

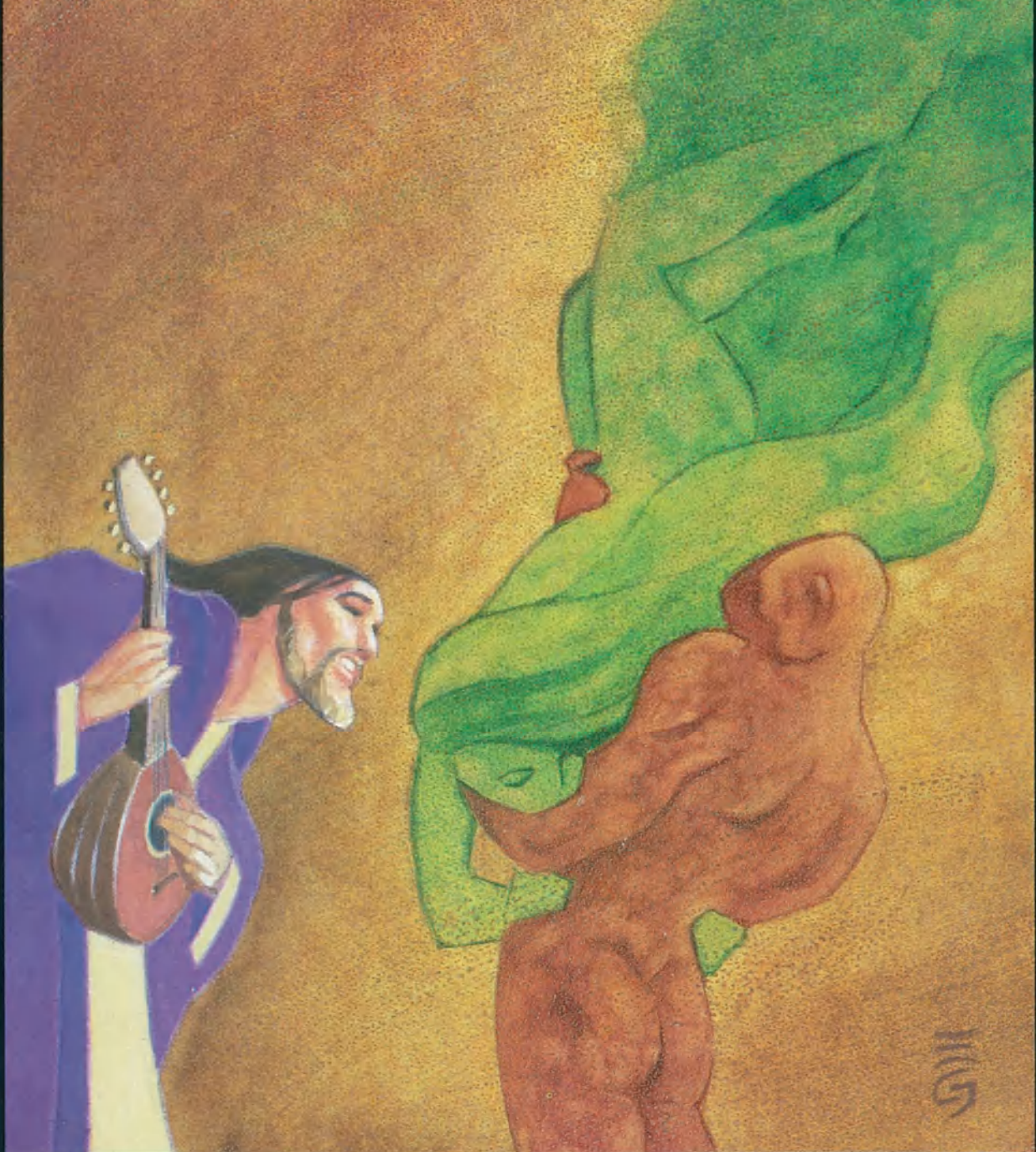
MEZLIM

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PRACTICAL MAGICK FOR TODAY



The Bardic Tradition

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MEZLIM

Practical Magick for Today!

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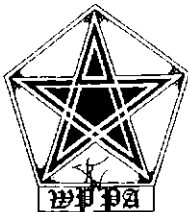
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"Just what does the word "Mezlim" mean, anyway?"

I've been asked that question a lot, and I'm sure there are many others who just wonder in silence. It comes from the Aramaic version of the Hebrew word *Mazel* (as in *Mazel tov!*). It means, literally, "the influence of the divine", or "the sparks emanating from Kether", the Crown of the Tree of Life. It references the fact that the divine lives in many paths, with each path as unique as the individuals who walk it.

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

So, in our own way, we are attempting to bring a few "sparks of the divine" into the world through our magickal labor of love: Mezlim.

A note about this issue:

For this issue the editors of Mezlim have kindly allowed foreign hands at the Macintosh. The look of this issue reflects this designer's belief that the page is melody on which the bard's story rides. We wish to thank the Editors for their patience and support, and hope you, the reader enjoy the finished product as much as we enjoyed creating it.

MEZZIM

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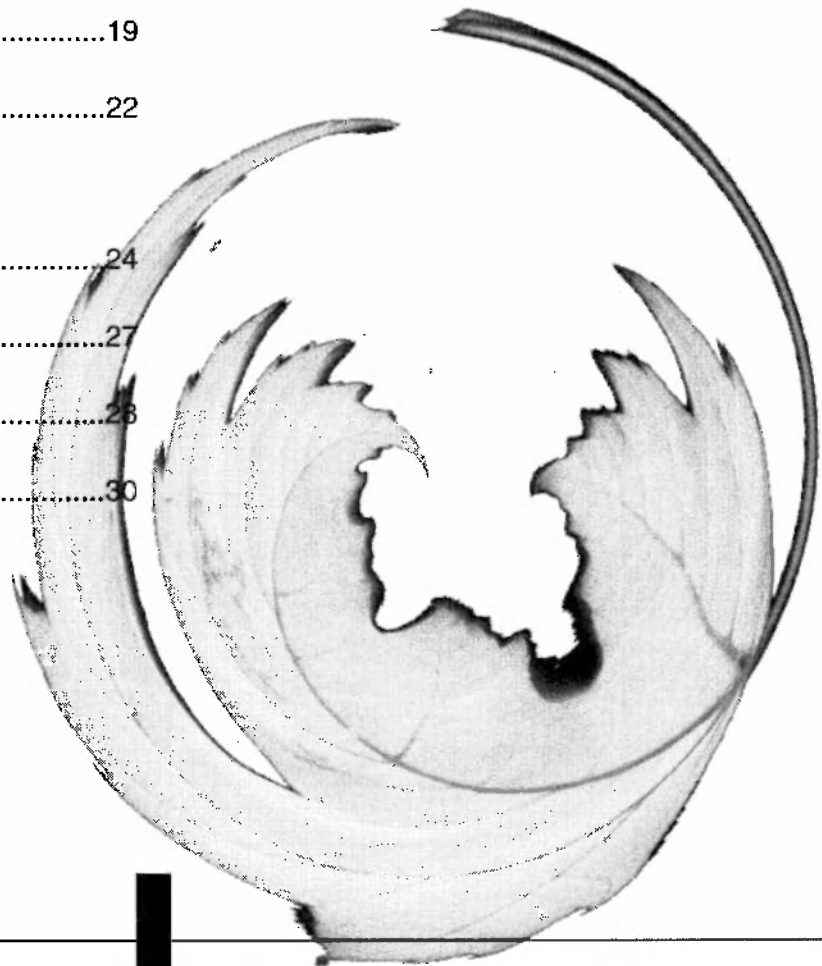
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This is the season for Festivals and they seem to ever sprout, green and fresh, like new twigs upon flowering trees. The Festival movement, as it relates to the magickal community, is of recent origin. It brings with it new ideas and roles. The Bard of old was a unifying element. He or she spoke a language, sang songs, told news and tales understood by most, if not all, of the audience grouped to listen or dance. The role of Bard and the unifying function the Bard performed has been, in large measure, ceded to the Drummer at festivals.

Festivals bring hundreds of persons with alternative religious and philosophical backgrounds together in an environment of mutual trust and respect. These events are unique in the history of religious and philosophical inquiry where tolerance is often preached and little practiced. The idea that it is possible to trust and learn from an individual who approaches divinity from a perspective which differs from one's own is revolutionary in a very deep sense. Festivals demonstrate that to respect another's individuality and personal relationship with divinity can lead to mutual personal unfolding of a profound nature.

The Deities and Spirits worshiped by the various esoteric groupings at Festivals differ widely. The traditions that I have encountered at Festivals include Wicca, Esoteric Christianity, Theosophy, Sheya, Druidism, Paganism, Thelema, Voodoo, Gnosticism and a number of eastern disciplines. It is easy to see that at this level of diversity, differences, if not problems, in communication are likely. Symbol systems used to communicate experiences often are particular to specific groups or solitary individuals.

There is a need for a unifying form of expression that transcends the intellectual barriers that weigh so heavily upon verbal communication; a nonverbal communion open to all who would partake of its magick. The business of the Bard is communication and communication in such a diverse envi-



Bard of the festival: the temple drummer

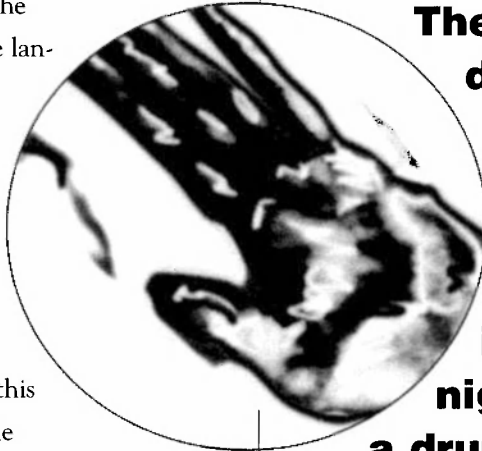
by Louis Martinie'



ronment as a Festival is best accomplished with an appendage other than the mouth. The language of the drum and the hands that move with the drum's head are more universal. There is one major happening that is shared by almost all who attend Festivals. This shared experience; this common ground is the Festival Fire and the language of the Fire is drumming.

Perhaps now is the time to lay the groundwork for the future myths and legends that will grow with this new type of Bard; the Festival Drummer. Festival

Drumming is a type of drumming; much like Jazz Drumming or Blues Drumming are types of drumming. As a type of drumming, it has flexible parameters. The important word here is "flexible." The British Bard of old was expected to know three types of songs; a song that could make people laugh, a song that could make people cry, and a song to induce sleep. The Festival Drummer, as Bard, can be expected to know three styles of Festival Drumming.



Styles of Festival Drumming

There is a definite flow to the type of drumming around the Festival Fire.

The manner of drumming changes as early evening passes into late night. Zayin, a drummer who was associated with the E.L.F. Festivals, distinguishes between three separate styles of drumming. The terms Community, Specific, and Trance can be used to describe these three styles. The styles generally follow a time line: Community Drumming first, Specific Drumming second, and Trance Drumming being the third style played.

COMMUNITY DRUMMING:

Community drumming expresses and invokes the spirit of the Festival community as a whole. This is a drumming usually heard when the fire is first ignited.

It is a loud, medium to fast style of drumming. There are usually the maximum number of persons

standing and dancing around the Fire during the time of Community Drumming. Here also there are the largest numbers of drummers playing and a strong underlying beat is necessary in order to keep the rhythms together. The rhythms associated with Community Drumming are straight forward and played in a manner that allows for the greatest diversity of individual preferences in drumming. It is not unusual to hear a great number of rhythms layered over a basic 4/4 beat.

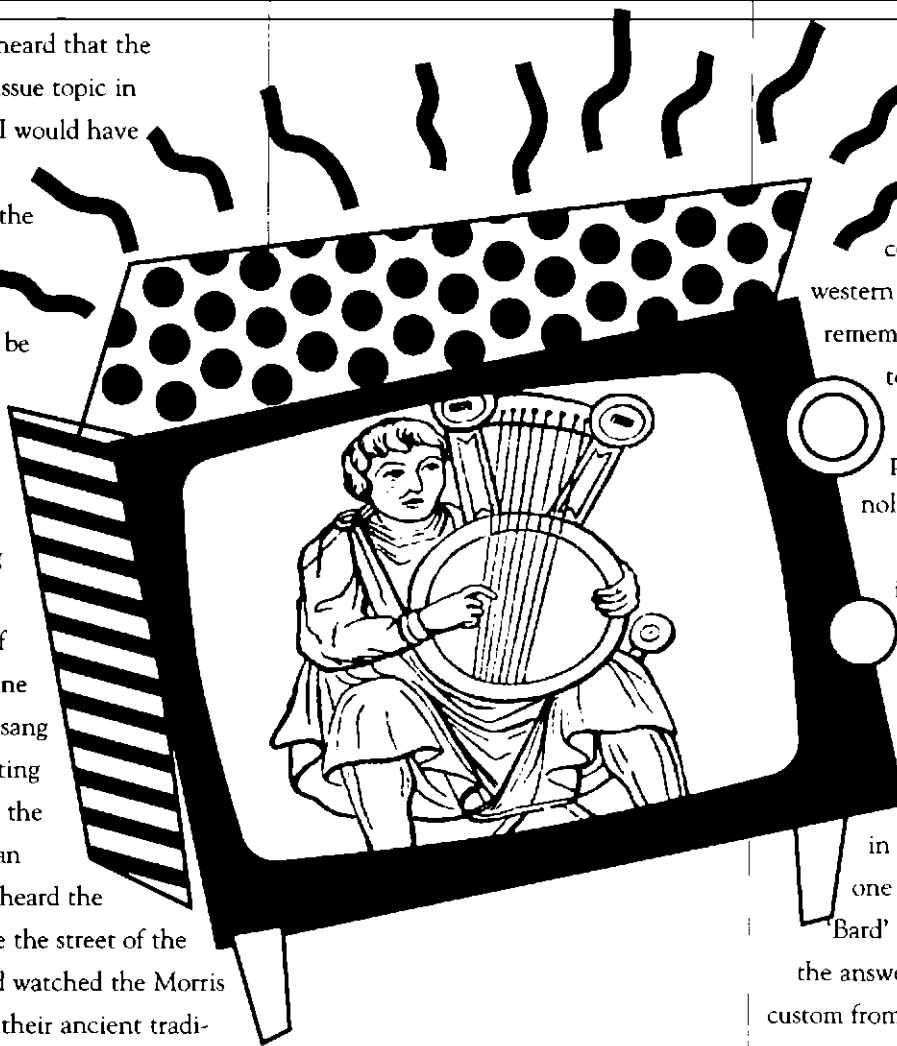
Community Drumming is a powerful expression of the bonds created between individuals at Festivals. In this type of drumming, individual differences are not lost or glossed over. They express themselves freely over the unifying matrix of the underlying beat. This underlying beat can be likened to the trust and respect developed and shared by Festival goers.

SPECIFIC DRUMMING:

Specific Drumming is a style that draws upon specific rhythms associated with one or more esoteric traditions. The

Continued on page 44
first sounds of this Specific style are usually

When I first heard that the Bard was to be an issue topic in Mezlim, I thought I would have to write something about it. After all, the British Isles are rich in Bardic tradition. There must be something I could say about the subject from my perspective over here. Indeed, since being here I have experienced the beauty of listening to a genuine Irish harpist as she sang her stories, enchanting all who listened, in the hall of a major pagan conference. I have heard the minstrels who grace the street of the old city of York and watched the Morris Dancers practicing their ancient tradi-



tures all over the world, not just Britain. It is still actively practiced in Arab countries, American Indians and other tribal communities. It is the modern western world which has to actively remember and recover the storytelling tradition if it is to survive, because the original purpose has been usurped by technology.

So, where are the Bards in today's western world? Some of the old storytelling practices are revived through re-enactment societies, individuals with historic interests or old family traditions in some rural communities. If one restricts the definition of 'Bard' to a minstrel or poet, this is the answer. The Bards become a quaint custom from the past, an anachronism

Where are the bards?

by Jaq D. Hawkins

ion. Britain is loaded with tradition of all sorts, not least of all the remnants of the old Bardic tradition.

The Druid Orders here help to keep the old Bardic tradition alive in its original form, or as near to it as can be done in these times of modern communication methods. The old Bards were the news carriers and social commentators of

their time. We now have television, radio, hard-nosed journalists and all sorts of opinion makers to fill that purpose which has relegated the Bardic tradition to a less immediate position. The old Bards have become story tellers of past legends rather than wandering bringers of current news.

Of course the storytelling tradition comes from cul-

with enough charm to revive periodically, or a family custom. In the case of Druidic Orders and some Hereditary traditions, there is a deeper purpose. To memorize one's history or magical lessons through song is also part of the Bardic tradition.

Still there is the question of the newsbringer and social commentator of the past. Music, now and in the past, frequent

ly focuses on love from some perspective, yet sometimes broaches political opinion and current events. Could the folk singers of the '60's, or even more modern groups like U2 or the Sex Pistols be accused of filling the purpose of the Bard? Perhaps, but there are many who will never swallow that idea. Somehow listening to modern 'punk' bands scream outrage at social injustice just doesn't have the same feel of a harpist singing lyrically about the exploits of whatever king was current at the time the song was written, yet one could say that these two versions of current events in song have a common definition.

The Bard lives on, but not in the form that once was. We still have our storytellers and minstrels within small communities, and this is how we see the Bard. Yet the Bard also lives on in the modern music and in each story we make up for a child. The Bard is the creative essence within us that gives life to the lessons we learn and express through artistic creation. The Bard lives through our rituals and through poetry. The Bard changes with the times, yet we will always think of the Bard as the harpist or lute player who tells stories of the past, which are now legends rather than current events.

Not everyone has the gift for making music, so we will continue to revere our Bards who share this gift with us. It was always so, and so it will always be. There is magic in song and in poetry. We can be sure that the magic makers will keep the Bardic tradition alive within their own magical communities, but the Bards will not be seen wandering from one village to the next to bring news again. It is for us to see the Bard in the forms that are presented to us, and to keep the magic of the old storytelling tradition alive within us and among our own families and pagan communities. The Bard is still there for us, we only have to look a little harder to recognize him both within and outside of ourselves. Still, there's nothing quite like listening to a good Irish harpist at a pagan conference.



The bard,

YESTERDAY

The bard holds a special place in history. The ancient bards were entrusted with preserving the pagan Celtic or Druidic traditions on into the Christian historical period. Many of our revered legends are nothing more than veiled references to the old traditions. Gwydion went disguised as a bard to the court of Pryderi in hopes of stealing his swine. The Arthurian legends deal much with the pagan Celtic theme of sovereignty. And let us not forget THE BARD - Shakespeare... many of his plays are views of the history of his era as well as some pagan themes: "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "King John", "Hamlet", "King Henry IV and V", "Macbeth", etc.

As the colonization of our present country occurred, much of the ancient lore was lost or changed. Some was brought to

and

Today

by Rick Allen

Some of our modern bards still have the storytelling talent: Bob Dylan - listen to the story of the "Hurricane", Gordon Lightfoot - "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald". And even now becoming more

popular is much of the music from the British Isles, groups like Clannad or artists like Loreena McKennitt.

The bards of the Middle Ages wrote songs of love, songs of tragedy, songs of valor, and songs of current events, much

like some of our modern

music. Even rap tells stories of life in the ghetto and the difficulty of survival for the oppressed and underprivileged. Of course, much of modern music has no vital message or meaning. Perhaps it is because our modern society wants to be entertained and forget their troubles. That speaks for itself, as the mind that is kept persistently busy processing useless information is unable to even think about unlocking the greater mysteries of life and experience the walk on

country and the tradition continues in Appalachian lore. The instruments may have changed or improved, but the music remains. Listen to bluegrass and you can still hear medieval roots. Country and folk music still tell stories, perhaps not as eloquently as our ancestors or as pure, but it still stands as music with a clear message.

the pagan path.

So, if the mind can be kept preoccupied by music, then it is obvious that music has great power to influence - for good or bad. And so, the responsibility of the musician becomes clearer and will become even more clear as you read on.

Now, ever since I was a child, music has held a fascination for me. I was raised in a musical household and learned to play guitar early. As I grew older, many special times were spent honing my talent on a hillside in the mountains of Colorado, playing to the breeze and listening to the sounds of nature. Of course, during the '60's, music played a key role in the societal upheaval that we all know took place.

warriors go off to battle. In my own ancestral heritage, bagpipes led the troops to war. I also think of the legendary bards that performed a specific function in their

ties, etc. I earned enough to keep from starving, slept on park benches, beaches, and sometimes nicer places. But as I sang to total strangers each night, I started to become more attuned to those who were

Hear the voice of the Bard!
Who present, past, and
future sees. -William Blake

listening. There were times I would decide to play a certain song if the mood was different, even change

time and have unfortunately, for the most part, gone the way of the passenger pigeon.

Historically, the bard told tales with or without music, keeping the realm informed of current events and teaching

songs in mid-stream if it seemed right. What I was discovering was that for some people, my song touched a part of them that needed healing. For some reason, my gift had been given for another purpose than fleeting fame and fortune (although I still wouldn't mind playing for the Stones). I discovered that many times, I was able to cheer up the most forlorn person with a song of hopefulness. I remember another time a lady who was suicidal because she had broken up with her lover. I sang her a song about finding joy in the depths of sorrow. She gained a new perspective and put away her thoughts of death.

As I meditated on these things, I realized that music has several effects that has much to do with our body chemistry. Of course, music is sound, which is energy. This energy reacts with our body's electrical system and produces a resulting action or emotion. It seems to be much like a telephone works (particularly if you have a touch-tone phone): a certain set of notes will reach a particular location. In the individual, it is the same: we each have our own "phone number" (unlisted?). A particular song or rhythm will connect and enable communication. It is only with empathy and a proper frame of mind that

Me too the Muses
made write verse.
-Virgil

the leg-

Songs by Dylan and others fueled many a protest and became our anthems. I'm sure we all can remember certain songs that influenced our lives or hold a meaningful place in our memories. As I continued along my path, I started to write songs of my own and perform publicly for the first time. It was then that I started to feel the real power of music and to investigate its uses through the centuries.

All cultures have their own musical styles and it is often tied to deity worship, in one form or another. Chants and hymns come to mind immediately when "religious" forms of music are mentioned. Of course, the intent is to move the listener towards a spiritually receptive mood or open their consciousness to a mystical experience. Anthems have been sung as

ends of old. In a way, they were historical chroniclers that performed for their living, while serving a vital function.

Unfortunately, with the advent of the printing press and even more so with modern technology, the vital need of the bard has passed. It is an unfortunate loss. It is obvious to see that much has been lost, perhaps permanently, of our pagan heritage, because the tales are no longer told as they once might have been.

But on another note, pun INTENDED, music has other uses that some may not be as knowledgeable of. As I mentioned earlier, I have played guitar and written music for a couple of decades or so. I spent about 2 years, when I was in my teens, in Europe as a "wandering minstrel" of sorts, playing in cafes, bars, private par-

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Q: Are we not men?

by Massimo Mantovani

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

"I started being involved in Magick in '83, after listening to a fantastic record by a band called Blood and Roses." (Massimo Mantovani - I loooooove quoting myself!)

Now that you know how it all started, you may want to know how things are now.

To put it simply, I was playing in the '70s, I was playing in the '80s and I am still playing now, in the '90s. In 1985, I started a band called Thelema which still exists, and we have released two albums, Tantra in 1986 and, eight years later, The Vision and the Voice in 1994. Since the beginning of my involvement in Magick, Magick has been the most important source of inspiration for both my lyrics and my music. Could/should I call myself "a bard"?

Treccani's Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Italian Language reads: "bard: the name indicates ancient poets-singers of celtic origin ... it is important to notice that this character is exalted as the poet par excellence."

I know that the theme of this issue is "The Bard: Magickal Myths and Legends", but I want to take the risk of not writing about legends of the past, but

instead about celebrating the new generation of bards, the Magickal Bards of today's Magickal Community.

"In case anyone hasn't noticed, we are involved in the creation of a culture" Kia writes in the "Sacred Dance" issue, and I also call your attention to Caliph Hymenaeus Beta's "Introduction: Culture vs. Cult" in The Equinox III; 10.

It's as simple as that. We are creating a Culture. Not a cult: a Culture. Not a sub-culture / alternative-culture / ecologist-culture / sectional-culture / labelling-culture / theGodsknowwhat-culture: a Culture written with a capital C, so that all the world must acknowledge the fact that the

Pagan/Wiccan/Magickal etc. lifestyle is an absolute part of this planet's life.

And a Culture needs means of communication. Now, it would be easy for me to speak about the media (TV, radio and press) and their attention to the world of music, but the fact is that ART (and music among the other forms of art) is the best medi-

um to communicate ideas. Remember, the bards were singers as well as poets.

The Magical Revival has given birth to a generation of artists whose inspiration abides in Magick, and among those artists the musicians are those who have managed to get the public eye, and have been able to spread the information and ideas they wanted people to know.

I think of people like Jimmy Page, Dave Tibet, Douglas Pearce, David Bowie, Blood and Roses, Sex Gang Children, Glod, SleepChamber, Non, Ian Read, Psychic TV, Ordo Equitum Solis and so on and on and on and on. The music they play is not important: they all are bards. Keter and the others who recorded Voice of the Sheya are bards; Elie and Friends are bards.

"The poets have always been with us, although we (for our part) have not always fully reciprocated ... the poets know their business and a goodly part of ours." (Caliph Hymenaeus Beta in "Introduction: Culture vs. Cult")

"Your music ... is the expression of your own understanding and ecstatic embrace of Law." (Lon Milo DuQuette in a

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A: We are bards!

The power of word

by KIA

Some thoughts on word, that mask that we wear every day yet hardly notice. For most humans, verbiage is the primary mode of communication and comprehension, however skilled they may be in non-verbals such as color or music. Most of us even learn basic magick by rote first, by reading and reciting forms and prayers that others have written. Wording is a process which puts labels on objects, thereby giving the communicators the power of reference. But Word can be a magickal tool, where there is much more going on than just reciting the script.

It is no wonder to me that the Egyptian god Tehuti is lord of Magick, communication, cycles, and wisdom. Legend has it that he created the hieroglyphs, and for the first time, ideas could be preserved. The hieroglyphs were so valued, only priests were allowed to use them. They were considered to carry the essence of the thing described. We've all seen stuff from the tombs of Egypt covered with the glyphs — no, they weren't just masters of graffiti. The action of writing creates histo-

ry. An idea manifests, and you can speak it to share it, but you can share it with your great-great-grandchildren if you preserve it in letters. Our rational manner of communicating through letters is much more precise than the symbolism of dance or art, and letters do not depend as much on

the more abstract arts do.

Whether the word is in the mind or the mouth, it is the underpinning of reality. You create one situation with your words, then another, stepping from stone to stone in a stream of consciousness.

Everything we perceive has a reference as an object — if not, the mind gets puzzled and it rationalizes, eventually giving the perception a label, or breaking down. The unaware person creates by associating whatever the stream sends him, rather than choosing which objects/situations to unite. Therefore, when we are conscious of our words and their impact, we gain control over yet another piece of the puzzle we call Universe.

The magickal tool of Word encompasses speaking your Truth, and being accountable for your words. Other talents that grow when these are cultivated are perceptions of multiple layers of symbolism in words (double-entendre and beyond), punning, and adeptness at manipulating situations with words. In my opinion,

the ability to write a good invocation is inferior (although useful) to the ability to manipulate one's Universe with one Word.

Discipline of the mind is favorable in so many ways, no matter how you accomplish it. I know you've heard this before, but I'll say it again: it is necessary to successful magickal working. The everyday creation of your reality is a magickal act. I try to eliminate the imagined boundaries between "sacred" and "mundane" and I come up with an integrated, interdependent, free-flowing whole. From this point, it is not difficult to see that every word and thought expended or chosen is energy. So, how do you want to use your energy? What do you want to create? Your words and thoughts will have the worth that you give to them. Since you created them, they are your children. They are you. You are always thinking yourself, making you up as you go along. One can start from this point of no division, or one can start from the other side, with this simple experiment: notice the thoughts associated with your feelings. Separate them out and notice how they fit together. I am not yet at the point where I can control my emotions, but I can control my thoughts, and so when I'm feeling something I don't want to, I balance that feeling with a thought of a different character. Obviously it is better to be in control of your thoughts than to allow someone else to do your thinking for you. Mass media knows that who controls the words, controls the minds.

We are only as good as our Word. What does it mean when you say, "So Mote it Be"? Does it work, or do the demons break circle and taunt you? Honesty is integral to the performance of Word/Will-based magick. Every act of keeping your word strengthens the Will for

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"The Mask is used at those times when human experience is transforming—birth, death, initiation, seasons of the year — the basic cycle of life."

John Mack,
Masks &
the Art of
Expression

The magic of masks

by Patricia Telesco

When you think of a mask, what comes immediately to mind? Is it the image of the Lone Ranger, or perhaps children donning masks on Halloween to portray an alternate persona? Is it the superhero of your youth who used a mask to safeguard his or her identity? Or, what about specialists, such as doctors and dentists, who wear

distant past of our species. The ancient Egyptians, for example, had gold funerary masks that emblemized Divine power and gave the spirit status in the after life. Other similar masks were found at Incan and Aztec burial sites.¹ Masks were part of classical Greek and Japanese theaters.

protective masks?

Then too, there are actors who apply masks in the form of makeup to develop believable characters for their audience. Today, each of these seem perfectly fitting in their setting, yet they whisper relentlessly of a faraway time and mysterious customs.

Mask-wearing is a tradition with roots delving well into the

Shamans used masks regularly in ritual, and primitive people wore masks to appease the spirits of nature. All this leaves us wondering about what attracts humankind to this form of masquerade?

The answer to this question is many faceted. First, masks are a way to explore the depths of our imagination. Here, for a few moments we can retreat from "normalcy" and explore limitless possibilities, quite literally walking a mile in different shoes. From this vantage point we gain unique perspectives into animals, plants and personas.

Secondly, masks delivered a visible face for folk heroes and even the Gods. The vastness of Divinity was overwhelming to primitive people. To better understand this force, they needed to characterize it in personable forms — images with which they could relate and interact. Thus, medicine men in Africa or the shaman of Nepal might don a mask designed like the

face of an appropriate Spirit when effecting cures.² The hope was to better relate to that Force, become possessed, and thereby produce miracles. In both these regions, and many others, the Medicine man is both priest and healer for their people.

In this setting, the mask serves an alternative function of providing inspiration to the patient. Instead of seeing good, old "Joe" before them, who might not inspire any type of emotional response, the mask transformed the individual into a formidable sight. Over time a specific mask repeatedly used could elicit specific responses. Among

these fear, relief, and hope are three depending on the situation.

Third, masks tap into a primitive side of our nature, expressing fears and hopes in allegorical form. It is this very form that found its way into magic and religious observance. Beginning with paintings left by cave dwellers, we see that masks participated readily in imitative magic. As part of the sacred dances to insure a productive hunt,¹ people readied masks of the desired beast. They then enacted a mime of sorts where the person embodying the creature gets captured. This magical parody represented the tribe's ambition as an accomplished feat. The idea was to metaphysically affect the creature as portrayed, and therefore have a successful hunting expedition.

In this illustration the mask fulfills several important functions religiously and socially. First, it provides the symbolism necessary to empower the magical rite. Second, it visually gives the participants something positive to focus on. Third, it becomes a central figure to rally around, inspiring the hunters before they begin their tasks. Finally, it honored the spirit of the beast being hunted.

This last function for masks reflects animistic beliefs among early peoples. It is analogous to the Native American tradition of thanking one's food for nourishment. In both instances, the animal became a sacred sacrifice that continued human existence by its gift. Thus, paying homage to the creature through costume or mask was appropriate.

A small sampling of masks from the Royal Ontario Museum and MET reveal masks for the harvest, healing, death, sickness, and all the major events marking human existence. So what does all this say to us? Modern propriety often

laughs at the use of masks as outmoded, foolish superstition. We giggle at Lois Lane's inability to see Clark Kent for who he really is because of his mask—a simple pair of glasses! We no longer believe that demons tremble in fear at hideous masks, or that decorative masks must accompany us to the grave to insure a better afterlife.

Yet, none of us are without a figurative mask or two. There are home masks, office masks, social masks and solitary masks that hide, or reveal, what we truly are. Each one has a purpose, a role on the stage of our life; each guise is but one facet of the greater individual. That is the Magic of the mask in whatever form it takes.

Webster's New World Dictionary describes a mask as anything that conceals or disguises. While this definition usually pertained to facial coverings, this article covers a slightly broader scope. Masks don't always cover the whole face. Some "masks" aren't masks at all, but a form of costume. In either case, however, masks can become a valuable magical tool for many purposes. Here are some examples:

A friend of mine created a "pregnancy" mask of her stomach using plaster as a cast. This became a ritual bowl throughout her last trimester, through which she directed loving, healthful magical energy to the child. Herbs, libations and milk were poured therein to share her sacred space with that developing spirit. During labor, her husband broke the mold to help release the baby easily from the womb, much as old midwives might have opened doors, windows and cupboards.

For bad habits, create a paper mache image of the negative characteristic. Wear this image into your sacred space at the beginning of a ritual. Then, in

conjunction with a spell or prayer for

release, remove the image and ritually destroy it; this visually makes that negative energy disappear and thereby reinforces your magic.

If you find you're having difficulty adjusting to a specific situation, look through your clothing and jewelry for something easily worn. Magically empower the token for the qualities you perceive necessary to handling that situation. Then, each time you don that item, likewise take-up the personal mind-set necessary to handle those circumstances. Allow it to become your prop, makeup and costume temporarily until you return home. Here, this mask should be removed until needed again.

For children's rituals, masks can be very educational and fun. Let them create images of one specific animal, then imitate that creature. Afterward, have a discussion of what it felt like to be that animal and if they learned anything from the experience. Additionally, make note of the different animals children choose. This may be an indication of a specific guiding energy in their lives.

Masks give us the opportunity to rediscover the breadth of human imagination. They encourage us to explore all the different aspects of ourselves and our magic in new and creative ways. Through masks, we can find an image of our fears, then face them. We can create a likeness of our God/desses and honor them. Then when the mask comes off, we can be reminded of the Divinity within that gives expression to every facet of our life.

1 The Smithsonian: "False Faces from Far-Flung Places," December 1994, p. 94.
2 "Powers of Healing," Time Life Books, Alexandria VA, 1989, pp. 10-13.
3 Oesterly, WOE, DD; "The Sacred Dance," Dance Horizons, Brooklyn NY, 1923.

Religion is a way of life. It's what-
ever we do and how we live our lives. It's
something that
needs to con-
stantly re-
invent
itself if it
is to be
at all

whole-
some.

Dead reli-
gions are

frozen rock-
hard, and

unchanging.

They seek to

maintain an old

order, bringing it

into the midst of this

new day. It doesn't

much matter whether it's

as old as the Christ dog-

mas of two thousand years

to move through life totally unaware of
life's possibilities. They seek the comfort-
able and familiar on a path of spiritual
death. It is hapless and predictable; each
day being as easy as the last; and equally as
bland. Inevitable change becomes disturb-
ing and is treated like an enemy.

Spirituality is somehow much
deeper than religion. It defies dogma and
theogony. It's the spark that can bring life
to a religion. When this spark dances in
the human heart, dogma and theogony
become the tools we use to consciously
comprehend this deeply psychic process.

A spiritual path is one of uncertainty
that refuses to quantify life as a
stoic process of predictable mile-
stones and landmarks.

Looking into this
from another angle,
there is a quixotic
dark side to the
spiritual path
that offers

courage. We face the darkness of our being
and lash out at the structure of our lives;
sometimes with
catastrophic
conse-
quences.

Yet

there is a

danger along

the way. Most

spiritual schools

are wise in asserting

that that danger is

ourselves. Still, like the

anthropomorphic process

involved in creating

deities — which we use to

invent ourselves, we create

the devils that undo us. These

are the vestiges of our being-ness.

Fundamentally, an exami-

nation of these structural compo-

nents of our being are mythologized as

a way of examining these archetypal

energies and discovering their modus

operandi. And then to explain how to

approach and incorporate these energies in

a useful and pragmatic fashion so that the

psyche performs in a functional and

healthy manner. The underlying spiritual

drive then brings from deep within a cer-

tain spark of genius clearly out into our

shared normal every-day world.

In Thelema, Thelemites are

warned of the energy sucker that would

interfere with this clear stream of energy;

the spiritual tape-worm known as the

Vampire. Now this is not the Dracula of

The Vampire in me

by Paul Joseph Rovelli



ago or the individual who habitually sleeps
through the same old routine day-in and
day-out ('time to make the donuts').

There are plenty of dead religions
as there is a plethora of people who choose

up fear and dread. Together they form a
whole. And with this not so obvious
wholesomeness we then embark on an

heroic journey that
requires the utmost

literary legend and Hollywood fantasy. Rather, it's the mythic being that sucks on our fears and doubts and consoles us in our weaknesses that we might not

go on.

And it has a seductive capacity that is both cunning and alluring.

It resides in that area of our psyche that we are the most at ease with. It pushes those buttons that have become connected to the strong psychic habits that it finds us partially or totally oblivious to. This is due to the repeated and desired ease by which we exercise and use such energies.

As it hides behind this ease, we are required to arm ourselves for the hunt to discover its secret lair. So, for me and I suspect for many, it is a very difficult and dangerous hunt. But the prey must be captured and contained before it destroys spiritual progress. We must drive into the terror of our darkness and battle through our own blindness. In essence, we then place ourselves in the strange position of also becoming the hunted as its unchecked tendency is to tap into and absorb the life energy which informs our being. A constant vigilance is required.

Freud referred to this process in his assertion that one of the essential psychic drives is the drive towards self-destruction or death. In my life, the desire for death is aroused by feelings of loneliness and isolation. When these periods occur, the vampire in me is aroused and succored. It then seduces me with the excitement of all forms of self-destructive behavior. The self-affirming habits of wine, woman and song become the dreaded mire of decadence and morbid fascination.

Still, as a creative person, I seek out a certain privacy in which to ply the various crafts that I work at. I require a certain amount of time to myself and distinguish myself from others in the manner of my appearance and mode of dress. I long to be at odds with consensus reality if only to get a glimpse of the fire just

precipice.

And my vampire is waiting at the edge or along the journey to the edge. It is only so happy to help me with my desire and to give me that fatal push over the

edge. It makes the fire seem so bright, so warm, so holy. And it blows a soft wind at my back to make my journey so easy and comfortable.

able that I might lose myself to its inertia. The fight is not with the Vampire. It's not my enemy but my kindred self. Its service to me is to keep me ever vigilant of my own self-deceit. The real enemy is my unconscious habits and desires; the tendency to go from moderation to extreme in acquiescence to the fundamental drives of my psyche.

It is a stern task master that practices a tough love, knowing that to indulge these tendencies to a blind excess is certain spiritual dysfunction.

When this happens, it holds and stores the energy that it takes as it feeds on the marrow of my decadence. My struggle begins as I attempt to turn the tide and push back through my own inertia, when I discover what I have so blindly done. And when again I have mastered myself anew, I have again restored the balance of power and found new energy reserves. I then take back that energy that was sucked from me.

Indeed, it is no wonder that that which doesn't kill me only serves to make me stronger.

The Ethics of Thelema

by Robert S. Pendell

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

In April of 1904, a young occultist visiting Cairo while on his honeymoon received what we today might call a "channelled communication." The occultist was Aleister Crowley, arguably the most brilliant, and certainly the most misunderstood, magician of this century - or any other century of recent memory. The communication he received was *The Book of the Law*, equally misunderstood, which was to become the foundation of Crowley's philosophy, religion and magickal practice, the origin of that system of thought known as "Thelema."

This book, also known as *Liber Legis*, proclaimed the advent of a New Aeon in human spirituality and presented the spiritual principles designed to guide mankind for the next two thousand years. Thelema has had a pervasive influence on Western culture for the rest of this century, an influence often unnoticed, but nonetheless powerful. Yet even among Crowley's admirers today, there is considerable disagreement and outright misunderstanding of what Thelema means. Nowhere is the problem more acute than in popular esti-

mation of Thelemic ethical philosophy.

The term, "Thelema," is derived from the Greek word for "will." The primary statement to Thelemic thought is well-known to most students of the occult:

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."—*Liber Legis* 1:40

At first glance, this seems to suggest that anything goes, that it is proper to follow every whim of the moment, to satisfy all one's urges at any cost, heedless of courtesy, the rights of others or even of common sense. Critics have complained that Thelema calls for a complete abandonment of all moral principles; such a philosophy, they feel, condones murder, theft, rape or any other barbarity if one claims that such is one's will. Nothing could be further from the truth. "Do what thou wilt," means none of these things; in fact, it is one of the most austere moral statements ever conceived...and one of the hardest to practice.

The unusual form of the language should in itself be a clue that we must think carefully about this phrase. Who is the "thou" indicated here? Why does it say, "shall be" rather than the more immediate

"is?" How, for that

matter, can any law be based on a program of "Do what thou wilt?"

Crowley himself insisted vehemently throughout his long and active life that this statement did not mean, "Do as you please." Careful study of his writings shows that the "thou" referred to is not to be understood as one's mundane ego, the everyday consciousness with which we normally identify ourselves. Rather the phrase refers to what a Buddhist might call "the Buddha-nature;" a Christian might refer to "Christ-consciousness." Others might speak of

"the Higher Self," "the God within" or "the Holy Guardian Angel." All these different forms of expression mean the same thing; in magickal terms, it is our "True Will" we are to pursue, not the fickle, momentary whims of the ego.

The Thelemic slogan is, surprisingly, the exact equivalent to Jesus of Nazareth's statement:

"Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done."—*Luke* 22:42

In Thelema, however, the principle is carried a step farther. Instead of subduing the ego to an external authority figure, a "God" outside of ourselves, who sits above us in the heavens looking down, we are expected to submit our egos to that spark of God that lives within us. We are to identify, not with our egos, but with that inner divinity, knowing that the will of that God is also our own True Will. We are to look for the kingdom of heaven within and follow the deepest intuitions of our hearts, trusting and believing that what is best within us is true and good. This reliance on the best impulses of our own hearts is truly what Thelema is all about. Furthermore, we are cautioned to trust only that divine consciousness within our-

selves, not the opinions of our neighbors, not the dictates of secular law, not the preaching of priests, pastors and prelates, who may, after all, be totally unenlightened and merely repeating the prejudices of their own meager egos. We are to apply the touchstone of our own best and highest understanding to any man-made laws, commandments, dogmas, doctrines or moral directives. All else is dross.

Obviously, this reliance on such inner guidance will work only for those who are in touch with that spark of divinity within themselves. It is equally obvious that relatively few of us have reached such an exalted state of consciousness. This is why the primary statement of Thelema is expressed in the future tense. Only when we have gained the higher consciousness required does "Do what thou wilt" become "the whole of the Law." In magick, this event is known as "Attaining the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel." A Buddhist would refer to it as "enlightenment." Only the enlightened may apply this Law as a present reality. The rest of us struggle toward it, often groping blindly, but trusting that we will one day find that inner source of strength and confidence which will offer sure guidance for the choices of our lives.

Thelema teaches, in fact, that the ego has no real will of its own, merely whims and automatic processes. The ego is that component of one's psyche that balances unconscious and instinctive drives with the equally unconscious contents of our super-egos, the psychological complex that records all the teachings of our parents, society, church and laws, that tells us what is right and wrong...in accordance with our early programming. Only by diligent effort may we discover our True Wills, the prompting of our inner divinity, buried

under all that we have been taught. Then only can we be said to have a free will at all.

The true nature of the Law of Thelema is further indicated by the second major slogan of Thelemic philosophy:

"Love is the law, love under will."
—*Liber Legis 1:57*

Here, the Law which has already been identified as Will is further identified with Love. Thus, "Do what thou wilt" is made equivalent to "Love." The true nature of our inner Law is love--love guided by and subordinated to the will of that which is best within us. This love is not to be confused with mere appetite, with lust, and petty striving for gratification; all this is simply self-aggrandizement. Thelemic love refers to the holiest devotion of which we are capable--divine love of our own divine natures and of the divinity of our fellow men and women.

The third slogan expands on this theme:

"Every man and every woman is a star."
—*Liber Legis 1:3*

There can hardly be a clearer manifesto of the egalitarian principle. If everyone is a star, we are all equal in our essential natures. True, some may shine more brightly, but all are equally stellar. Each star in the heavens is capable of supplying warmth, energy and life; this is a star's love, a love we are called upon to emulate in our dealings with our fellows. In Crowley's Gnostic Mass, the Deacon's exhortation to the sun reads, in part:

"Let thy perpetual radiance hearten us to continual labor and enjoyment, so that as we are constant partakers of thy bounty, we may, in our particular orbit, give out light and life, sustenance and joy to them that revolve about us..."

Surely, if we give out such valuable

commodities as light, life, sustenance and joy, our neighbors will have little reason to complain of our conduct towards them.

An important phrase from The Book of the Law, which is often overlooked, is:

"Thou hast no right but to do thy will."
—*Liber Legis 1:42*

This expresses the clear understanding that each and every one of us has a purpose to fulfill in this life. We are expected to devote all our best efforts to discovering and accomplishing that purpose. All secondary rights that we may claim as humans derive from the one essential right to do our wills. Nothing else really matters, because unless we are accomplishing our purpose, we are wasting our time. Please note that we are to accomplish our wills, not the wills of our parents, our government, our church, not the will of any other person nor of any human institution.

We live only to do our wills. We eat only to sustain our lives so that we may do our wills. We earn our money only so we may bear the expenses of doing our wills. If we marry, we marry to gain companionship and cooperation in the accomplishment of our wills. If we rest or play, it is to refresh ourselves so that we may better do our wills. Nor is this to be understood as a grim self-sacrifice; it is doing our wills that gives all the rest of our lives meaning and joy.

And let us not forget that the will we labor at is found in the deepest, most sublime portion of our psyches. In the doing of our wills, neither we nor anyone else should have any occasion for fear--provided it is truly our will that we do. If our will springs from divine love, the doing of it will bring nothing but light, life, love and liberty to us and to our fellow men and women.

In Thelemic doctrine, all disputes between one human star and another, all animosity, hatred, rancor--all evil in human thought and action arise only when we lose sight of our purpose in being, or when we seekers are still struggling to find our purposes.

Between people who are active, productive, creative and motivated solely by love and purpose, there can be no dispute. "Thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay." (Liber Legis 1:42,43) For our only right is to do our wills. We have no right to interfere with another's will, still less to force him to comply with ours. We do our wills; we do not force someone else to do our wills for us. This cannot be emphasized strongly enough. We have no right but to do our wills! We have no business meddling with anyone else.

Crowley reserved stern warnings for those who would forget this principle. To quote again from The Book of the Law, "The Word of Sin is Restriction." (Liber Legis 1:41) To which Crowley adds the comment (in his essay, "Duty"):

"The essence of crime is that it restricts the freedom of the individual outraged. (Thus, murder restricts his right to live; robbery, his right to enjoy the fruits of his labour; coining, his right to the guarantee of the State that he shall barter in security, etc.) It is then the common duty to prevent crime by segregating the criminal, and by the threat of reprisals; also, to teach the criminal that his acts, being analyzed, are contrary to his own True Will. (This may often be accomplished by taking from him the right which he has denied to others; as by outlawing the thief, so that he feels constant anxiety for the safety of his own possessions, removed from the ward of the State.) The rule is quite simple. He

who has violated any right declares magically that it does not exist; therefore it no longer does so, for him."

Surely, we need not stress that these are hardly the words of a man who would promulgate a code of immoral or amoral conduct!

How then are we to avoid conflict with others in the pursuit of our True Wills? Again, for Thelemites, The Book of the Law provides valuable guidance:

"For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect."--*Liber Legis 1:44*

When all are attuned to their True Wills, with their purposes unblunted, and are not attached to results, they cannot come into conflict. If a man wills to make music, he need only play his instrument; it is not his business to force anyone to listen to him. If he does not play well enough to attract an audience, he need merely practice. If he cannot learn to play at all, he has probably mistaken his will--a true musician will play, without regard to anything but his music.

Note that this is not to say that we are not to care about what we are doing. The musician in the example above cares passionately--about his music; this is the pure will, unassuaged of purpose. Whether he play well or ill, it is the music that truly matters, not the applause of his hearers; this is his freedom from the lust of result. If he desires nothing but the applause, he has not found his Will; his fulfillment depends on the will of others to applaud him or not. Thelemic doctrine teaches that all questions of ethics can be resolved on these few principles--provided they are rigorously applied.

Meanwhile, in this still imperfect world, we rely on Crowley's statement of

the Rights of Man, a document which he called "Liber OZ." To summarize rather than quote, this declaration states that each person has the untrammelled right to live as he pleases, provided only that he allows others the same, equal right. In a free society, only voluntary associations are legitimate, only voluntary participation is ethical. "The word of Sin is Restriction." Victimless crimes are no crimes at all, merely an example of someone meddling into someone else's business--forcing his own will on everybody else. Between consenting adults, any behavior is ethical and moral, but only if all participants truly and freely consent to participate.

Thelemites believe that these principles constitute the only rational standard of ethics possible. They believe that consistent application of these principles would eliminate any possible conflict between one person and another. They believe that these principles are the hope of mankind in the New Aeon that rose upon the world in 1904--the Aeon of Horus, the Divine Child, Crowned and Conquering. We must learn to see ourselves as such children, joyful and innocent, playing what games of life we will, giving offense to none, but love to all.

Finally, in the words of the Gnostic Mass:

"The LORD bless you.

The LORD enlighten your minds and comfort your hearts and sustain your bodies.

The LORD bring you to the accomplishment of your true wills, the Great Work, the Summum Bonum, True Wisdom and Perfect Happiness."

So mote it be!

Love is the law, love under will.

The cult of the divine artist

by Andrew D. Chumbley

The Cult of the Zos and the Kia exists between the images which are presented here to define it, for it is through the gateway of imaginal interaction that the numinous reality of the Divine Artist cometh forth!

I

The Magical Current is the vital energetic continuum which motivates the activities of initiated states of entity within the universe. Its manifestation in the World is determined by the forms through which it is transmitted. The vehicles of transmission are manifold and are specialized to fulfill the requirements of Time, Place and Purpose. Such vehicles are both visible and invisible upon the Earth; some are perceived as bodies of initiates, either as individual avatars or collectively as magical orders or Schools of Thought, and others as ranges of consciousness — zones of specialized perceptual activity. The latter exist as aggregates of imaginal, astral and cognitive entities; the nature of this form

of transmission may transcend, and yet permeate through, the liminal boundaries of temporal structures. There are forms which partake of both the subtle and the gross, having their existence as Dreaming Entities, as noumenal matrices beyond the common scope of linear cognition and which, as Pure Idea, transgress the limitations of the Mind to penetrate the atavistic strata of Matter to achieve expression through the Living Flesh.

The Divine Artist is the possessor of this sagacity of the carnal; his is the mind traversed by the lightning-bolt of inspiration; from his gestures the World of Man is illumined — the untamed fire of heaven translated to the parchment of reality. This is the avatar of the Zos and the Kia, the Genius of the Hand and the Eye!

II

Where the veils of temporality are parted, blown asunder by the zephyr's kiss,

there lies the World-field, set at the heart of the summer-land, the domain where the ancient folk of the Elphame hold covine.

'Pon embertide night 'neath a moon-black sun, in the ragged ring of the Serpent-path. Like moths we are forever drawn back to the Secret Fire of Eld, to leap in the flame of our own self-recreation, to once more reclaim our memories from the dust ... once more the Sabbat-ride is come!

Here the course of witchblood flows — a river-wreath of scarlet to encircle the Isle of the Blest; here the step of the wise doth noctivagant turn — to trace its crooked dance to the primal music of Pan.

Here Nature fornicates and takes its own pleasure 'twixt Gods, Men, Beasts and Spirits: One Body

amidst the cornucopia of internecine venerie. Here flesh is the transgressor: the maker and breaker of its own law. The Body extends to embrace all others.

This is the meeting-place of the Artists Divine, the conclave that is met beyond the pillars of the twin twilight ... in a time that is not a time ... in a place that is not a place. In the Night of the Mighty Dead we gather, shedding the skin of our mortal circumstance, flying forth cross the borders of kingdom and age to the Sabbat of the Dreamer.

By many names you may call us, in many books you may read of us, from many mouths hear tell of us ... in the myths of days past, in tales of were-and-faerie-folk, in half-caught glimpses at the crossing of Dawn and Dusk. Here a hand is stretched to you from the Circle-dance of the Deathless ... hear this voice that speaks to you from mystery!

III

Wherever the fulguralis strikes, the omen-bearing lightning bolt, there too is the Divine Artist!

The spectra of his expression — the scope of all consciousness; the nature of his expression — the vital energetic fleshing of magical aesthesis — such is his form cast through eternity: One Body divided between the pantheon incarnate of Man! Such is the Gnosis of the Divine Artist. The temporal manifestation of this Gnosis utilising the name of the Zos Kia Cultus seeks to attain an hypostasis of the Magical Current, a vehicle specialized for the reification of the Inherent Dream. Its votaries meet alone ... in a great company of spirits; its rites are held within secret conclaves that are states of the heart and mind; sometimes amid the thrall of the Astral, sometimes amid the circles of the Adept, and oft-times — unbeknown to all ... in solitude.

IV

The Current of the Zos and the Kia was transmitted through the work of Zos vel Thanatos, the artist known in the world of men as Austin Osman Spare (AOS, born 1886, died 1956). Its inception partakes of the work of an on-going initiatic lineage, of which Spare was an adept; this being known as the Tradition of the Sabbatic Mysteries. Having no name, but that which Time, Place and Purpose require, the Sabbatic Tradition has passed from hand-to-hand, mind-to-mind, throughout and beyond mortal reckoning of Time.

It was from his initiatrix, the Witch-mother Paterson, that Zos vel Thanatos was inducted into the Craft of the Wise, and thus placed his mark within the book of its ancestral vitality. Through his unique skill as an artist he evolved his own recension of Sabbatic lore, the spe-

cialized system of sorcery known as the Way of the Zos and the Kia.

This sorcerous unification of art and magic establishes the conscious recognition of awareness functioning within the field of magical aesthesis. It is this very quality of recognition that marks its singular importance, for it permits the Self-knowledge of artistic genius and thus marks our progression upon the path of incarnating the Primal Dream of the Divine Artist. This Self-knowledge of perceptual evolution and its implicit ethos of creativity has accreted the form of transmission known as the Zos Kia Cultus.

This step of attainment was achieved in 1952 through the collaborative work of Zos vel Thanatos and Kenneth Grant; the latter being a Grand Master of the Typhonian Ordo Templi Orientis. The Zos Kia Cultus may thus be viewed from an initiatory perspective as a bridge between two ancient streams of occult tradition, the Sabbatic and the Typhonian.

Our present purpose within this statement is to clarify the nature of the Zos Kia Cultus, to demonstrate the integration between the atemporal gnosis implicit in the chosen form of its transmission and the temporal work of its votaries as relating to the interaction of the aforementioned initiatic streams.

Amidst these words let the reader seek not for the lightning-flash of the Kia, for it strikes wheresoever it desires; it is thus I bid the reader to remember: "The law of the Kia is its own arbiter, beyond necessitation, who can grasp the nameless Kia? ... How free it is, it has no need of sovereignty. Without lineage, who dare claim relationship." The Book of Pleasure, AOS

Seek not, for Thou art That which Thou seekest!

V

The ethos of the Zos Kia Cultus unifies the summit of mysticism with the depth of fetishistic diablerie. Its subtle metaphysical bases are Zos 'the Body considered as a whole' and Kia 'the Absolute of the Other'; these are the Sorcerer and the Out-reach of his Entity to embrace Total Awareness in freedom.

The means of reification utilised by its votaries are as diverse and unique as is the nature of genius; and yet given the initiatic context of its origination there are certain magical praxes which identify the mundane working of the Cultus. It is here that one must distinguish between the specialized nature of the Zos Kia Cultus as both a manifest Body of Artist-initiates and as a zone of activity within the range of consciousness through which magical aesthesis is generated. Its essence should be understood without nominalization, its naming is for the self-conscious activity of the initiate within.

VI

The lineal descent of the Gnosis which has come to be manifest through the Way of the Zos and the Kia traces a pathway back to the very fount of witchblood's origins; for it is said in lore that the Initiatrix of AOS derived her wisdom from the Elder Gods, the Gods that were before the gods of men. This initiatic provenance is true of all forms of Traditional Craft.

According to the words of Kenneth Grant the specific lineal stream of the Zos Kia Cultus is informed by an Amerindian magical current. This impetus was transmitted through the tribe of the Naragansett Indians and later surfaced with the Salem Witch-cult. It was from this latter source that Paterson claimed her derivation.

It is said that she worked within covens of this lineage which were operant within various regions of Great Britain, but oftentimes in the South of Wales. (There is here a nominative identity with a lineage which informs the present phase of the Sabbatic Tradition; the line of which I speak derives from Llandeilo in South Wales, this in itself means 'Land of the Devil'. Adjacent to this location is a place called Salem.) These covens achieved converse with the transmudane source of their power through the tutelary spirit which has come to be known as Black Eagle. This Spirit was bequeathed to AOS by his witch-mother, and its function is to serve as the point of transference between the Elder Gods and the present initiates of the Cultus. It is the Grand Famulus for the Magical Force which has manifested through the Way of the Zos and the Kia, and carries with it the karmic heredity of its previous mediums. It is therefore that certain initiates of the Cultus Sabbati and O.T.O., have been led, within the present phase of the Tradition, to form cells specifically to evoke Black Eagle in their attainment of communion with the Elder Gods. It is of note that Black Eagle is represented by AOS as both a personage and, more frequently, as a mask; there is here a subtle key to the interpretation of its nature and its true origins.

VII

*"You know that I am near and am presently among you.
As the Darkness bears in from the Gate of Twilight
And draws my wings around you, so I come to you, —
In the atmospheres of the Shadow I surround."*

—An Oracle received by Alogos.

(Winter 1993 e.v.)

Here follows a Vision of Black Eagle derived from Frater Dr'ku Aleaos

Sottoz:

Standing at the Crossroads' heart, the eyes be not open, nor be closed.

Being neither awake nor asleep; not dreaming nor conceiving.

Facing neither noontide nor midnight, the day-break nor the dusk -

gazing between the twilight's horizon, mirror-masked in summoning: wait.

Beyond the mask of the familiar, the vulture-soul of desolation wakes.

And there at the heart of inbetween, a rustle of shadow quickening, speaks.

The saying of silence unfolds black wings reaching out for the flesh, into now and here;

blood beckons swathes of memory uncoiling, rushing out on winds of ancient night.

Rapt in this embrace hear the voice of the Old One -

hear the song of the returners shrilling over desert sands, across solitudes of ancestry;

words of the animals, breathing colours beating hard upon the skin of sight,

chasing ciphers across the windows of the dreaming eye.

Time present, time past, time that is not - here none of these are, yet shall swiftly become;

I dreaming I - thou art that, and every configuration of strange flesh becoming.

Follow the beat of an eagle's wing through the caverns of the heart, backwards into night ...

The work thus far achieved within cells of the Cultus Sabbati has permitted us to obtain knowledge concerning entities such as Black Eagle which exist within the aforementioned range of consciousness.

The traffick held with such entities obtains the requisite insight into the subtle realms where-in magical aesthetic activity occurs gestatively as Dream. Thereby subtle

manoeuvres of the

Dreaming Body have

been realised and the function thereof reified through the appropriate media. This statement is an example of such.

This work, as with the previous work of Zos vel Thanatos, is part of an ongoing process. This path leads on; the futures into which it penetrates may transmute the veracity of these words; the path will turn a-new. Let us not seek it, for we are already its direction.

VIII

This transilient path strikes across all borders; who seeks to confine it imprisons himself. Magical Aesthesis is bound solely by the horizon of the Possible as witnessed by the imaginal eye of the seer. The skin of reality is its virgin canvas, the prima materia subject to the mutative impressions of the Other. The Divine Artist, forever renewed and strengthened through the disciplines of the path, casts forth his spirit to bodies new and unsullied by preconception:

It is the visionary capacity of the Human entity that is the stigmata of the Kia's thundercrack, for the ability to draw from the unknown depths of the psyche heralds the emergence of a creative force which will rend the limit of the Carnal and evolve a flesh beyond aught that we might guess at. Such is the New Sexuality! Such is the Way of the Zos and the Kia!

Post Scriptum: The author would like to express his gratitude to those whose participation in discussion and magical practice has made possible the formation of this article: The Initiates of the Cultus Sabbati, Fr. Dr'ku Aleaos Sottoz for his perseverance upon the path of the ancestral mysteries; Fr. Feth Fiada for his permission to utilise certain information relating to the historical provenance of the Sabbatic Craft; Sotor Pasht-akhti for her

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To dream

by Tath Zal

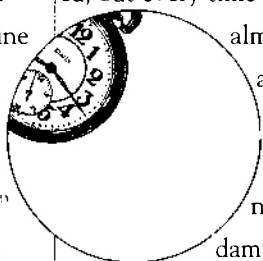
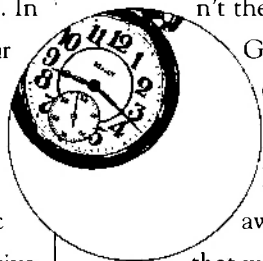
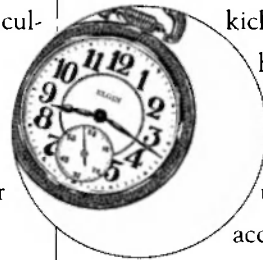
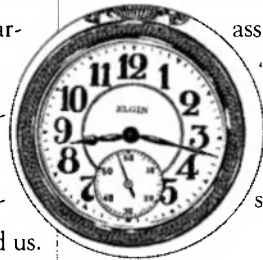
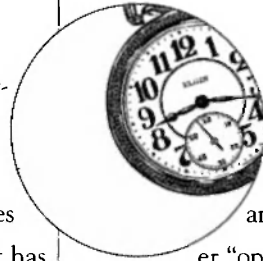
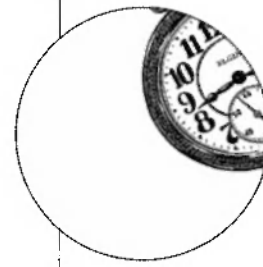
A bard, the Bard ... someone of the shakespearean era comes to mind ... in dusty clothes, travelling from place to place, regaling the populace with stories, songs and, of course, news of the kingdom. These must have been multi-faceted individuals with many talents, of such importance to the widely separated towns and villages that they could travel unharmed where others dared not venture. It would seem that, in part, their purpose was to share the news and entertainments of the day, and in doing so to create a common culture of sorts; to unite an otherwise distant and fearful folk by means of shared traditions. In this way, Bards and their travels were like threads which were used to stitch small pieces of fabric together to form a larger cloth. In this way, the old way, common culture was created and people were united by it.

The previous announcement of the theme for this issue, "The Bard: Magickal Myths and Legends", called for "some not-quite-forgotten tale to share around our conceptual bardic circle." I have been at many bardic circles and have been entertained by stories, songs, jokes, dances, drums, and just about any other form of creative endeavor of which the human spirit is capable. No one person, no single Bard, was dominant at these circles, but rather each member of the circle con-

tributed to the evening and to the spirit of that event. I have witnessed poems recited by children not yet old enough to be in school and great stories told by some of the oldest among us. It has been both an honor and a privilege to be a participant at such circles. Yet, if all participate, are all then Bards? I believe that the answer to this question is definitely "Yes!"

We magical folk are often culturally extant from those who surround us. In the United States particularly, we exist as islands within the popular christian culture, separated from those who fear us simply because we are different. In many ways, it is similar to those long-ago times. However, it is also dissimilar in that we are freer than we have ever been to express ourselves and to share our talent(s) with our greater communities. In addition, we have more resources at our command ... books, magazines, radio, TV, tapes and CDs. Almost anyone can obtain access to these mediums and use them to "exercise" their Bardic prerogative(s). And we are a very creative bunch! So, in the spirit of magickal creativity and using this wonderful magazine as my medium, I submit the following to this "conceptual" bardic circle:

She was tired of living in "interesting times." The Chinese were



right about that one — it certainly was a curse. Every day brought another challenge, another "opportunity" to grow and develop ... more like another pain in the ass that called for her to "rise above" it all and make the more mature, the more evolved decision/choice.

Why her? Why couldn't she be the one, just for awhile, to kick and scream and be pig-headed and selfish, and have others adjust their lives and their schedules to her whims, to accommodate her demands? Or even better still, why couldn't the Cosmic Scheduler of Growth and Development Opportunities cut her some slack and just leave her alone for awhile? Peace and quiet, that was what she really wanted, but every time she thought that it was almost within her grasp, another f...ing challenge presented itself. And she couldn't turn her back on the damn things. They weren't

small challenges, oh no! These were Big Challenges ... her source of income (critical to those basic necessities like food and shelter) which included her job, her small business, and her attempts to finance her schooling; her personal life (no time for one of those, too many challenges to handle); and, her magickal work (when was there any time for that when every thing and every one had need of her time and attention). She didn't even have time to mow her damn grass! It was life as Continual Crisis, and she hated it.

Her friends were in the same boat, the Cosmic Scheduler was working overtime out there, so that no help could be expected from that quarter; nor was her family close by for solace and support as they lived several states away and seldom visited. If she took the time to think about it much, she got very depressed. Luckily, she didn't have much time to do that either, so she just kept moving, trying to do everything and be everything, and grow, dammit, grow.

She kept thinking that surely there would be some reward for all this in her next life; but secretly she was afraid that somehow, even with all the challenges, she was missing the point, and that all this pain and pressure would keep coming around again and again until she figured it all out. That was the worst of all, the not knowing ... or even having a clue about how to begin to learn.

Did the challenges contain within them the source of this knowing, or was her reaction to the challenges themselves the area on which she should focus? What would happen if she just walked away from it all and "trusted the universe" to provide?

That kind of attitude in others had always galled her. She felt as if she and millions of other people who worked and paid taxes were taken advantage of by those who did whatever they wanted, and used unemployment and other government benefits to finance their ability to do so. Irresponsible,

She was tired of living in "interesting" times.

that was what it was, and she refused to be irresponsible ... it was neither mature nor evolved behavior, and she could not, in good conscience, join the ranks of those who lived by Whim and by Want rather than by Will.

And yet, although she did not act out of whim, nor of want, she did act often out of need ... the need to deal with the challenges, the need to do everything and be everything, the need to grow. What she lacked was focus, focus brought about by a knowledge of Will. What was her Will?

She had a lot of activity in her life, but how was it manifesting her Will? It was a key

question, and one she could not answer.

Here then was a doorway to knowledge, a light upon her troublesome path. What was her Will? Once that could be determined, other activities and challenges could be prioritized, or even ignored if they did not meet the requirements of her Will. It sounded simple, but ... how was she to distinguish between Need and Will? Need was so insidious, so demanding, and her response to it was automatic — blind, without focus, so that, when Need had been met (and it seldom really was), there was no joy, no satisfaction in it.

She decided to begin with Focus ... on her work, her life, her home. When she really began to look, she saw that it was all in chaos. A hundred projects started, few, if any, finished, but all waiting patiently for her good intentions to circle back to them so that a little progress could be made. No wonder she was so crazy! In

attempting to do it all, she really did little or none of it ... a certain formula for frustration and anger. And yet, she loved all these projects! Her life was filled with interesting things and she often thought that those people who did not interest themselves in the broad spectrum of experience available in the multi-verse were poor by comparison to her. How could she choose to abandon even one of these?

Focus, discipline, responsibility ... this became her mantra. It did not honor her projects to leave them laying about, languishing because of her lack of focus. It did not grow and develop her soul to fly

Continued on page 45

The dumb supper

by Marie Day Butler

Rye and Sem and me was talking at the store one afternoon when business was brisk, like always. Except it was worse. Seems like a lot of folks had left Singletree and never come back. I'd actually done some thinking about taking another job just to keep busy.

Be that as it might, we was talking and the conversation happened to turn to girls. By this time me and Ada was keeping steady company and Rye and Ezelle had got to be fair constant together too. Sem went between Catherine and Sary Jane. First he'd like one tee--total best and the next month dogged if he hadn't switched to the other one. But this was one week the girls had all three of us scratching our thoughts. Wouldn't none of the girls do nothing. We'd asked and asked and even coaxed a mite. But no matter how sweet we talked nor how handsome we slicked back our hair all we got out of them girls for answer was a giggle and a "no" shake of the head! It had us fair fashed!

"Aw, come on, Ada," I says to her after Wednesday night meeting. "It just don't look right to have you saying 'no' when I done spoke for you and all. What are

you girls all fixing to do that's so almighty secret and brings on so many gigglings?"

"Waal, Jeff, it ain't meant to be funny at all." She says. "It's a plum serious thing we are doing. All the girls are in it and it just makes all the difference in the world as to how everything turns out!"

Waal, I began to suspect right then as to what it might be they was planning so special. Then she gives me a sweet smile and when I walked her to the door she says "Now, Jeff, you won't forget, will you? It's plum serious. And there can't be no men around or it will spoil the spe--" and then her hands flew to her mouth to stop the word. I never let on. But I knowed.

We'd all done given up trying to break down the girls' determination and resigned ourselves to pitching horseshoes Saturday afternoon. Now that we had given up drinking we'd got to depending on the company of the girls a right smart, leastways for Saturdays. The prospect of setting the benches in the Safe-Home didn't appeal to us none unless we set with

the girls. Right queer how men can get

themselves attached to the women-folk that-a-way. Never did quite understand it.

We was talking like I said and suddenly I had a thought. "I know exactly what they are going to do. It ain't they be mad or anything like that. Fact is it's because they likes us they're going to cook their Dumb Supper."

"What makes you say 'Dumb' supper, Jeff?"

"What makes vittles smart or dumb" I says, "Is a tater smart because he can see where he's going?"

"Oh, you are the brightest!"

"Old joke, Jeff, real old."

I was so put out I didn't know but what I'd just not tell them the right of it. But I done it. Mainly because it made me out knowledgeable. So I hitches up my plaid suspenders (they was the latest thing for the young bucks) and I says "Waal, sir, a Dumb Supper is all cooked silent like, and it's all cooked backwards. If any one of them speaks a word they have to throw out all the vittles and start over."

"I can't imagine Ezelle keeping her mouth shut long enough to cook a cobbler, or a corn pone let alone a whole supper!" And Rye just set himself down and laughs. "It's no wonder Ada said it would take the whole night. It might take the whole durned week."

Sary Jane don't have no trouble keeping her mouth shut." Sem says. "But the way she cooks could put a spell on a mule. I mind some cookies she made for my birthday last year. They was all done up in a fancy box and it was a fair good thing. The box, that is, for I couldn't break through them cookies with an axe! Finally threw the cookies away and ate the box."

"Spell on a mule..." I says, studying.

"Hush, Sem!" Rye fusses, "so's Jeff can tell us the rest of what the supper is for."

"It's the mate-choosing kind of supper." I says.

"She be a good-hearted girl, though." Sem says.

"Who?"

"Sary Jane. But she shore can't cook." Sem keeps talking and Rye is about to heave a stick of stove wood at him when he grins and shuts up.

"Now." I says. "First they cooks the dessert, cobbler or whatever, and then the meat and vegetables. Then they cook the soup and nobody speaks a word."

"You mean all this cooking goes on without anybody talking none?"

"That's right," I says. "If any person speaks a word they have to throw it all out and start again. Otherwise, they haven't done it right and a thing that gets half made is the same as a wrong one and it don't do nothing."

"You was saying you had an idea, Jeff?"

"My idea light just blowed put." I says. "I ain't got much knowledge but if we get to pulling a prank and something goes wrong -- waal, it ain't worth it."

"Reckon you're right on that, Jeff."

"Reckon you be."

"We can sneak over behind the bushes and watch, can't we?" Asked Rye. "That ought to do no harm."

"No sir, NO SIR!" I says. "I am staying away. We are all staying away. Don't nobody but us three know what's going on, and don't nobody breathe a word!"

"Why, Jeff," Sem grins, "I didn't know you was all that set on such things, I am surprised!"

"I'm not set at all," I shakes my head, "but I remember things you ain't never seen. I know for a fact that my Uncle Johnny Patrick got throwed across a room for messing around while Aunt Ellen

was doing her Wise Woman work. Not that it hurt him any. I was right there!"

"Aw," says Sem. "I don't believe it -- or maybe I do. Let's hear the story, Jeff."

"Waal, Uncle Johnny's mother was a great believer in the potions. More than anybody I ever did see. And she had come to Aunt Ellen for a double one that day. Uncle Johnny is 'Uncle' to the whole town, but Aunt Ellen, the Wise Woman, is my real aunt. That's important to the story. Johnny's mother had a pair of mules that just naturally wouldn't stay home and a daughter of marriage age who just naturally wouldn't leave. So this day she had plum run out of patience on both counts. She's

It don't do
to hurry
your tales.
Hurry ruins
a good story
all to tatters.

wanting something to make the mules stay in the pasture and something to make Litty Mae get herself a man. It wasn't that men didn't like her. She was a pretty girl and nice too. But Litty Mae was a choosy one and she wouldn't have none of that, no sir.

"Waal, Aunt Ellen was mixing and stirring one thing and then another into the kettle with the purpose of settling Litty Mae with a husband. She adds a

pinch of this and a pinch of that and she done it all quiet and quick. I was perched up in the apple tree and looking through a crack in the blind but all I seen was her hand going into her apron pocket and then I heard something hit the boiling water in the kettle.

"I suspicioned she knowed I was there. She stirs and she stirs and talks friendly like to Miz Patrick."

"Now we must let it rest three hours and thirty two minutes. Not a minute over and not a minute less, and when it's done you cool it is the springhouse three days and not a mite under or over."

"Then you sprinkle three table-
spoons in Litty Mae's
morning tea, and see that
she drinks it EARLY in
the morning. Then get her
out into the garden with a
hoe right after. Now you
do this every morning for
seven days. Then you tell
Litty Mae just what you
done and why."

I could see a mite
of restless stir in both the
setters so I whomped up
the story a little. It don't
do to hurry your tales.
Hurry ruins a good story
all to tatters.

"For the mules you sprinkle a
double portion in the water trough, six
tablespoons for fourteen days. But first, and
heed me now, you get rid of that moldy
hay and get your mules some good food. I
know you are well fixed. Good hay won't
scare your pocketbook none."

"Now along about then Miz
Patrick pushes her face back together and
she whines a mite.

"It plum wonders me Miz Ellen,

how the same receipt can be used for such different things.'

"Don't know as they be so different. A mule-headed female and a mule-headed beast is all the same where their minds is set in the same stall. The main difference is the mule already knows he's acting like a mule and someone has to point it out to the woman.'

"Waal, I never!' squeaks Miz Patrick, but she didn't do no more arguing when Aunt Ellen turned her a hard look. Then she commenced to stir again and I knowed she knowed I was there, for she give me a wink with a finger to her lips in a shush sign.

"Waal, I almost falls offen the branch where I was hanging, but I caught holt again and it was a fair good thing too, for I'd fell for certain at what I seen next.

"There was a pounding on the door and it busted open before Aunt Ellen could even turn herself around. Shore it was John Patrick and he was storming. His mother shot plum out from her chair scabbling at her bonnet strings, commenced to try to calm him down a mite.

"Now, Johnny, you musn't get so het up! I'm just here to visit with Miz Ellen for a spell, er' that is, I mean, for a little while.'

"Naturally she had done give it away and she knowed it.

"Potions!' he thunders. 'Ma, this ain't going to do no good and you know it! Mandrake roots and toad-frogs! A bunch of tom-fool nonsense and that's all! And that table over there she makes dance and pound the floor -- shore it ain't moving now -- because she ain't pushing it with her foot that's why!' His face gets red and then blue and then it gets purple and his long red hair sparks all over his shaggy head.

"Now Aunt Ellen never moved.

She never turned around even when he had come thumping in the door. Doubtless she knowed what he thought before he ever spake a word. Johnny never made his feelings a secret on nothing to nobody.

"I heard a loud bang right then, and then two more quick together. Didn't know what it was at first till I saw Johnny's eyes bugged out. I declare you could have caught them in a bucket! And mine too, I reckon! We was all took by surprise -- all but Aunt Ellen. She never turned. What made the banging? Why that table. The very one Johnny had pointed at!

"And it just kept on banging. One loud bang and two more close together -- over and over. Johnny's mouth slacked open but the rest of him was as still as church. All his color drained down to reach his red shirt. I wasn't close enough to see but I knowed that blue vein in his temple throbbled and jumped.

"Get outen the way, Ma!' he bellers, and he runs full tilt acrost the room and jumps on that banging table with his arms and legs all spraddled out trying to hold that critter down.

"Waal, that table never stopped its noise one bit. Johnny'd commenced to cuss and cave and smash into that table with his fists. After a minute or two the table cut loose and throwed Johnny Patrick clear acrost the room! That's what happened! I watched the whole thing!

"He sails through the air like a eagle still spread out and then he come to stop with a terrible hard thump. His leg hit the side of the heavy oak wash-stand that was standing under the winder. There was a crack you could of heard in Grassy Creek if you had been there! I was shore his leg

was broke in three places with splinters of

bone sticking through like scairt porky-pine quills. But I was wrong. He was not hurt a bit! Aunt Ellen helped him into a chair at the kitchen table and commenced to make tea. Long about then Miz Patrick moans. She was right there on the floor where she fainted. She wasn't hurt none either.

"Aunt Ellen gave them both hot tea and then she had some for herself. She sipped her tea and smiled at Johnny. 'There IS a trick to it. I haven't used it for a long while. Been thinking it would make good firewood. That is if you would consider splitting it for me, Johnny?'

"Johnny stretched up from his chair and nodded. 'I'd be right proud ma'am.' He says."

I noticed Rye was about to blister his chair; "What about Litty Mae? What about the mules? Did anything change?"

"Did anything change? Waal, I reckon at least ONE thing changed. Is that right, Sem?"

"You're right, Jeff. One of them herbs shore done it's work for shore!"

"How'd you know?" Rye would druther ask questions than puzzle hisself.

"I know," says Sem, "because Litty Mae is my own mother. But I never heard that story before."

"Ain't never told it before," I says, "and don't never let me hear of it ever being told again!"

And then a mule come in to git shaved and I left.

The old broom sweeps over the almost cold hearth an hour before sunrise, as April's last frost clings to outlaw winds. Little Red Riding Hood, alone, in the fairytale cottage, strains to hear the first birdsongs of the day. Snow White and Rose Red, sisters of Summer and Winter, mingle among her remembered myths. She is both and neither, empty and bitter-sweet. Born of

betweenings, her spirit was caught and held most embarrassedly by the heel in Uncle Wiggly's cabbage patch at the crack of the day, almost first of May. Somebody goofed! What is this midnight horrowshow wraith doing here, exposed and arrested in the sacred dew, caught between the breaths of today and tomorrow? Misbegotten by Loona, this careless moonbeam bounced off the frost-etched windowsill and f-f-f-fft, plot, fell right into broad Daylight Savings Time. Well, I'll be damned, JeanLee, what the hell izzit?just me and my mythology, you see, A to Z.

Meanwhile, Jack Frost, the bane of all April sunrise children, steals his desserts of iced tulip and popsicle crocus, nimbly plucking finely glossed posies. A bouquet of frozen raindrops, Jack's calling card, will garnish every gray doorstep before the end of this last cold night.

I first met Jack at childhood's fiery sleepless fever midnights, when he and his minions scribbled messages and invitations on my white window. Their elvish runes imitated ferns and feathers in paisley, but somehow I understood. I dreamed of the night when I would wander with Jack and sing silver songs with him throughout the countryside. My fondest hope was to help him celebrate the rainbow dewdrop crystal heaven pixie party that frisked, freaked and



by Goldie Brown

frolicked all the Winter long. Every year the same happy/sad icicle graffiti irreverently splatters the pastels of early Spring, in the hours before the world awakens. My spirit longed to fly with those roughshod angels of sunrise, riding hobnail over night's jaded mascara.

Well, this morning I reach out with nailbitten insomnia fingertips to gleefully scratch through the frosty pane, into Jack's spiderweb world. An alarm of crystallized mist rattles like hail flung down between houses snug in springtide, alerting the nocturnal mischief-makers to my illogical presence. Sheathed in glistening April chrysalis, I confront jagged Jack. After a prerequisite scowl, he actually recognizes me and laughs his famous tinkling laugh.

Old fairy and new fairy acknowledge their kinship - but before we can complete our first embrace, a golden chord struck by hands

more divine than ours heralds the sunrise and we can only bow and melt together in solemn reverence.

Our mutual melting is orchestrated by the celestial roll call, the spontaneous chanting by the angels of dawn, in which everyone's names are echoed - the brassy names, the splintered ones, the real names, the dusty, half-forgotten ones, all remembered in a litany of amnesty.

Awakened from my dream by the calling of my own names, I discover that only my heart has melted, leaving tears on my pillow, but Jack Frost is gone for another year. The broken-egg yellow and white eastern vista illuminates the ashes on the cold hearth and there is only me and my mythology, blowing in the wind like ragged, empty garments hung on a tree by the gypsies.

Letter from Hardscrabble Creek

The Three Magicians by Chas S. Clifton

Once upon a time there were three magicians. At least they thought they were magicians, and their names were Mike, Phil, and Teresa.

Mike, Phil and Teresa lived in the little frame house on Trinket Street in the city whose name was a real-estate developer's lie. Now, obviously some details in this story have been changed because no one tells the whole truth and nothing but the truth in a story about magicians. But it is true that the city's name was a lie, a lie stretching back to the nineteenth century.

In the little frame house on Trinket Street, however, the three magicians did not worry about the lie because they were more worried about money, or rather, its lack. For Teresa had only the part-time clerical job that had sustained her while she was finishing her degree at the university, while Phil worked for very little money at a struggling advertising agency, and Mike managed a struggling used-book store that was not, shall we say, putting peanut butter on the table for him. Often times he would sleep in the store unless Phil and Teresa let him sleep on their sofa, for he could converse about any-

thing and was not a bad cook.

Mike was also the first of them to become a magician. He had lived with three or four other magicians in a two-story house that smelled like cats in a part of the city where most of the houses had been replaced by printing companies, warehouses, auto-repair shops, and nightclubs of changing ethnic complexion. "If that was the way that magicians live," Teresa had thought, "then what's the point?"

But that household had split up, as magickal households so often do, and Mike, as mentioned, ended up sleeping in the back of the bookstore on God Avenue, which is merely a translation of its real name, except for those times when he stayed at Phil and Teresa's house.

So the three magicians decided, with some justification, to do a Big Ritual to improve their situations. They pored for days over volumes of forgotten mystic lore, most notably David Conway's *Magic: An Occult Primer* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1973). And so they planned their magickal working.

As it happens, all three of them were born with their natal Suns in Gemini, and – for there must be some truth to this astrology business – they all worked in

what could be called "Geminian" occupa-

tions: a bookstore manager, a secretary, and an advertising copywriter.

That being the case, clearly a Mercurial ritual was called for, and their books of magick told them all they that needed to know. Well, almost all. They did it on Wednesday, of course, and figured out from the tables of mystic hours that they should begin at something like 9:22 on a bright late-winter morning. Not being a morning person, Teresa was not totally sold on that idea, but it was what the book said to do.

On empty stomachs, they dressed in mercurial colors as much as was possible for economically disadvantaged magicians who did not possess great fortunes, noble lineages, faithful manservants, or any of the other helpful accessories owned by the magicians in the novels of Mr. Dennis Wheatley. They anointed their foreheads with the cinnamon-flavored "Mercury" oil that Phil had prepared in a pill bottle, and on their heads they placed circular bands of orange construction paper marked with special sigils that had to do with Mercury. And if you know what a "sigil" is, then you will understand how this was important magick stuff and not an attempt to look like the Friendly Indians in an elementary-school Thanksgiving pageant.

In the living room they carried away the table made of plywood and fruit crates and pushed back the other furniture,

which was only an old sofa and some big floor pillows. They made an altar and lit lots and lots of cinnamon-flavored incense sticks. And then they performed the ritual, the one in Latin in Mr. Conway's book, and if you want to know what it sounds like, you may read it there yourself. And they visualized real hard and tried to go to the Qabalistic Sphere of Hod although none of them really could have explained exactly what that was. But the air in the little frame house still seemed sort of sparkling afterwards.

Since they were all three Geminis in Gemini-type jobs, they asked for something equally suitable but more lucrative and satisfying in the same line. Phil was still hoping for a better-paying copywriter job; Teresa wanted to work full-time, and Mike asked that the bookstore make more money, since his pay directly depended on

what was in the cash register drawers. Afterwards, Teresa had to leave for the office, since she only worked in the afternoons. Mike had a few glasses of wine from the big green jug. Eventually Phil persuaded him that it would be a good idea to open the bookstore and that he, Phil, would give him a ride up to God Avenue.

Phil was still pretty naive about the combination of ceremonial magick and alcohol.

That spring their lives did change. When Phil went to apply for a better-paying copywriter job, the universe spun him 90 degrees and he wound up in publishing. The agency that employed Teresa got some federal grant money and promoted her into a more challenging full-time job. And with warmer weather, the bookstore started doing better still. Its owners fired Mike, whose work habits were too erratic, moved it to a

new location and had their best year ever. Phil and Teresa are still together. One evening while they were eating supper, the telephone rang. It was an old acquaintance from the magick days, calling to tell them that Mike had shot himself to death.

They never do rituals in Latin anymore, nor do they think much about what magickal hour it might be. But sometimes when spring snows are melting they remember the sparkling air inside the little house on Trinket Street. And they realize how much they do not know.

Chas S. Clifton lives in the Wet Mountains of southern Colorado. He edits Llewellyn Publications' Witchcraft Today series, which includes The Modern Craft Movement (1992), Modern Rites of Passage (1993), and Witchcraft & Shamanism (1994).

A Good Chant for Gathering Sicum

by David Sparenberg

A Siouan word for a category of sacredness, sicum is guardian spirit power. Sicum is gathered throughout life by vision questing and is utilized in medicine ceremonies.

Through the power of the stone
Through the power of the shell
Through the power of a feather
From the flight of an eagle

I draw the air of nature
into my lungs
I draw the cosmic wind
into my heart

Through the power of those who move
Through the power of those who breathe
Through the power of those who speak

I draw the fire of the sun
into my visioning eyes
I draw the fire of countless life forms
into my red path heart

Through the power of the stone
Through the power of the shell
Through the power of a feather
From the flight of an eagle

I draw the ancient fertility of the earth
into my alchemical belly
I draw the webwork of earth's sacred
purpose

into my red path
heart

Through the power of those who move
Through the power of those who breathe
Through the power of those who speak

I draw the sweet water and the saline
into my veins
I draw the fluids of evolving life
into the cradle of my heart

Now I am part
of everything that is
Now I am grounded
in the holy hoop of creation

Centered
in the living circle
I am here, gathering sicum
I am drawing power

A Garden of flowers

by Mishlen

There are certain flowers which bloom only at night. And there are flowers which bloom only in their season. The flowers of the mind are like the second. It is when the mind lies quiescent that the blooms can arise. In the stillness of the deep, these flowers struggle to grow, straining towards conscious awareness like a plant struggles towards the sun.

Such are the mind's thoughts. Thoughts become words in our minds. Then the word-flowers are spoken aloud. Within the temple, they become words of power, causing change in accordance with Will. A question here – why only in the temple? Or is there something we do not see?

When one takes a mate, a blending process begins. Even the most prosaic of humans acknowledge this. As mind flows into mind, thoughts are shared, emotions are shared.

But that is not all. I know each of you have experienced the phenomena of someone close to you bringing up an unusual subject that you'd only thought

about the day before. Or an hour before. This seems to indicate that thoughts may not only travel through space, but through time as well.

honor to the new life created?

What gives such power to a mere thought? OR – DO ALL WORD-THOUGHTS CONTAIN THIS POWER,

AND WE HAVE NEGLECTED TO NOTICE THEM!

Like arbitrarily pushing buttons on your computer, not heeding its 'language', results only in chaos. (From which the only path is to hit 'escape'.)

And we live in Chaos. It bothers us, but we believe that is how life IS. And nothing can be done about it.

What if something CAN be done? If we take responsibility for this chaos, if we choose our thoughts with laser-like awareness, we become the engineers.

We become the gardeners, and the words become our blossoms and

It is
when the
mind lies
quiescent
that the
blooms
can arise

The bloom opens like a vortex in space-time, traversing worlds of the multi-verse. And who is there to witness this

what was once Chaos, becomes the steady light of our Will.

thing? Who gives

Quasimodo's bones

by Greg Moorcroft

Crescent slits the fertile Sky
Her blood the Ocean
Saturate in life changing
Bathing the open shore
Kisses passion pounding
A gift remains, hurled adrift
Glitter shiny - stone cold enamel
Spiral child

Gale slashes the futile hill
Hollow temple dust aswirl
Dionysus howls abandon
One grain too many too few
Pride of the polis totters
Ground to pieces - crash to earth
The Ancients reclaim their glory
Crushed empty shell

Oceans swelling towering dance
Sinking soaring forest reef
Sunken bubble in earth
Ancient magical creatures vanish
as rough walls wash smooth

Blinding disk fuse the sterile sky
Awash in aching flame
Slashing burning tides of sand
disperse those waters of old
Landscape swirling shifting
Spiral child scratched dimmed dusted
blasted
Drowning grain by grain
Engulfed in dry earth

We have ignition -
Desert sands fused
Polished glittering jade
Life green vista
Museum floor at ground zero
Now I am become -
code name Trinity

Solitary fish leaps for glory -
Now I am not where I am!
My deep world lies flat beneath me
What alien vista this?
Suspended, dry - what are these lights?
Floating, not floating?
That distant edge-
the end of this new world?
Restored to my old!

Diamond in sand of time signatures
At last to ashes to dust
Even the Magic Flute may fade
As memorial stones crumble
Bones in the expression of love
Disintegrate - re-earthed to atoms

As we build forever empires
Permanent structures -
of quantum probabilities
A new bright smudge in the night sky
heralds a star's death ages past
Its dust blasted around half a galaxy
- spiral parent -
Only now we get the first clue
The beginning after the end.

To Arthur C. Clarke

The Heretic's Corner

Kabbalistic Blockbusting by Dr. Richard Kaczynski

One of the disadvantages of being a professor is the overwhelming desire to show people things. Never mind whether it's in a classroom, at a party, or over dinner, that urge to broaden horizons – of both the speakee and speaker – presses on one's tongue like a Freudian slip waiting to ... er ... slip. Here's one of my favorites:

"Without lifting your pencil, pen, finger or other pointing device, can you draw four straight, connected lines which pass through all of the circles?"

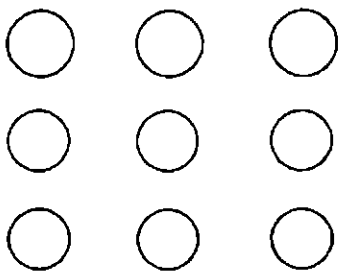


Figure 1

Try it before you go any further. If you can't get it right away, then read on before you peek at the solution (which appears at the end of this column). The point is that our thinking, creativity, and very view of the world is constrained by artificial and self-imposed limits.

Consider this episode from the life of astronomer Tycho Brahe: While walking home from his laboratory one night, he saw something unusual in the sky. He couldn't quite put his finger on it, but he knew something wasn't right. Passing some locals on the way, he asked if they saw anything different about the night sky. Straight off, they answered, "Why, yes. There's a new star." Amazing though it

may seem, an astronomer missed what untrained and uneducated villagers spotted right away. Why? Because he believed so strongly that God's universe was constant and unchanging that his beliefs wouldn't allow him to see the plain truth.

Whether it's writer's block, a creative block, or a spiritual block, it's likely that such a barrier lies nowhere else but inside your head.

For many ceremonial magicians, this is true of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. All too often, the Tree is simply a diagram on paper. Even when visualizing it in the body of light as in the Middle Pillar Ritual, that page in a book is simply imagined upright. What happens if you take the path from Yesod to Hod, then turn a hard left?

The Tree of Life is more than a two-dimensional diagram in a book. Even as a drawing, Tiphareth, for me, always seemed deeper than the other sephiroth. And about that term I just used: Although the word sephirah comes from Hebrew roots meaning "cipher," "number" and "telling," the ten stations on the Tree are commonly referred to as "spheres." Not circles (which are flat, two dimensional objects), but three-dimensional shapes like globes.

Similarly, consider the 22 paths. The Hebrew word for path is netiv. It is an unusual term, distinct from the more common derekh, which designates a public road. By contrast, a netiv is a personal, hidden path which the individual blazes on his/her own; the road less traveled. At first, a path conjures images of a rustic road or a strip of matted grass ... decidedly flat in appearance. This may be why some writers prefer the term "tunnel," which encourages a three-dimensional

image. However, a tunnel seems unnecessarily limited when one considers that a path is open to the sky above.

The Cube of Space

Early Kabbalists recognized the need to understand the world by conceptualizing it beyond two dimensions. The Sepher Yetzirah lays the groundwork for a three-dimensional projection of the 22 sacred letters. According to its plan, the three mother letters **א**, **ב** and **ג** become the X, Y and Z axes (up-down, east-west and north-south) of three-dimensional space (see Figure 2). This triplicity is significant, because it also corresponds to the three primordial elements (**א**= air, **ב**= water, and **ג**= fire), the threefold name of God (**איהוה**), and the three horizontal paths on the Tree of Life (in western esoteric schools, these paths are attributed to the letters **ה**, **ו**, and **ז**).

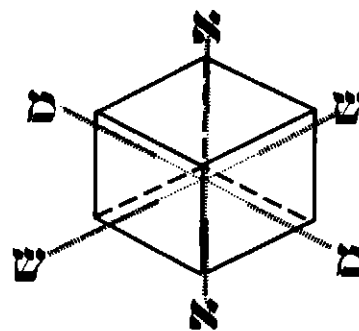


Figure 2

While the three Mother Letters represent axes of what magicians might call the Six Cardinal Directions, the remaining 19 letters (and six of the sephiroth) are assigned to three dimensions as the Cube of Space. Although this cube is difficult to illustrate in two dimensions, Figure 3 represents the cube "unfolded" on a flat surface. If you stood on the square corresponding to "down" and folded the page up around you, that's what the cube of space looks like, i.e., Figure 3 gives the Cube of

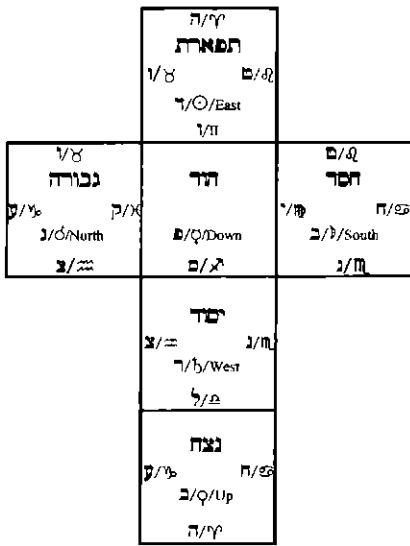


Figure 3

Space from the perspective of someone inside the cube.

Some observations:

- The attributions of the letters to the Cube follows the order of the Zodiacal signs to which they are attributed: For instance, the side facing east gives Aries, Taurus and Gemini; the side facing south gives Cancer, Leo and Virgo; the side facing west gives Libra, Scorpio and Sagittarius; and the side facing north gives Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. Note that the order of these signs around each face of the cube correspond to the Hebrew letter **ג**, (the first letter of Genesis) as if stamped on each face of the cube by someone from the outside (gee, who might that be?).
- This arrangement of the Cube of Space gives the Cardinal Signs along its top edges, the Fixed Signs along its vertical edges, and the Mutable Signs along its bottom edges.
- For each direction, the four signs attributed to that square correspond to three of the four elements, one given twice. The element given twice is the one

which corresponds to the cardinal direction: In the east there is Aries and Leo (both Δ); in the south, Cancer and Scorpio (both ∇); in the west, Libra and Aquarius (both \triangleleft); and in the north, Capricorn and Taurus (both ∇).

- Only six of the seven planets in traditional astrology are assigned to the cube. That's because the complex of **מלכות/ה** is assigned to the center.
- The supernal triad of Kether, Chokmah and Binah is not represented.
- The attributions of planets, sephiroth, paths and directions are highly inconsistent with the Kabbalah as taught in ceremonial magic(k) ... which may be why it has been neglected by so many. It's easier to ignore what doesn't fit one's system than to revise one's beliefs. Spirituality, like history, is written by the winners.

Breaking into Four Dimensions

If three dimensions weren't enough, then the ante can always be upped. By now, it should surprise no one that Kabbalistic secrets extend to this dimensionality. Indeed, the Cube of Space can be expanded into 4-D space with very interesting results. However, since there's no way to make (let alone show) a four dimension-

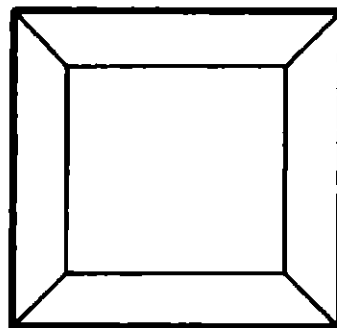


Figure 4

al hypercube, a surrogate is necessary.

Consider

Figure 4, which is a

central projection of a 3-D cube into two dimensions. In other words, if you looked dead on into the center of a cube, you'd see the front surface, the back surface, and the edges which connect them. On paper, it looks like a square inside a square.

If the central projection of a 3-D cube into 2-D looks like a square within a square, then the central projection of a 4-D hypercube into 3-D looks like a cube within a cube. In his television series Cosmos, Carl Sagan described this projection as the three-dimensional shadow of a four-dimensional object. Figure 5 gives a general idea of what this 3-D shadow looks like.

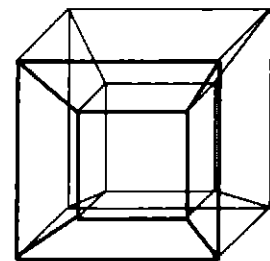


Figure 5

A four-cube (as mathematicians call it) has 16 vertices and 32 edges. The latter number represents the 32 paths of the Tree of Life. The number 16 represents the primordial alphabet from which other alphabets are believed to be derived. This can be found in the Hebrew alphabet by combining letters which can be interchanged (e.g., **א** and **ב**). Sixteen is also the number of geomantic figures.

The four-cube also looks like six truncated pyramids, their apexes forming the interior cube. This calls to mind Enochian magic ... another system where its model (i.e., the tablets) are often treated as flat surfaces even though they have depth; first, perceived as a grid of truncated pyramids, and, second, united into a 3-D cube.

In Minkowski's physics, the fourth

dimension is time. In terms of magical practice, consider the following: Other than during a "Great Magical Retirement" or similar long-term working, most ritual occupies a brief point in time. Thus, the fourth dimension is collapsed to a finite point (or duration), during which the entire continuum is ostensibly available to the magician via the principle of "quod superius, quod infernus" (as above, so below).

Five Dimensions

Just as three pairs of letters symbolize the three axes or six directions of three dimensional space, the ten sephiroth represent the polarities of five dimensional space. According to the Sepher Yetzirah, these five dimensions are north-south, east-west, up-down, past-future, and good-evil. The first four dimensions agree to the space-time continuum of modern physics. Interestingly, the fifth dimension is moral.

This 5-D projection explains why the supernal triad was missing from the Cube of Space, and why Malkuth appeared so incongruously at its center. In fact, these four sephiroth constitute the polarities of the fourth and fifth dimensions: Chokmah and Binah correspond to past-future, while Kether and Malkuth correspond to good-evil.

The five-cube contains 32 vertices, corresponding to the 32 paths of the Tree of Life. It also has 80 edges. The number 80 refers to **A**, the mouth which generates the sephiroth ("tellings") and the Kabbalah ("oral tradition"). This reinforces the notion that the essence of Kabbalah lies in its speaking and performance: in short, in experience.

Lest there be any doubt that the Tree of Life symbolizes five dimensional space, Kaplan writes:

"In general, a knife or cutting blade has one dimension less than the con-

tinuum that it cuts. In our three-dimensional continuum, a blade is essentially a two-dimensional plane. Therefore, in a five-dimensional continuum, one would expect a blade to have four dimensions. Such a blade would be a four-dimensional hypercube having 16 apexes. The Midrash states that God's sword has 16 edges, indicating that it is indeed a four-dimensional hypercube." (Sepher Yetzirah, p. 46)

And what does a five-dimensional hypercube look like? Check any book on multidimensional geometry and you'll see a drawing like Figure 6. Although this figure is a crude attempt to render a 5-D figure as a 2-D central projection, its similarities to the natural array (Figure 7) and the Tree of Life are very striking. Rotating the perspective on the five-cube produces something even closer.

This is especially interesting considering that the Sepher Yetzirah was written no later than 900 A.D. (and parts may pre-date the Talmudic period), while higher dimensional geometry was not explicated until the mid 1800s. Once I discovered this five-dimensional representation, I realized those wily old Kabbalists were onto something. Never again did the Tree of Life look flat.

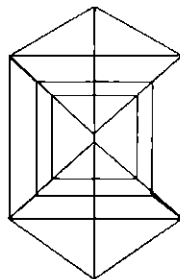


Figure 6

For More Information

The Cube of Space has been virtually ignored in magical writings. One

exception is Wang's Kabbalistic Tarot (1983), which devotes but a few pages to the subject. A decade later, Townley's The Cube of Space (1993) provided a personal exploration. Finally, Kaplan's Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation (1991) includes an enlightening discussion on the Cube of Space and the five dimensional Tree of Life.

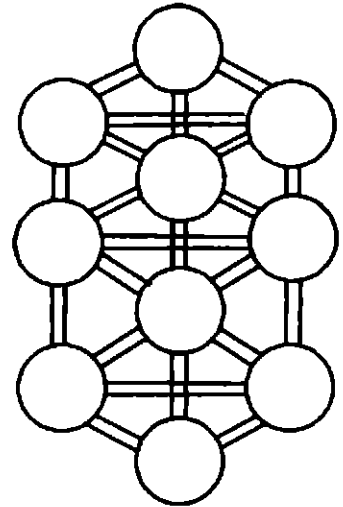
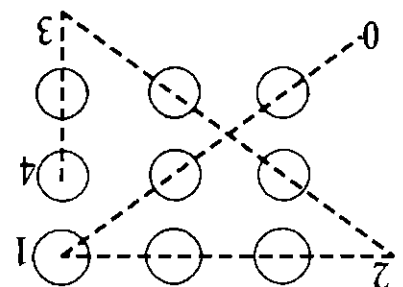


Figure 7

The square outlined by the nine circles creates an artificial boundary over which many people feel their lines cannot transcend ... even though this is not given in the instructions. In fact, the problem can only be solved by extending the lines outside of the imaginary square.



Review

WOMEN OF THE GOLDEN DAWN:

A Review/Commentary

by Donald Michael Kraig

I continue to find it fascinating that there is interest in what was a relatively small magical order, The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Over 100 years ago it was founded in England, under circumstances which remain cloudy even today, by three men interested in Freemasonry, Theosophy, Druidism, Hermeticism, Kabbalism, Rosicrucianism and Magick. Their first initiate was a woman.

I admit my own fascination with the group, and the numerous Orders going around today that in some way, uh, borrow (yes, I'm being generous!) from the rituals and structure popularized by the published information on the Golden Dawn show that others remain interested, too. I have seen various orders which take the name, add words to it (International, Thelemic, Heretical, New, Reformed, Eternal, Oxford, etc.) which imply that they are following the GD traditions, but then change many or most of the GD practices and teachings. "Making corrections" is what they call this, although what I've seen certainly brings their accuracy into question.

Other groups also "borrow" from the Golden Dawn but don't let their followers know this in their writings. I have some published chapbooks from an organization called the Ancient Mystical Order of Seekers (A.M.O.S. - Perhaps they have an Inner Order called something like the Arcane Numismatic Druidic Yobs or, well,

you figure it out). Their "ancient" teachings were photocopies of the GD initiations (with new names added for the officers) along with copies of the GD "knowledge lectures," sections from Crowley's *Magic in Theory and Practice* and information copied from a few other, modern sources.

While the interest in the GD remains high, I have been surprised that little has been written about some of the women who were members of the group. More than just being members, they were an intrinsic part of the GD and vital to the Order's existence. I have said for years that more research should be done on those striking women. For example, my guess is that the GD color scales were designed by the GD's first initiate, Moina Bergson Mathers. She had gone to art school and the color scales follow the theory of color popular at that time. I would like to see proof that I am either correct or wrong in this supposition.

That is why I was excited to find that Mary Greer, a highly respected professor and author of books on the Tarot, had written *Women of the Golden Dawn, Rebels and Priestesses* (1995. Park Street Press. Rochester, Vermont).

Unfortunately, my anxiousness to have such a book resulted in expectations on my part. I was looking for a book which discussed these women's lives and their importance to the Golden Dawn. I also had hoped to read about the magical rituals they performed and how they may have differed from the rituals designed in toto by men. By having expectations I set myself up to be disappointed.

As I read the book and thought about it over the past few weeks, I came to the conclusion that the title was wrong. It

should have been titled, "A Feminist Uses the Lives of Some Women of the Golden Dawn in an Attempt to Prove the Validity of Astrology". Many pages of this large book (490 pages, hardbound, \$29.95) are spent showing how the natal charts and transits of the four women she describes explain why certain events happened in their lives.

Of course, going back and looking in charts to show comparisons with events in the past proves nothing about astrology. It only shows that if you look at two things which occurred in the past closely enough you can find what appear to be relationships. To prove that astrology is accurate would require predictions for the future and show that the relationships in numerous future instances are not chance (see the work of the Gauquelin's for such proofs). Thus, one of the main aspects of this book was doomed to failure.

Curiously, Greer uses common, tropical astrology in her analysis. As several people have pointed out, the Golden Dawn's astrology (as seen in some of their published documents), is not tropical at all and seems to be an offshoot of sidereal astrology. In *The Rites of Modern Occult Magic*, Francis King writes (p. 203), "In Mathers' system [of 'initiated astrology'] the moving, or tropical, zodiac is abandoned in favour of a fixed sidereal zodiac in which the signs and constellations coincide and is measured from the star called Regulus, which is taken as being 0° Leo." Greer never addresses this sidereal/tropical dichotomy, nor does she explain why some of the astrological interpretations given by her subjects are based on tropical astrology. Why did they ignore the Order's (now lost, or at least unpublished) teachings? This would have been an interesting analysis, but, alas, it is not touched.

Another aspect of this book which I personally did not like was the focus on women-as-victims. Greer uses the approach found in Nina Auerbach's book, *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth*. The basic context is that women of the Victorian period were locked into four categories – Angel of the House, the woman who is the vital force behind a man but who stays in the background; Old Maid, an heroic figure in exile from society; Fallen Women, who can only advance through freedom of behaviour which goes against societal norms; and Outcasts, who exchanged "humiliating dependency for heroic exile in order to remake themselves and the world around them" (p. 20). Greer locks each of the four women she studies into one of the above categories, victims of the time and the conventions of society. What she doesn't show is how these unique, independent women were, as the title of her book implies, rebels who fought their perhaps unrealized victimization and broke through the categorical myths.

Unfortunately, the theme of the long and continuously suffering victim, a popular topic in some feminist and pop psychological literature, pervades this book. This is odd as one of the purposes of being a magician is self-empowerment and the ability to get through and rise above victimization, to be an actor rather than a reactor. Is not one of the purposes of practical magick to improve your own life and the lives of those around you? In my opinion, a magician who sees himself or herself as a victim denies his or her own magick.

I don't want to imply that this is a bad book, only that I found it very unsatisfying. I found the historical information on the four women – Moina Mathers, wife of the founder and eventual head of the Order; Maude Gonne, a leader in the

movement for freeing Ireland from British rule; Annie Horniman, wealthy supporter of the arts and the idea of a privately-supported repertory theater; and Florence Farr, unique and original actor, model for Shaw's "New Woman," and head of a GD temple – quite fascinating. Greer did much research, including finding previously unpublished documents, but relies mostly upon previously published biographies. Nowhere else can you find such a collection of material about these women in one place.

There are also a few insights into the Golden Dawn, such as Moina's direct admission that sex was discussed in the higher degrees of the Order, although it is unclear if this is mere theory or does have practical, magical applications. A less direct letter from Moina was printed in Howe's *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*. As in many other books on the GD, you will also find a great deal of historical information, but here it has a feminist point of view (that could lead into a discussion of the technique of literary criticism known as deconstructionism, but I leave that for the reader to examine on his or her own).

This feminist viewpoint invites new perspectives on the GD, but because the information is filtered through that attitude, it is open to error. For example, she claims that "astral visioning" (skrying) is something which is "scorned by many male magicians who deem it to be a self-indulgent waste of time: Francis King, for instance, believes skrying can make one an 'astral junky' ... " (p. 108). I cannot agree with that statement. First, I do not know any male magicians who deem skrying in the spirit vision to be "a self-indulgent waste of time." In fact, most of the magicians I know value it highly. It has also been my experience

that many women have a better natural proclivity for this magical technique (as I wrote in *Modern Magick*), and men who are not good at it highly respect anyone who is an excellent skryer.

Also, to state that King believed that "skrying can make one an 'astral junky'" is totally false. What King was discussing was that a group within the GD which had originally done skrying (and, as a private and secret group within the Order was involved with fraternal political disagreements and struggles) shifted from skrying to a form of mediumship which would today be called "channeling." One of the things both the skryers and the later channelers did was try to get new information from the "third order" (the highest level of the GD; members of which are not incarnated). As King writes in *The Rites of Modern Occult Magic* (p. 127), "... the Chiefs of the Amoun Temple [of the GD, by then (circa 1909) known as the Stella Matutina] in London became as addicted to mediumship and astral travel as a drug-addict is to heroin!" Later he adds that their misinterpretation of GD techniques of astral projection and travel may have been derived from their spiritualistic interpretation of the work done by the skrying group (Florence Farr's "Sphere" group), "but they indulged in them to a far greater extent" (p. 127).

Much of the information they obtained, channeled from an "Arab" named Ara ben Shemesh, was adopted by Dr. Felkin, who took the information (including such things as changing the traditional color scales with no reason) with him to New Zealand. This certainly brings into question information that comes from those whose training came directly or indirectly from the GD in that area. To sum up, contrary to Greer's claim, King was

criticizing channeling without checking on the validity of the information thus obtained (contrary to the technique used by the GD), and not skrying. King even claims that a seance was held in the Vault of the Adepts in 1909, something entirely foreign to the system of the GD.

Later (p. 244), Greer even admits that there were problems with the Sphere Group. "Annie [Homimann] saw the problem [keeping accurate records of admissions, examinations and members] as an evasion of 'laws and precedents,' which she blamed on the existence of secret groups within the Order, especially the Sphere Group."

Greer also focuses on the idea that members of the GD would choose their magical mottos as the result of close examination of personal desires and goals. In fact, many of the members simply looked up family mottos from a resource book and used those. When Mathers determined that originally his surname should have been MacGregor, he took the motto of the clan MacGregor as his own (" 'S Rioghail Mo Dhream").

Greer's statement (p. 160) that Thomas Lake Harris developed Karezza, is also in error, although her description of Karezza, "a trance state induced by a kind of yogic breath-control during sexual intercourse, in which the participants, sitting face to face, withheld both movement and physical orgasm," is correct. In fact, Harris (according to Catherine Yronwode's article, "Tantra, Male Continence and Karezza" as posted on the internet) "did not practice Karezza by that name nor did he practice it in form. He, like many others, followed the lead of Henry Noyes of the Oneida Community and practiced 'Male Continence.' In this tantra-like sexual system, female orgasms are allowed and encouraged."

Karezza should be traced to a woman named Alice Bunker Stockham. She was a gynecologist and revolutionary interested in women's suffrage, birth control, prohibition of alcohol, rehabilitation of prostitutes and eugenics. She "invented, named and taught Karezza, based in part on Noyes' Male Continence and in part on Hindu tantra yoga, which she had also studied in India but with one difference – she asked that her female followers also abstain from orgasm."

Ms. Greer seems to have some problem with Aleister Crowley. As a result of the infamous incident in which he tried to take over the London Temple for Mathers when the Order was trying to liberate itself from Mathers' growing dictatorial attitude, he is described as Mathers' "henchman" (p. 245). The choice of this word and its negative baggage seem to indicate her negative attitude toward Crowley. She could have just as easily described him as "loyal to the man who was the head of the Order to which he had dedicated himself and proud to function as his leader's representative." In the same paragraph she described how Crowley shortly thereafter went to New York and then Mexico. She claimed that "Everyone sighed with relief" because Crowley had removed himself from the picture. In such a well-documented book I am surprised that she offers no proof for this defamatory statement.

On page 246 Ms. Greer claims that Maude Gonno's sister (as well as Maude) were not satisfied with the GD because of its Masonic basis and "conspiracies of wealth and power with 'Semitic' (meaning Kabbalistic) tendencies." Again, she offers no proof of the idea that Semitic means Kabbalistic. In fact, what is probably

true is that they were referring to the still occurring (and false) belief in international conspiracies between Jews and Freemasons to take over the world. It was described in the infamous *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*.

Later, a former head of a GD temple (who had been pushed through the degrees so that others could use her natural, mediumistic abilities) denied the Order and revealed her twisted interpretation of them and the "conspiracy" as "Inquire Within," author of *Lightbearers of Darkness* and *Trail of the Serpent*. This type of foolishness goes on today as you can hear if you listen to so-called "Christian" radio and television, and especially the teachings of Pat Robertson who adds Trilateralists and others to the conspiracy brew. In short, it was a statement of paranoia and anti-semitism, something which Greer seems to want to deny.

Near the beginning of this article I described the fact that I disliked the "women as victims" attitude which I feel pervades the book. On page 377 she writes, quoting Gerda Lerner in *The Creation of Patriarchy*, "It is only through the discovery and acknowledgement of their roots, their past, their history, that women, like other groups, become enabled to project an alternate future." I cannot agree with this. True, there are many therapists who claim that by focusing on history and our personal past we (both men and women) are able to create a better future. In fact, merely focusing on the past and personal and societal victimhood, we stay victims. This was fully described in the book, *Return of the Furies* by Wakefield and Underwager (1994. Open Court, Peru, Illinois).

The real problem in my opinion, is that these therapists do not go on to the logical next step and ask, "Okay, you were

a victim. Now what do you do? How do you stop being a victim?" and then help their clients move away from victimhood into freedom. Focus on something and you create it – this is a corollary of magick. Of course, if these therapists keep their clients as victims, the clients will keep returning for more "therapy." However, to claim that these so-called therapists are just greedy bottom-dwellers may be overstating the facts (at least in some cases).

Greer correctly says that "The story of the Golden Dawn and its women has been preserved primarily by men." She adds, "I have made a deliberate effort to look for and present ideas and events from the women's point of view. This shift has led to new perspectives, new possibilities, that are both personal and *political*" (emphasis added). Here we come to the crux of the problem with this book – it is not about the Golden Dawn or even about the Women of the Golden Dawn and their amazing contributions to occultism and society. Rather, it is a political document intended to present a particular view of feminism.

It is true that the male historians of the GD tended to ignore the women who played such vital roles in the Order and in society. Their sexism discounted the women's roles and made them invisible. But Greer doesn't merely ignore the men. She describes them either as weaklings controlled by passions or as bullies who need to dominate others, especially women. Personally, I find this view of men as offensive as the sexism of the male authors. It is a view which is both anti-male and dated. For a more advanced version of a freedom-oriented philosophy of honor and respect for all I suggest the book, *The Dialectic of Sex* by Shulamith Firestone. It focuses on liberation and freedom for every-

one and presents a possible future which is inclusive rather than exclusive.

But instead of a forward attitude, she makes some of this book a political assault. "Over the next two years Pixie [Pamela Colman Smith] was to paint ... [what] would become the world's most popular Tarot deck, the Rider-Waite Tarot, or, as is more correctly called by feminists today, the Smith-Waite deck" (p. 318). It has been a time-held tradition that employers, rightly or wrongly, take credit for the work of their artisans, male or female. You don't see the name of everyone who designed, created parts and built a car, you merely see the name of the company which employs them. The names of men and women who painted in the styles of the more famous artists they worked for have been lost over time, their works being listed as "from the school" of the famous artist. Smith deserves credit for the cards she painted. But what about the person(s) who created the necessary "separations" which allowed them to be printed? Why doesn't he/she/they get credit, too? And while it may be true that some feminists refer to it as the Smith-Waite deck, she gives no proof for her claim.

Greer even goes so far as to deny Waite's involvement with the major original aspect of the deck. "... [T]he Minor Arcana number-cards are original works that were only loosely imagined by Waite if *at all*" (p. 406, emphasis in original). Her "proof" for this claim is two-fold. On page 457 is a statement that in one earlier deck, of which there is a copy in the British Museum, there are a few cards of the Minor Arcana which, unlike other decks until the Rider-Waite deck, had pictures on them.

Greer ignores the fact that Waite was a scholar (although a very pedantic one) and would have frequently visited the British Museum. My guess, therefore, is that Waite found the pictures of the cards and showed them to Smith. My proof, which admittedly is not strong, is that Waite writes (in *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*), in his description of the two of cups, that the Caduceus and lion's head is "a variant of a sign which is found in a few old examples of this card." So chances are the designs were by Waite and the fulfillment of the designs were by Smith. For this she should receive due credit, just as Lady Harris should receive full credit for brilliantly realizing the designs of Crowley for the Thoth deck.

Greer's second proof that Waite may have had little to do with the design of many of the cards, especially the Minor Arcana, comes from her quote from Rachel Pollack's "... second volume of *Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom*, [where she writes that] many of Smith's cards do not follow the descriptions given in Waite's book on the Tarot." This is not true; the descriptions match entirely. However, some of his interpretations do not seem to match some of the illustrations. He does write, however, that his interpretations are only "intimations," and that people with psychic ability will create their own meanings based on the images.

Could Waite have been consciously deceptive and misleading? My contention is that he was. In the introduction to the *Pictorial Key* he writes about the meanings of the cards, saying that, "... they are the truth so far as they go.

"It is regrettable in several respects that I must confess to certain reservations, but there is a question of honour here ... [Charlatans] scatter dust in the

eyes of the world ... [so] I feel that the time has come to say what it is possible to say..." In short, although he based his ideas on the Golden Dawn teachings, he valued his vows and refused to reveal the secrets of the Golden Dawn Tarot deck, its images and full meanings. That is why he says he did not include the Hebrew attributions on the cards: others who had done so had "nearly every attribution ... wrong." This, of course, implies that he must have known the correct ones, the ones used by the Golden Dawn, the ones on the deck which he must have used within the GD. Like a dedicated member of any magickal order, he refused to reveal the meanings to the uninitiate.

There are errors in this book which are compounded by an admitted political agenda and a fruitless, *ex post facto* attempt to prove the accuracy of astrology. But in no other single source can you find such a collection of information about the lives of four important GD women. It is hoped that in the future some of the other, lesser-known women of the GD will also be investigated. Perhaps the most interesting of the other women was the author Fiona Mcleod. Her writings are said to be totally from a woman's point of view, and yet she was not an incarnate woman but an entity who at times took possession of the body of a man, literary journalist William Sharp.

Some feminists will find this book interesting. Members of various Golden Dawn and other occult groups will find little that is not available elsewhere and may wish to wait until this book is reissued or comes out in paperback. Some Pagan women who read this book may be surprised at the leading roles many women played in the Golden Dawn. This may cause a few to reassess any negative opinions of

Ceremonial Magick which they might hold.

But the fact is that missing *Women of the Golden Dawn* will be no great loss to most occultists unless they are collectors of anything to do with the Golden Dawn. They, like myself, will find this book – even with all its problems – a necessity.

THE CELESTIAL BAR A Spiritual Journey

Tom Youngholm

Delacorte Press

ISBN: 0-385-31548-1

Reviewed by Robert Ross

"Throughout most of my life, during the challenging and even the happier times, I felt that something was missing. I didn't know what it was, just that I didn't have it" says Tom Youngholm, the author of *The Celestial Bar*.

A few years ago, Tom Youngholm was meditating. In his words, "it was a very deep meditation". He felt a hand gently rocking him and he made contact with what he calls his spirit guides. "For thirty minutes I went somewhere, and when I came out of that meditation I knew things I hadn't known before. I could explain reincarnation, spirit guides and angels". With a little prodding from his "guides", *The Celestial Bar* was written.

In this book, Mr. Youngholm's alter ego, Johnathan "Digger" Taylor is a forty something would-be composer whose life has been a series of failures and broken relationships. He's stalked by an ongoing nightmare that affects his dreaming and waking state. Digger is searching for something that will not only lessen the sense of foreboding that he has in life, but will also bring him a realization of balance and completeness.

He finally gets the break in life that he's been looking for, an opportunity to compose a music score for a major motion picture. He's invited to an audition, arriving early and exhausted, he takes a nap in the studio's dressing room. Soon, in his dreams, Digger Taylor is again being pursued by the foreboding force which has been stalking him for years.

In his attempt to escape the force, he enters a fictional bar (as in drinking establishment) called the Celestial Bar. In this cosmic tavern, "Digger" meets some very unusual people; Ahmay, a Shoshone medium who acts as his spiritual guide; Paula, who he recognizes as the love of his life and soulmate; and Ramda, an interactive computer who adds new meaning to the term "virtual reality". All of these characters assist him in putting his life back on track and discovering PEIS – physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual balance.

Five minutes before Digger's audition is to begin, he's awakened by the stage manager. Of course, he's not the same person who went to sleep an hour earlier. Digger auditions of course, and ... well, it's worth reading the book just to read about the experience of the audition.

The Celestial Bar is in many ways similar to *The Celestine Prophecy* in that it mixes storytelling with truth in a way that entertains, yet has us thinking. The book is an enjoyable read, and reminds us of that search for balance that needs our constant attention.

The power of word

Continued from page 11

the future. The magickal formula is, "...because I said so." This may sound wild but it works and I dare you to try it. This practice that can apply to every area of your life, and includes such ordeals as knowing your limits and setting your boundaries on how much you are Willing to do. Keeping your word is the most direct way for a passive observer to become an active participant, which will change the whole direction of your life.

Of course, one man's honesty is another's bald-faced lie. We all know what "Truth" and "Honesty" are — they are totally subjective. We all know the value of bending the truth to protect innocents, so let's not get into that sophomoric debate. I have found that I can justify my own Truth within the limits of my own reason.

Haven't you ever been in a situation where someone was just aghast over something you did, and no amount of your reason could explain it to them? The same principle works on your internal planes: if you have to stretch to justify an action to yourself, you sense that you have tipped the balance of karma away from your favor. As always, it takes a great deal of balance and concentration to ride that razor's edge.

Magick-workers are supposed to have a knowledge of the value of symbolism. Hey, words are symbols too! Unfortunately, since words are with us all the time and "magickal talismans" are not, we tend to overlook the power of words. Do you take what you say in circle more seriously than your everyday chatter? Why? I have stated in other articles that in magick, it is the intent that matters, and many will agree with me. One thing I wonder about, though, is the power of an offhand remark.

One wintry night, while living out in the country, I was awakened in the wee hours by fits of sirens and rumbles of trucks. Not a typical quiet night in the country. My bedroom window faced the road, and each time a vehicle would blast by, I would get more aggravated. I looked out the window to see what was going on, but the commotion was just beyond my view. "I sure would like to know what's going on over there," I grumbled as I got back into bed and tried to go back to sleep. One week later...a woman came to my door and asked to use the phone. I let her in, and we got to talking about how awful the hilly roads were in the winter. She said, "Why just last week, my sister's boyfriend ran off the road just down from here, about three in the morning!" Since I do take my words seriously (and not so seriously), and have experienced similar phenomena in not being careful what I wished for, what exactly is the effect of pebbles dropped into the pond without thinking? Hopefully, the word that is Thoth manifests before the Word comes out the mouth.

Those groups of words that we call "magickal formulas" we could also call "cliches." They are truisms that have been said so many times and accepted as the workings of Universe, they've become trite. We accumulate blocks to the truth of cliches of our own accord. Yet we are only using two different labels for the same animal! One of the most powerful magickal formulas is, "I don't know." These simple words, when spoken, can bring on Beginner's Mind, openness to learning, which is the key to all growth. Don't just change the channel on things you have heard before, but examine EVERYTHING for any clue that it might hold for YOUR

Truth. When the opening of Tiphareth

came for me, I realized that my Angel was speaking to me in popular songs, resonating through my head. O the Resourceful One! When this illuminating but annoying stage was over, It started speaking to me in cliches. Now THAT was aggravating. However, by this time I was also so entranced that I started looking for Its/Our Truth everywhere, which became another incredible adventure.

Unfortunately, these conventions of thought that I write in are a mask between you and I, and what I truly mean and what you perceive. Word is the first and last veil between being and ...everything.

The cult of the divine artist

Continued from page 21

inspiration. The Initiates of the Typhonian Ordo Templi Orientis, Ani Asig for his support, and Aossic Aiwass for his invaluable correspondence upon these matters. Lastly, Fr. Baselek, an independent magician whose mediumistic insight has penetrated the arcanum beyond!

May the Blessing be upon all who drink from the Cup of this Mystery!

Editorial

by Kenneth Deigh

Samhain, the time of year when the boundaries between the worlds are barely present, making way for inspiration, instigation and other forms of spirit chatter - a Pagan New Year's of sorts. In addition, the production schedule for this issue falls around Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year; a time for reflection on the past and setting of clear paths for the future. This is a season to reflect on the path that has brought each of us the present moment, and which will carry us onward from the here and now. This is a time to consider the quality of that path; how we can improve it, how we can clarify it, so that we - and others - can understand it more fully.

Recently I performed a handfasting for a NeoPagan couple. While sitting at the reception afterwards, I was approached by a woman with a question that speaks directly to the issue of healthy boundaries and to our goals for the magickal/pagan community as a whole.

The question she asked was essentially: Can you be monogamous and still be Pagan? She had become active in her local community about a year ago, and, being an attractive woman, had received a lot of attention from both men and women who wanted to engage her sexually. All well and good - so far. The difficulty came

when many of them would not take "no"

for an answer. They persisted in their attentions, even to the point of approaching her at her job. Finally, she became so disenchanted that she withdrew from the community entirely.

Hearing her story, I found myself wondering how people who call themselves "pagan" could justify such behavior. We are supposedly tolerant and supportive of other people's beliefs and values, even when we don't happen to share them ourselves. Are there people in our community who feel that each individual is not entitled to place their boundaries where they choose - including the choice to be more exclusive in their choice of sexual partners? Apparently so. And this saddens me. This can by no means be an isolated incident, and if this is the image we present to new people seeking to enter our community, what sort of long term goals can we hope to achieve?

Personally, I believe there can be no real positive growth in our extended Magickal Family until this issue is addressed and dealt with in a clear and decisive manner. I invite your response.

Wishing you a Blessed New Year,



Kenneth Deigh

Neophyte's Niche

by Donna Stanford-Blake

The Next Step

I am at the top of a tall roller coaster looking down. I feel stark terror. I want to vacate the car NOW! It doesn't matter that I am one hundred feet up and still climbing. I want out - NOW! Yet, deep within I really want to do this and I know I will enjoy the ride. But for that eternally long moment near the summit of the tallest hill - I want out!

That's what my life feels like. I have worked long and hard climbing my personal mountain (no insignificant little hill!). But now I no longer see the path going up. It seems to drop right out from under me. In the distance, I see other parts of the track but immediately in front - nothing. I can not stop my forward progress and there is no way to get out, at least not without significant personal harm. So, I must go forward. Arrrghhh!!!!

The next step in my magickal growth felt like this a couple of months ago. I went over the top of the hill and down the other side. I did enjoy the ride - eventually. But the sheer terror of that first step into the unknown remains etched in my memory.

In magickal, spiritual growth many steps build one's path. No, not all of them involve the emotional turmoil I describe. Sometimes the next step follows the previous easily, effortlessly. Sigh... But usually our egos and attitudes fight and struggle every inch of the way as we strive to unfold.

Next steps occur at forks in our

paths as well as at emotionally laden events - births, weddings, funerals. Or any other thing that triggers a response deep within the psyche. You know - another fucking growth opportunity. Yep, the next step on your path in disguise.

It is how we choose to respond to these events that directs our path. The one ironic and universal truth to choosing magick or any other spiritual growth discipline is once started you cannot go back. Sure, you might stop practicing, doing rituals or keeping your journal. But you already set the process in motion. You will never be the same. Remember - this is GOOD! Overcoming the fear of change ranks up there as one of the biggest lessons to learn. Most of us use the rest of our lives perfecting that one! In fact, this basic fear lies at the root of all our quandaries in taking the next step.

Instead of using my magickal tools to ease my journey down my mountain (that I had carefully constructed from a mole hill), I conjured visions of failure and "what ifs". What if I fail? What if no one ever likes me again? What if I really haven't grown? What if I'm not really a magickian? Fear.

The one constant it seems in this thing called life is our battle with fear. Strangely, I have found if I name it and look at it, the feelings of terror evaporate like mist. And I take the next step, without having to go down the roller coaster. Of course if you like roller coasters - be my guest!

A baby learns to walk. First taking one unsteady step, then another. After much practice, the infant learns that if the body leans forward the feet must follow or kerplunk! I've seen teetering toddlers leading adults a merry chase using this

method. Lean forward, get gravity going, build momentum and the feet must follow - faster and faster. Of course, until control is learned, a few tumbles are inevitable.

Path walking and step taking become more like this process when fears are quickly dealt with. Yes, it is a learning process. But it doesn't need to be nearly as painful as we make it. Which is another point to keep firmly in mind. We are magickians even when we do not chose to acknowledge it. WE create our realities - pain, roller coasters and all.

So next time another growth opportunity comes your way, ask yourself why you have chosen to experience this. Maybe you cannot yet accept the fact you created the event. Accept this fact, so that you can choose how to respond. I am learning that first I must allow myself to feel any emotion that comes up. I do not need to act on them, just feel and acknowledge. Then, after the emotions subside, I chose how to respond. Step taking becomes easier and more rewarding.

At this time I feel I'm at a crossroads in my path. I see many different directions in which to go. But I feel confused as to which way to go. Actually, it isn't a fork in the road - it's an octopus. How can I take my next step, confidently?

First I need to take my own advice and journal. What patterns do I see? Is there a pattern of fears I need to confront? I also need to list all my options and the benefits and drawbacks of each. Then listen, really listen to my inner self. Are there little screams of fear and doubt I am ignoring? What are my emotions? Am I allowing myself to experience them fully or am I stuffing them? In the midst of this I need to continue my magick. I need to do temple and sit in stillness. Often, I find my answers there. Amazing! Mostly, I feel the

need for time. To stop the merry-go-round of my life (or at least slow it down) and consider where I am going and where I want to go.

In the last year I took several major steps; two initiations, a betrothal, a new house, two moves, a funeral. On the list of major life changes I feel I have done my fair share. So before my next step I am taking time for ME. Which is a step in itself!

So, after fifteen continuous issues, Neophyte's Niche will not appear for at least the next issue.

Then I will lean out, put my foot forward and take my next step - and the next and the next and the next...

I would like to thank all my readers for their support and helpful comments. It has been a wonderful growth opportunity to write Neophyte's Niche for the last three and a half years. I will return!

In Peace,

Donna Stanford-Blake

Letters to the editor

Dear Managing Editor:

I just had read the Beltane '95 edition of MEZLIM, and was very pleased with the depth of understanding in the discussions on sexual orientation in the magickal community. I found Paul Ravenscraft's "Sexual Identity as a Spectrum of Possibility" and Morgana's "Sexual Orientation, Gender, and that 'Polarity' Business" both to be thoughtful and enlightening. Where I disagree, however, is with Ivo Dominguez's "Three Gay Male Archetypes" which seem short-sighted for the modern gay man - especially the

modern gay man who is also a pagan.

The three archetypes which Dominguez chooses are very closely related to the stereotypes that modern society holds for us; and comes at a time when the gay community is struggling very hard to broaden its own self-perception and the perception of the larger society. We must remember with these archetypes, as with all others, we should not limit the facets that the triple god/dess can take; and this includes their images as gay or lesbian. We are not one dimensional people, and our archetypes of the gods/desses should not be either. We do not have to accept standardized precepts - or archetypes. The point is, that when choosing an archetype, we should not be afraid to explore all the facets of the diamond that we, as children of the Great Lady and the Horned God, truly are.

Sexual orientation is a difficult issue, and I must say, that as a young gay man, and a novice on the Wiccan path, I appreciate the Wisdom and compassion that is expressed in this issue of MEZLIM. Taken as a whole, I'd say that this collection of addresses demonstrates that the magickal community is heading in the right direction in terms of understanding and acceptance of differing orientations.

Let's hope that society can eventually move in the same direction. But until then, it is good to know that there is a place where we can all call home.

I am, yours in the Craft,

Joshua ap Herne-Dragonsong

Dear N'Chi and Friends,

I just finished reading the latest issue of MEZLIM and my sides are aching from laughter. Such a feast of sacred (and profane!) humor.

Refreshing, invigorat-

ing, orgasmic, enlightening. Loved it.

As always, bright blessings!

Goldie

...we are bards

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private letter to the present author)

As Magicians, we all should be artists. The artist penetrates into her/his inner world to find inspiration, her/his inspiration is a side-kick, of her/his self-knowledge.

As Magicians, we all should penetrate into our inner worlds to find self-knowledge, and self-knowledge may bring us artistic inspiration.

This is the Aeon of Horus, the Crowned and Conquering Child (I start being boring, don't I?), so don't look for a bard without: look for the bard within, and you'll find the Bard; the only one who can sing about your own feelings, your own life, your own happiness or sadness.

There are, of course, legends and myths about the bards of the past and Ossian is our model, but it is a model that must be updated.

Please, think about it deeply: this new magick has set upon each of us the most beautiful task, the Great Work and the spreading of our Culture all over the world. This we must sing about, now.

Otherwise our children won't have anything updated to sing around the bonfires: what do you expect, that they read Waite's books while banging the drums? I am afraid that even my beloved Equinox would not do around the bonfires. Songs about our own quest are the most wonderful legacy we can leave them. We are tomorrow's legends.

Love is the law, love under will.

...festival drummer

Continued from page 5

heard as the night moves on and people begin to leave the Fire. The number of drummers decreases and the rhythms grow more pointed and complex. Beats that call to specific Deities are played to invoke or evoke their presence. Dancers may be moved into possession by the Deities that are called.

Specific Drumming may show up in any tempo or speed. Some pre-knowledge of the rhythms played is usually helpful but intent listening usually reveals a rhythmic pattern that a drummer new to a particular beat can play. Festivals are great opportunities for learning new rhythms and many of the rhythms learnt fall into the Specific category.

TRANCE DRUMMING:

Trance Drumming is usually very late night/early morning drumming. Relatively few people remain at the Fire and those who do usually have a deep commitment to contacting the Sacred. Rhythms associated with trance drumming are customarily slower in tempo and quite simple in outward structure. Rhythmic phrases are repeated over and over until the drummers and other participants are swept into an altered state of consciousness by the repetition of the rhythmic phrase.

I find that Trance Drumming is very similar to mantric yoga. At a Festival I attended some time ago, Trance Drumming was practiced before a shrine dedicated to ancestral spirits. While I was drumming, I became aware of various aches and pains in my body from holding a constant position while drumming. After awhile I moved beyond the discomfort into a space where the drum rhythm filled my consciousness. The next step in my experi-

ence of the Trance Drumming process can be compared to the flickering of a candle. Awareness comes and goes ... it seems to flicker on and off. It pushes off from the rhythm being played and returns to the rhythm after a spell of profound inner silence.

In summary, it may be beneficial to distinguish between three styles of Festival Drumming:

1.COMMUNITY DRUM STYLE -

This style calls forth the spirit of the community and is a celebration of the trust and respect shared by the Festival goers. It is usually the first style of drumming heard around the Festival Fire.

2.SPECIFIC DRUM STYLE -

Here the drummers play specific rhythms in order to invoke/evoke specific Deities. Festivals are excellent environments for drummers to teach and learn new rhythms and many of the rhythms shared between drummers are Specific in nature. The Specific style of drumming ordinarily follows the Community Style.

3.TRANCE DRUM STYLE -

This style of Festival Drumming is ordinarily associated with intense magickal work. Simple rhythmic phrases are repeated in order to induce a trance state. This style of drumming is commonly the last played and many Festival goers greet the dawn to the sound of Trance Drumming.

"Bard" is a word used to designate a position; a position dressed in characteristics that distinguish it from other roles and positions. "Temple Drummer" is an apt term to describe those drummers who play for and to Spirit at home and at Festivals.

The term Temple Drummer is meant to

describe both a type of drummer and a position and role in a magickal group. It is common for Festivals to nurture the growth of Temple Drummers and for these drummers to take their new skills and magicks back to the mystical groups with whom they work.

Many groups have positions such as Priest or Priestess. The position of Temple Drummer can also be of great value to the functioning of a group. The position could be vested in one individual or float from one member to another as situation and skill prescribe. Initiations into the position of Temple Drummer can be performed based upon the group's orientation and the drummer's relationship to Spirit.

The primary role of the Temple Drummer is to call/assist in the calling of Spirit. Other functions that the Sacred Drummer could perform in a magickal group include; signaling the opening and the closing of the rites, providing a unifying framework for songs and chants, supplying rhythms for group and individual ritual dances, setting a pace for the ritual work at hand by either speeding up or slowing down the rhythm being played, and bolstering mood changes within the rite by varying the volume of the playing. I have often times observed a shift in the confidence level of ritualists when drums are included in the rite. People who are reticent to speak lines, invocations, etc. in a silent environment quite frequently forcefully project their parts when a background of drumming is present.

The Temple Drummer walks hand in hand with Spirit. S/he uses the sound and silence of the drum to speak the endless Names of Spirit. The drum not only talks, it listens. It pulls into itself the Names it speaks and grows more powerful in the process.

Perhaps it is well that the Bard of

the Festival Movement seems to speak through the tight membrane of the drum. The drum is the most primary of instruments. It can connect the very old with the very new. As one of the three Temple Drummers of the RAMPART STREET SPIRITUAL VOODOO TEMPLE in New Orleans, I play for many of the ceremonies. A very large casino has been built across the street from the Temple and it advertises its presence with a 3 to 4 hour laser light show almost every night. There is nothing that quite describes the feeling of playing the ancient rhythms in a crumbling courtyard built when Marie Laveau and Dr. John walked the cobblestone streets of the city ... all the while the night sky is ablaze with a battery of lasers. BLADERUNNER never had it so good.

...yesterday

Continued from page 9

one can consciously find that number and enact communication.

Now here is where the real responsibility comes in. As a musical "healer", one must ensure that they are empathic enough to communicate the right message or information to do the maximum benefit to the listener. There are of course certain ethical standards involved as well. One should not use their music with the intent of harming or gaining control over someone. Ideally, the musician should ask permission before arcanelly using music or there must at least be the knowledge by all parties involved that the music will be reinforcing or creating magick (much like during a ritual or celebration). Something that I have found useful is to spend some time in meditation before playing in front of a group or if my

music is to be used for more than "entertainment". I seek wisdom during this time of preparation to play the songs needed and the ability to read the underlying currents so that I may have smoother sailing.

We all have seen how music can drive a person to self-destruction or lead countries to war. I firmly believe that if a person is weak spiritually and mentally, they will be wide open for this kind of influence. And it is evident that if a person refuses to let down their mental barriers, they will be mostly unaffected by musical influences. Of course, we all have some genre of music that will grate our nerves (ok, so some say that bagpipes sound like two cats fighting...), but if one is strong, they can at least tolerate it until the light changes to green, so to speak.

In ending, I would like to also mention that it is not only skill that is important, but to be in tune with the forces around you (another bad pun). Sincerity and a fervent desire to use your music to lighten the heavy heart, ease burdens, teach, and learn are vital skills that must not be lost. Mechanical, formulaic barding can be quite counter-productive. It is one thing in the studio to hone a song to perfection, but to try something like that during a celebration around a sacred fire is basically closing yourself off to the influence of the deities and what wonders could transpire during a truly inspired session of drumming and dancing. Meditate on your music, seek your muse, and share it!

Blessed Be!

To Dream

Continued from page 23

wildly about, lacking the discipline to move steadily forward upon her path. It was not responsible (a value which she clearly cherished) to assume tasks and instill trust in others regarding their completion, and then fail to accomplish all but the most pressing of details.

She saw clearly that her image of herself as busy but productive was not reflected in her actions or her life. She was busy, but she accomplished little or nothing. Her life was not a joy, was not even productive, but rather was evidence of the ultimate uselessness of a frantic human "doing" rather than the progress of a centered human "being".

Focus, discipline, responsibility. She had had her "fun" (as in NOT!), and it was time to get on with her Work (and hopefully a lot more real fun as part of the process). She was ready to move from the wind-buffed periphery of her own personal tornado to its center ... and to begin to assume control of its power. It was her biggest challenge yet, but somehow she believed that this one would provide her with both the growth and the peace she sought. To dream.....

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