consecrate the sacrament and open the way to the spirit realms. The power raised may be directed by the group toward all manner of ends, such as the casting of a spell, for oracular divination, to empower a bud-will, or purely as a celebration of the mysteries. If performed solo, this is more commonly for the purpose of self empowerment and spell casting. The witches may be naked, or if clothed be it in robes of black, with faces concealed by bestial masks.

It is the essential intent behind this ritual that is timeless and traditional, rather than the specific structure and wording.

Chapter 41
THE CALL OF THE HORNED ONE

The circle are gathered, somewhere away from the eyes of others. The magister, who is to act as a medium for the spirit to possess, stands at the centre brandishing a blade or wand. All are dressed in black and dark forest colours, so they may blend into the night instantly if discovered, their faces concealed behind spirit masks. The priestess as mother or handmaiden as lover stands amongst the circle, immediately facing the magi. Those officers who are responsible for summoning the quarters are also in their positions, ready to begin their tasks upon the bidding of the priestess. The drummers and musicians are poised.

Whilst the officers are summoning, the magi draws upon the floor before him the sign of the pentagram. Upon completion of all these tasks, the priestess then makes this proclamation;

'Horned One, we summon you!
Our medium is prepared,
And I, your (Priestess/Handmaiden), am ready.
By the secret names of the witches,
We call you!
Azarak and Zomelak!
Come! Come! Come!'

The drums begin a steady beat. The magi then traces over the form of the pentagram with his blade. He then steps forward to stand at its centre. Intoning with the concentrated force of his will, he gives the call. (This charge was written of by Major C. Fuller, in an article concerning witchcraft published by Spare in his periodical Form, 1929. It is quite specifically described as a call to summon the Devil. Gerald Gardner plaguerised it as a part of the Witches' Rune, presented in the Book of Shadows).

'Eko! Eko! Azarak
Eko! Eko! Zomelak
Zod-ru-kod e zod ru koo
Zon-ru-koz e-Goo-ru-mu!'

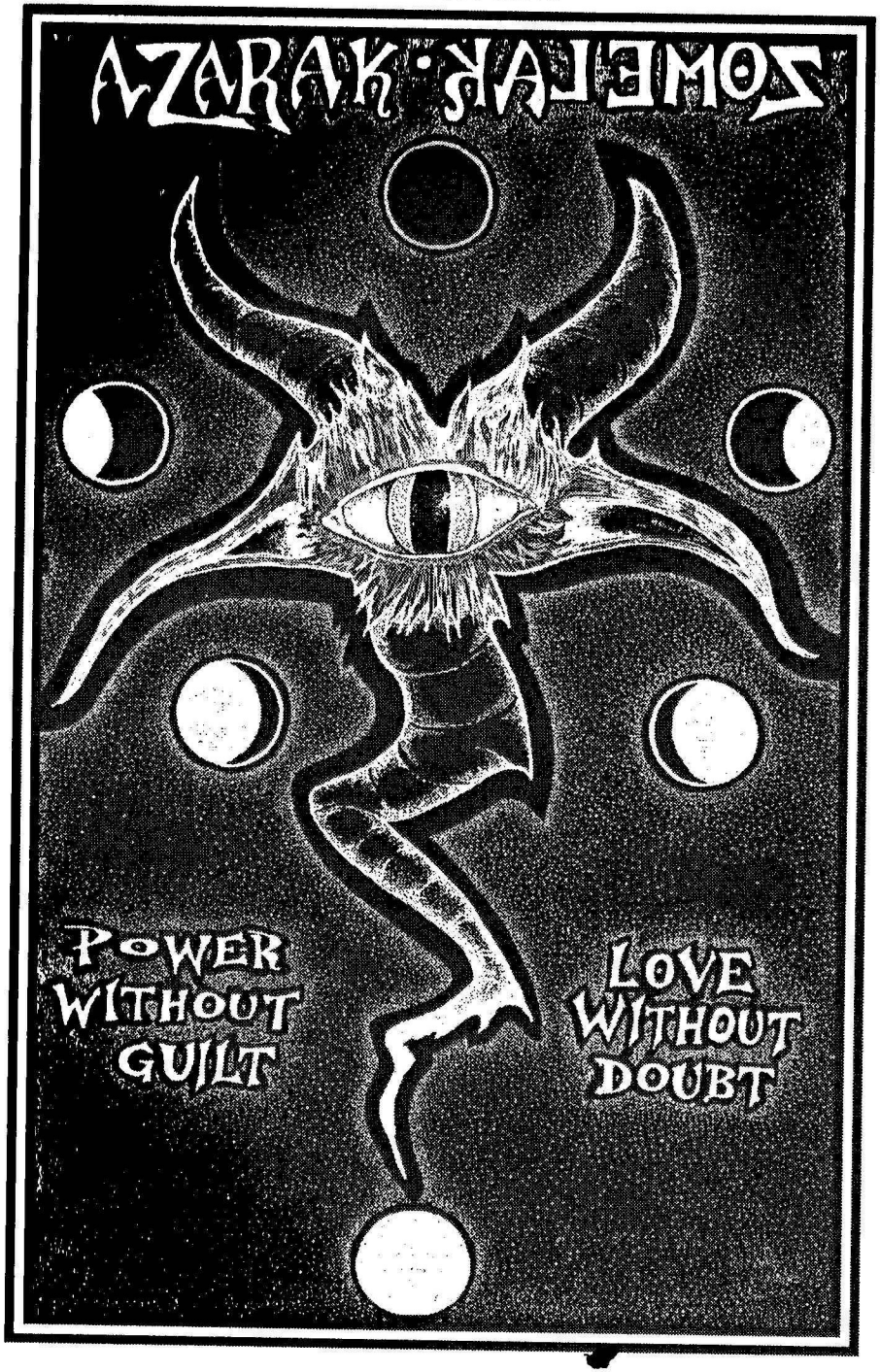
The priestess then salutes the magi with the mano cornuto, who replies similarly. Upon her signal, the circle begins to circumambulate, saluting the medium also. The magi continues the conjuration as above, entering into trance. As they dance, all chant the names of the god. Steadily the drums and chanting intensify, and the movement around the circle becomes faster. The chanting becomes more freeform as the energy within the circle is raised, with celebrants also offering any incantations or songs known to them that will aid the summoning.

This continues until the magi attains the possession trance, fed by the power of the circle. The conjuration is concluded with the intoning of;

'Eo! Eo! Oo... Oo... Oo...!'

The spirit signals its presence, the circle becomes still and silent as its proclamation is delivered. The priestess and coven salute the Horned God with the osculum infame, a kiss delivered in this instance to the second face.

She then offers up to the god the chalice and platter, into which the magi 'earths' the possession and circle energy into the sacrament by means of his blasting rod. Alternatively, or in addition, the priestess may present the god with the material links and beseech him to cast some form of



spell, according to some request of the coven. This he may do by rune song, or by any other means. He then administers unto the coven.

The magi then collapses to the ground, allowing the spirit to leave him, whilst the priestess drinks the first portion of the wine and salutes the god. The chalice is then passed around the circle, with each celebrant drinking and saluting the god in whatever way they choose. The final draught is poured upon the ground as a gift to the spirits.

Whatever other acts of ritual to be performed are then dealt with, until finally the cardinal officers return to their places and dismiss the circle.

Chapter 42
PRIMORDIAL WOMAN

'And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded;'
Deuteronomy 17:3

The first known representations and signs of goddess worship also date from the Palaeolithic or 'Old Stone Age', with the creation of the first cult objects. Typical of these objects is the Venus of Willendorf, a powerful symbol of fertility with exaggerated belly and breasts. The pure magick of childbirth, and the source of all life, was celebrated as a feminine mystery. Women were believed to conceive by the will of the ancestors, that their spirits may return into the kindred, their natural cycles reflected in the moon. Follow the roots of any theology and you will see that this is the case, however twisted such roots have become.

In many traditions there are recognised both a Lord and Lady of the sabbat, yet exactly who this Lord and Lady are varies from one to the next. The various names and faces of the witches' goddess, like those of the witches' god, are many. Almost invariably they are lunar forces. They include the Greek triple moon of Artemis, Selene, and Noticula-Hecate, Hertha the Great Mother, Dame Harbondia, Brigid the poet sorceress, Our Lady Khaos, the Diana and Aradia of Gypsy lore, the gnostic Sophia, Mother of Matter, Mary Mother of God, Freya who taught the power of seiðr, Lilith, the first wife of Adam and the mother of Cain, or as Namaah, sister of Tubal-Cain and consort of Azazel, or even simply the Primordial Woman.

In an age where we are recovering from the tyranny of the 'One True God', it is only natural that we should see the play of the cosmic balancing act; where there is light, there too shall we find darkness, where there is man there too is woman, and where there is the power of a god, there too shall there be goddess. Witchcraft does not see deity as something above and beyond creation. Rather, it is immanent, and present in all things. Therefore, it exists in both male and female emanations. Such a world view cannot be fully expressed without the duality of male and female, for without polarisation there can be no manifestation.

The British Isles is a melting pot; a seething cauldron of cultures, but the Pictish, Celtic and pre-Celtic strands are the oldest of this land. Britain has always been a motherland to its own inhabitants, whatever the actions of its governments. Even during the grip of Christianity, at least up until the Reformation, we never truly abandoned our matriarchal goddess, venerating Mary above the holy trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. In her the worship of the mother, and of Lady May, continued. Those bards and poets who, in ages past, would have venerated their goddess, Muse, she who gives her name to music, instead wrote of Christ's mother.

The three faces of the goddess became concealed beneath a new mask, that of the three Marys present at the sacrifice of the solar principle, Jesus; the virgin, the 'dearly beloved', and the crone. Mary became the Queen of Heaven, and had many female saints by her side, such as Saint Brigid, the Christianised form of the Irish goddess. As Our Lady of Mercy, she was patroness of midwives and poisoners.

As with the ancient traditions and the rites of the esbats, she sometimes becomes identified with a mortal woman. Mary Queen of Scots' support amongst her subjects was vastly due to her name. The irony of her role in instigating the persecution reflects the nature of the witches' goddess; it is what some might call a betrayal.

Mary is also Marian, as in the maiden consort of Robin Hood, discussed earlier. A kind of unofficial goddess worship might also seen in the story of Marilyn Monroe.

More perversely, she may also be identified with the veneration of Lady Diana, an unofficial saint who shares her name with the 'Queen of Phaerie, and of Witches All' ; Diana as lunar goddess and consort to Lucifer. The events of her death also reflect the power of witches' goddess in the psyche of this land. There are rumours whispered all around that her fatal collision was directly beneath a crossroads at 'Junction 13', perhaps not so coincidentally corresponding with the number of lunar cycles in a year, and the baker's dozen.

This author is witness to the fact that in Haitian voodoo Lady Diana was soon recognised as a lwa, identified as an emanation of Ezili Freda. An altar was built to her by the crew of Ton Ton Edgar for their ritual in King's Cross, not long after the above described tragedy took place.

The cultural association of the male principle with light, rationality, sol, and order has meant that the feminine has become associated with darkness, irrationality, luna, and chaos. Her faces have and always will inspire awe, fear, and rebellion amongst her worshippers. Whatever the outward faces she shows, her manifestation is in direct contradistinction to the status-quo, and 'out of law' to what remains of the patriarchal Church and post-industrial culture. Thus, for example, in the luciferian traditions she may also be identified as Lilith- the female aspect of God's shadow.

She has been with us from the beginning. Her mysteries may not be reduced to mere matters of philosophy, comparative theology, or any fixed belief. Their power is vastly greater than any mere human 'ism'. It is an atavistic urge, expressed as a dance and revelry, a sounding of our voices, as inexplicable inspirations brought about by qualities of the moon herself. This very same behaviour is displayed by our close simian cousins the chimpanzees. Holding hands, they circle dance and wail when the moon is full. The traditions of witchcraft, like the rationalist doctrine of 'evolution', recognise that the human species has animal origins. The rites of the witches at the full of the moon are primordial in their origins. Thus, the witches' goddess is often anthropomorphic, or a shapeshifter between human and animal forms.

Chapter 43
SONGS OF THE OLD RELIGION

At the end of the rituals of the sabbat comes the party. This means drinking, eating, socialising, and also the singing of songs. And so, I shall write of these songs in bringing this Book of Cunning to its conclusion.

The traditional folk songs of the British Isles contain the threads of hidden memories. The singing of them plays a vital role in the traditional coven moot, although many of their older forms have been christianised or simply lost altogether. No academic study will ever do justice to the mysteries of song, the magick is in the hearing and the singing. Since a song cannot be learnt until it is heard, we have here a genuine oral transmission.

The casting of spells through song is ancient and traditional. Indeed, one of the original meanings of the word 'rune' was 'song'. Our own word 'warlock' may be etymologically traced to the Norse and Icelandic 'varðlokkur', meaning 'one who knows the spirit songs'. The roots of 'charm' lie in the Old English 'cyrm', meaning a hymn or coral song, and this in turn is derived from the Latin 'carmen', meaning a sacred incantation to the goddess Carmenta, inventor of the words of power. 'Enchant' came from 'incantare', meaning 'to sing over'.

For the majority of the material presented in this chapter I am entirely indebted to my mother, who is a powerful singer with memory of one hundred and one folk songs at any one time. The magick may be in the breathing and sounding, but the knowledge is also in the lyrics themselves. To those who have astral ears, let them hear, but for the others, I hope that reading will entertain you enough for the moment, until we meet in circle perhaps...

A common theme amongst many traditional songs and ballads is that of magical transformation, from human to animal. In the witch cult of England in the middle ages, it is said that the male priest was generally dominant, although there was some variation where the Queen of Phaerie had leadership. The association of the blacksmith and the Horned God is as ancient as Tubal-Cain, his blackened face still seen in the Mummer's play. He is represented in this song in both roles as a god of love, and of death. It may contain the memories of the 'chase' between the god and the female coven leader, his maiden, culminating in some form of the great rite. Also, it may be significant that the first shape change chosen by the maiden is the hare, the traditional form a witch takes to travel to the sabbat. Yet whatever form she takes, the 'black man' always catches her. Not even conversion to Christianity and regular confession can save her from her plight. There are many versions of this ditty, which may also be heard in French.

A similar song is reconstructed by Graves in The White Goddess, page 392, which follows a seasonal wheel of shapeshifting. In this, the roles are the other way around; she is in pursuit of him. They become, in turn, a hare, he a greyhound, a trout and otter lank, a bee and a swallow, a mouse and a cat. The chorus runs 'Cunning and arte he did not lack, But aye her whistle would fetch him back', perhaps a direct reference to the 'fetch' or familiar. Isobel Gowdie of Auldearne at her confession in 1662, makes a direct quote;

> ' I shall go into a hare
> With sorrow and sighing and mickle care,
> And I shall go in the Devil's name
> Aye, till I come home again.'

This lays considerable weight to the argument that such songs are an original and genuine tradition of the craft.

The Coal Black Smith

And she looked out of the window, as fair as any light,
And he looked into the window, as black as any night.
Hello, hello you coal black smith, what is your silly song?
I'd rather keep my maidenhead, that I have had so long!

(Chorus)
I'd rather die a maid, she said,
And then she said,
And be buried all in my grave, she said,
And then she said,
Than I'd have such a nasty, fusty, dusty, musty,
Coal Black Smith…

And she became a hare, a hare all on the plain,
And he became a greyhound dog, and fetched her back again.

(Chorus) I'd rather die a maid…

And she became a fly, a fly all in the air,
And he became a spider, and pulled her to his lair.

(Chorus) I'd rather die a maid…

And she became a fish, a fish all in the stream
And he became an otter brown, and fetched her home again.

(Chorus) I'd rather die a maid…

And she became a nun, a nun all hid away
And he became her priest, and he confessed
her night and day.

And she became a corpse, a corpse all in the ground,
And he became the cold grey clay, and smothered her all around.

The theme is followed also in the song *If All Those Young Men*, again with the first animal being the hare. In The White Goddess, Graves suggests there is a connection here with the early British taboo against hunting the hare, the divine punishment for this being to be cursed with the weakness of cowardice. Only on May Eve were the taboos lifted.

If All Those Young Men

If all those young men were like hares on the mountain
Then all those pretty maidens would turn hounds, go a-hunting.

If all those young men were like fish in the water
Then all those pretty maidens would soon follow after

If all those young men were like rushes a-growing
Then all those pretty maidens would get scythes go a mowing

Also coal black in colour, although presumably only her hair and eyes, is the Cruel Sister of the following song. In it, three minstrels form an instrument from the parts of a human corpse, which then possesses its own spirit and sings. That this is a common magical practice from paleolothic times onwards, reflected in the 'shamanic' practices of primitive societies we have encountered today, may or may not hold relevance to the original way that this song would have been performed.

The Cruel Sister

There lived a Lady on the North Sea shore,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
Two daughters were the babes she bore
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
While one grew bright as is the Sun,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
Coal black grew the elder one.
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
A knight came riding to that Lady's door,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
He'd travelled far for to be their wooer.
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
He courted one with gloves and rings,

(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
But loved the other before all things.
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
'Oh, sister, will you come with me?
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
"To watch the ships sailing on the sea?'
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
But when they stood on that windy shore,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
The dark girl threw her sister o'er.
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
Sometimes she sank, some times she swam,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
Crying 'Sister, give to me your hand,
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
'Oh, sister, and you'll let me live
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
'All that is mine, to you I'll give!'
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
'It's your true love that I'll have and more,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
'But you will no more come to shore!'
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
So there she floated, pale as a swan
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
The tide it bore her body on.
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
Three minstrels walking on the strand,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
They saw the maiden brought to land.
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
They made a harp of her breast bone,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
Whose voice would melt a heart of stone.
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
They took three strands of her yellow hair,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
And with them strung that harp so rare.
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
Now they were bid to her father's hall,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)

To play the harp before them all.
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
But when they laid it on the stone,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
The harp began to play alone.
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
The first string sang a doleful sound,
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
'The bride her fairer sister drowned.'
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
The second string, when this they tried
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
Sang 'Guilty is the dark haired bride.'
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)
The third string answered sweet and low
(Lay the bent to the bonnie broom)
'Now all her bitter tears must flow.'
(Fa la la, la la, la la la la la)

The song begs some strange questions. The knight travels far for to be their wooer, and makes gifts to one whilst loving the other. It is undefined as to exactly which of the two it is that he actually loves. When the dark sister murders the light, it seems to be automatically assumed that she will wed the knight in her place. It is as if they are two aspects of the same person, like Holda and Hella, Cain and Abel.

The following is a seasonal folk song of Samhain. The 'soul cake' in question is a form of sacrifice left for the ghosts that leave their graves at this time of year.

Souling Song

A soul, a soul, a soul cake
Please, good missus, a soul cake
An apple, a pear, a plum or a cherry
Any good thing to make us all merry
One for Peter, two for Paul
Three for Him who made us all

Also a seasonal song is John Barleycorn, traditionally associated with the sacrifice of the Corn King at Lammas.

John Barleycorn

There were three men come out of the west
Their fortunes for to try
And they have made a solemn vow
John Barleycorn must die (2x)

Fa la la la, it's a lovely day
Fa la la la lay o
Fa la la la, it's a lovely day
Sing fa la la la lay

They plowed him in three furrows deep
Laid clods all on his head
And they have made a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead

Well then there came a shower of rain
Which from the clouds did fall
John Barleycorn sprang up again
And so amazed them all

Well then came men with great sharp scythes
To cut him off at the knee
They bashed his head against a stone
And they used him barbarously

Well then came men with great long flails
To cut him skin from bone
The miller has used him worse than that
He ground him between two stones

The following song is the tale of a wicked curse, and how it was undone.

Willies's Lady

King Willie, he's sailed over the raging foam.
He's wooed a wife and he's brought her home.

He wooed her for her long golden hair.
His mother wrought her a mighty care.

A weary spell she's laid on her:
She'd be with child for long and many's a year.
But the child she would never bear.

And in her bower she lies in pain.
King Willie at her bed-head, he do stand.
As down his cheeks the salten tears do run.

King Willie back to his mother he did run
And he's gone there as a begging son.

Said: 'Me true love has this fine noble steed,
The like of which you ne'er did see.

'At every part of this horse's mane,
There's hanging fifty silver bells and ten.
There's hanging fifty bells and ten.

'This goodly gift, shall be your own.
If back to my own true love you'll turn again
That she might bear her baby son.'

'Of the child, she'll never lighter be
Nor from sickness will she e'r be free

'But she will die and she will turn to clay
And you will wed with another maid.'

Then, sighing, said this weary man
As back to his own true love he's torn again

'I wish my life were at an end.'

King Willie back to his mother he did run
And he's gone there as a begging son.

Said: 'Me true love has this fine golden girdle,
Set with jewels all about the middle.

'At every part of this girdles hem.
There's hanging fifty silver bells and ten.
There's hanging fifty bells and ten.

'This goodly gift, shall be your own.
If back to my own true love you'll turn again
That she might bear her baby son.'

'Oh, Of the child, she'll never lighter be
Nor from sickness will she e'r be free

'But she will die and she will turn to clay
And you will wed with another maid.'

Then, sighing, said this weary man
As back to his own true love he's torn again
'I wish my life were at an end.'

Then up and spoke his noble Queen,
And she has told King Willie of a plan
How she might bear her baby son.

She said: 'You must go get you down to the market place
And you must buy a you loaf of wax.

And you must shape it as a babe that is to nurse.
And you must make two eyes of glass.

'And ask your mother to a Christening day
And you must stand there, close as you can be
That you can hear what she do say.'

King Willie, he's gone down to the market place.

And he has bought him a loaf of wax.

And he has shaped it as a babe that is to nurse
And he has made two eyes of glass.

He asked his mother to the Christening day
And he has stood there, as close as he could be
That he might hear what she did say.

How she spoke, and how she swore
She spied the babe where no babe could be before
She spied the babe where none could be before

Says: 'Who was it, who undid the nine witch knots,
Braided in amongst this lady's locks.

'And who was it took out the combs of care,
Braided in amongst this lady's hair.

'And who was it slew the master kid
That ran and slept all beneath this lady's bed
That ran and slept all beneath her bed.

'And who was it unlaced her left shoe
And who was it that let her lighter be
That she might bear her baby boy.'

And it was Willie who undid the nine witch knots
Braided in amongst this lady's locks.

And it was Willie who took out the combs of care,
Braided in amongst this lady's hair.

And it was Willie the master kid did slay
And it was Willie who unlaced her left foot shoe
And he has let her lighter be.

And she has born of a baby son
And greater the blessings that be them upon
And greater the blessings them upon

ADDENDUM: THE WITCH COUNTRY

There has been a lot of interest of late in the history of witchcraft in the Eastern Counties; Cambridge, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. Since this is where I am 'coming from', so to speak, it might prove helpful to write a little about this subject. It is true to say that many folks hereabouts still practice the 'Old Ways' in one form or another. I know of a few people that have had witchcraft passed through the family, or at least the odd bit of folk magick. We have our fair share of famous sorcerers here, and I myself was introduced to witchcraft both through my own family, and through involvement with others of a similar background. Not all such people make open claims, however. The true history of witchcraft in East Anglia is not documented, and such claims are often not easy to back up.

Some brief notes on that history which has been documented concerning the actual practitioners themselves might prove instructive. We have, of course, the famous witch trials of Mathew Hopkins, and many lurid accounts exist from the days of the persecution. However, I shall limit my accounts to a few of the better known witches and cunning folk who have gained their reputation since then. Most of those accounted for here lived around the 19th century.

The most famous and controversial has to be Old George Pickingill, the witch magister of Canewdon, Essex. Legend states that so long as the

tower of the church there stands, there will be seven witches in Canewdon. There is the ghost of a headless witch who occasionally materialises thereabouts, who drifts along the river. It is said that anybody who meets her is whirled into the air and deposited in the nearest ditch. In more recent times various claims have been made that state lineage from the 'Pickingill nine', covens of which he was said to be the magister..

Another most famous witch was Cunning Murrel, who lived in Hadleigh, Essex, between 1812 to 1860. The day before he died, on December the 15th, he predicted the time of his own passing to the minute. Murrel was a secretive man, and travelled only under the cover of night. He also carried an umbrella with him wherever he went, whatever the weather. The seventh son of a seventh son, he often claimed to be 'the Devil's Master'. He made his living by casting out evil spirits, and undoing the curses of witches. He was known to possess a magical mirror, which he used to look through walls, and to spot dishonest clients. Such practices are detailed in most of the classical grimoire of this period, which remain a source of fascination to many of those interested in sorcery today. It is also said that Murrel possessed a rather impressive library of hand written grimoire, including the spell book of his teacher, Neboad, said to be three hundred years old when it was given to him. He was known for his use of witch bottles, and other forms of common folk magick. Such a combination is not uncommon, and continues today within witchcraft as practised by myself and other members of my family.

The hermit known as Old Dido lived in a tent near Hainault until some time in the late 1890s. He was famous for his herbal remedies based on what he found in the forest. Gaining a reputation as a witch, he was one of the last few practitioners of the old herb lore, and people came to him with all kinds of ailments. Such practices have all but completely died out, however. Many modern witches are also seriously working to heal using more natural methods. In traditional cunning lore such knowledge is sometimes known as the green path.

Also from the same area was Old Mother Jenkins the Goose Charmer, who took pay from the local farmers to 'bless' their geese so they would fatten. Goose charming, and various other schools of 'animal magick', are a common feature of the witchcraft of East Anglia.

In Huntingtoft we find Tilley Baldrey, who was interviewed concerning her practice of toad magick by Eastern Counties Magazine in 1901. This gruesome self initiatory rite involved the sacrifice of a live Natterjack Toad. It has parallels with various other rituals that might be considered 'black witchcraft', such as the lucky black cat bone of South American Hoodoo. It also has elements of the demonic pact, and is thus a most powerful and dangerous spell. Furthermore, since the draining of the Fens in WWII, the once common pest that is the Natterjack Toad is now a protected species. The ritual is thus illegal to perform in the modern day, and cannot possess the same contextual meaning.

Horseheath, Cambs, has 'Daddy Witch', who lived in a hut by the sheep pond in Garret's Close. She is said to have gained her knowledge from a book called The Devil's Plantation. Again we find the presence of a grimoire, itself as required a magical object as any broom or cauldron. Local tradition states that when she died in 1860 (a bad year for witches) her body was buried in the middle of the road that leads to Horseheath Green, and that her grave remains dry when it rains because her body gives off heat. It is considered necessary to nod nine times as you walk over the spot to avoid bad luck.

Also of Horseheath is Mother Redcap, who died in 1926. Like many witches of the area she was known to possess familiar spirits inherited from her predecessors. She named them Bonnie Red Cap, Blue Cap, Venus and Jupiter. When she died in 1926, it is said that the black man appeared and delivered her familiars to her 'next of kin', who remains unidentified.

Jabez Few was a witch of Willingham, Cambs, and died there in the early 1920s. It is told that he possessed familiars in the form of white mice. One day he put one of his mice, so it is said, in the bedroom of a woman of the village. She fetched a big tom cat to be rid of it, but the mouse beat up the cat and stripped it of half its fur. She then decided to employ a little magick of her own, collecting clippings of horse hoof and the legs of a toad, and boiling them in a stone jar. Minutes later Jabez appeared outside the house and whistled, at which sound the mouse came to him and they were gone. Upon his death, his nephew got rid of the mice by holding them over running water, whereupon they scuttled off and were never seen again.

In Ipswich, Suffolk, there are tales of a 19th century wizard who went by the name of Old Winter. His powers seem to be mostly hypnotic, and he put these to use in punishing wrongdoers. A tale is told of how he once caught a thief making off with firewood, and 'bewitched' him into walking around in a circle for hours with the wood in his arms. He also caught a man stealing vegetables from the doctor's garden, and 'bewitched' him into spending the whole night sitting in the cabbage patch. Perhaps he also gained a little cash from helping people to give up smoking, like many of those who might be considered his modern contemporaries.

Also from Suffolk was Daisy Chapman, the witch and midwife who was a direct relative of this author, and a great influence upon my mother. Tales of her abilities, and knowledge of her spellcraft, have been passed through our family. Indeed it is likely that, if it were not for her, witchcraft would not have survived in our 'line' at all. Hence she is mentioned out of respect, even if she is less known compared to most of these others.

These are just a few of the most famous and important witches and cunning folk preserved in the lore of East Anglia. Even from such a cursory glance, we can see that whilst there are a few common factors, each of them was highly individual. Such it is with the local witches of the modern day. Do not be disappointed, then, if I do not present you with the details of some ancient 'East Anglian Witchcraft Tradition', whose 'Hereditary Rites' have been passed unchanged and unadulterated through the generations.

It is fair to say that there are surviving 'folk beliefs' and methods of witchcraft that have indeed found their place in our culture. It is these beliefs and practices that provide the main focus of this work. However, times have changed, and with them the beliefs held by the common people. Thus whilst my Great Aunt Daisy may have been a servant of Our Lady of Mercy, operating within an essentially Christian belief system, I *do* still consider my own activities as a continuation of the witchcraft within my family. This is *because* and not *despite* the fact that my own 'explanations' as to how magick actually works probably vary from hers wildly. Witchcraft is a weapon *against* fixed belief, rather than a religion of any kind. 'Goddess save us from single vision.' I am quite

sure that each of the above cunning folk gained their abilities through questioning everything around them, and reaching their own conclusions.

Every witch that has come to the craft has been an individual who, rather than blindly following in service to the past, has sought to grasp the powers of witchery and make them wholly their own. So it is with this author, himself a bona fide witch of East Anglian heritage. I hope it is also so with you the reader, whatever area of the world you are from and whatever path you walk.

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