

The Chaos Files

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Preface

The current is changing. Again.

Magic is no longer the exclusive province of grey-beard occultists, tree hugging crystal mongers and blue-haired old lady fortune-tellers.

Once again the world is seeing a magical "revival". In fact, this time it's a revival within a revival. Ever since the 1960's, the magical world-view has been rising in popularity, although most of this current was seized upon by the New Age bunny-foo-foo-white-light-feel-goody's, and we get to squirm at the spectacle of yuppies with more money than sense dropping thousands of bucks to participate in seminars teaching cheap tricks like fire-pit walking and spending similar amounts on "crystal

healing vibration generators" consisting of a cheap plastic box, six square inches of velvet polyester and a rock.

On the other end of the spectrum, we have the grand exalted pooh-bahs belonging to "mystical Orders" with pretentious names like The Ancient and Accepted Brotherhood of Magickal Adeptus Majors . Occasional variants include the Tai Chi Masters of the Secret Hidden Tanrta or the Followers of the Great Magus What's-His-Nameus. These types will be notable for their ability to rattle off long lists of enlightened authors of sacred tomes, usually only acceptable if their sources are (supposedly) over one thousand years old, are unpublished outside their "circle", and/or are written in Latin, Mandarin or Sanskrit. If you really think it's your true purpose in life to spend a couple of decades practicing your "kerazzas" or "middle pillar" exercises under the tutelage of some old guy with a stick who must be addressed as "master" and then only with your head on the floor and your butt in the air, then please drop this book now and go find them. You'll be happier, trust me.

Be aware that due to the pressure of political correctness these days, only the occasional "avatar" of the Sacred Seunzikiko Whoopie will be so boorish as to insist that theirs is the "only" way to enlightenment/power/nirvana/cosmic truth. With a condescending smile they will inform you that, yes, there are many paths to the "truth", but theirs however is the only one that any person with sense/strength/seriousness/dedication/the right stuff/in their right mind could possibly choose unless they were a total idiot. And since you're not on their path, this means you, you upstart little Chaos Mage.

This by no means implies that old-school occultists are all like that. I have many friends in such organizations and they are very pleasant companions; they appreciate the rush of fresh air that Chaos Magic has brought to the occult world - it keeps them from taking themselves too seriously.

However, there are some people who are taking up the study of magic with a clear head, and trying to integrate the theories of modern science into a magical paradigm that can function without the need of being sanctioned by a "higher power"; to take the advancements of philosophy and apply them to something other than sarcasm and cosmic one-ups-manship. Religion has held the rights to mystical experience for far too long; it's time for a new way of thought that transcends transcendentalism.

Nor is it the first time this has happened in the long history of the mystical arts. The priests of Horus overthrew the followers of Set in ancient Egypt. A millenium later Moses out-magicked the heirs of that priesthood to set his people free. And their entrenched hierarchy was in turn overthrown a millenium later by a precocious young carpenter and magician extraordinaire from the small town of Bethlehem.

And so it goes.

It seems like spiritual revolutions are a requirement of history. Only now they come, like everything else, fast and furious. The unpretentious carpenter's pretentious heirs did their level best to stamp out all competition, but along the time that we now call the Renaissance came another revolution in mysticism. However, getting there was not much fun, as many, many thousands of people were put to death in Europe alone for worshipping the wrong god.

In the 19th century some people tried to unearth the old occult knowledge, and succeeded to some degree; the period saw the emergence of the Rosicrucians (whose desendants still run those cute ads in the backs of comic books) and a particularly successful offshoot called the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. One of their notable alumni was an eccentric Englishman from a well-to-do family named Alexander (aka Aleister) Edward Crowley. He was considered quite the wet-behind-the-ears radical in his time. He got called "The Wickedest Man Alive" by the English press and spent most of his life trying to live up to the label. He produced what might have been the forerunner of modern "performance art" as well: a series of magical ceremonies conducted for a paying audience in London. The fact that many of the scenes featured nudity was probably what annoyed the Victorians so much.

Then he really annoyed the occult establishment by publishing a lot of the Golden Dawn's and other "secret" occult societies "secrets" for consumption by the general public, and proclaimed himself the "Magus of the New Aeon".

He's had a lot of company since then.

New Aeons and Magi to accompany them come, as I said, fast and furious these days. The life expectancy of a Magical Aeon is about five years as of this writing. Why is it all coming to a head now?

We are lucky (or unlucky) enough to be incarnate at the dawn of a new millenium. If one happens to have a propensity for dabbling in the occult arts, then the lesson of history should be heeded. The last time a

millenium change rolled around, most of Europe was caught up in a raging case of "Millenium Fever". The appearance of the Black Death did nothing to assuage the creeping feeling that the world was coming to an end. Doomsayers filled every public square. People cast off their worldly goods in a frenzy, scourged themselves bloody, went off on impossible pilgrimages of hundreds of miles on foot and generally went stark raving mad, all because a particular calendar date loomed in the near future. It didn't matter that the date itself was completely arbitrary - in fact, as near as modern historians can figure, the carpenter-magician's year of birth was probably what we would call 4 BC, so one thousand years hence would have been 996 AD!

As we well know, both that date and 1000 AD came and went and the Second Coming didn't come. So Chrisendom celebrated their reprieve by throwing the Dark Ages and spent the next couple of hundred years roasting alive a few million heretics. Those people sure knew how to party.

Now the town squares are filling with raving doomsayers once again, and mass graveyards are filling with the bodies of the poor saps who didn't have enough sense to just say no to the kool-aid. The strange thing about "End Of The World" cults is that when the end of the world is, as usual, a no-show, the followers don't do the sensible thing and rip the arms and legs off of the leaders that deceived them. No, instead the leaders manage to transfer the blame for their lack of divinity onto those who didn't believe them in the first place and their sheep, being sheep, go along with it! It happened one thousand years ago ("...it was those filthy heretical Moslems who controlled Jerusalem and made it an unfit place for Christ to return to - yeah, that's it...") and believe me, my magical brothers and sisters, it's likely to happen again!

And the stakes are even higher this time around. The Cold War may be "over", but there's still more than enough megatonnage scattered around to turn the planet into a radioactive slag heap. And sooner or later, some group of religious fanatics is going to get their hands on a nuclear device and decide to do little cleansing of the heretics somewhere. It's bound to happen.

What's a magician to do?

Even among the occult cognesetti, a whole lot of time and energy is wasted lambasting each other, either as groups or individuals, that would be better spent doing just about anything else. There are easily dozens of magical "systems" and most of them have the same nasty habit as the religionists: thinking that theirs is The One And Only True

Way .

The Chaos Magicians are here to announce: there is no One And Only True Way . All systems are equally right, and all of them are equally wrong. The evidence is clear, if one bothers to take off the blinders and look at it.

First one must assume that magic exists in the first place. All systems of magic throughout history have proceeded from this basic assumption. Remember that the scientific method itself must always proceed from basic assumptions before it goes about testing them. The logical error that has invariably crept into magical thinking is that when a certain system's techniques yield positive results, it is some sort of proof that said techniques are the only ones that yield positive results. It's like saying that because one catches a fish with one kind of bait, then that is the only kind of bait that can catch a fish!

So we end up with dozens of magical systems, each one claiming, due to their limited successes, that theirs is the The One And Only True Way of magic.

The challenge of the current generation of mages is to jolt the putrifying corpse of the occult back to life and then drag it kicking and screaming into the 21st century. The subject of this book is the answer to that challenge:

Chaos Magic.

Forwar(ne)d

I'd like to make a few things clear from the start: the various magical techniques discussed here and the examples given are not to be taken as comprising some kind of unalterable system. I think that was a mistake on the part of virtually all mystico-magical systems that came before the time of the present "Chaos current", and I wish to avoid that mistake. Anyone who finds themselves adhering slavishly to the methods and examples given here for any appreciable length of time is missing the point entirely. Chaos Magic can only be "learned" by *experiencing* it by whatever means available.

Chaos Magic as presented in this book is the ultimate "secret" magical system, because you are expected to devise your own personal system that truly cannot be known in its entirety to anyone else but yourself. Those who consider themselves bad poets or inept scriptwriters are at least expected to be able to collage together workings from other sources and add their own personal touches.

This book is not written in a "linear" style. Each chapter is a self-contained essay on a particular facet of this very multi-faceted subject. The chapters can be read in any order, which I think is appropo for the subject.

These essays describe Chaos Magic as I have experienced it, and others who might call themselves Chaotes will likely disagree with some or all of what I present. I certainly hope so. We're as bad as the practitioners of any other Art. That is the final paradox of Chaos Magic - it cannot be accurately described beyond a personal expression of Art. It is what it *does*, not what it says it does. This is the prevailing attitude, and I think it shows a healthy skepticism, which is the surest protection against the Arch Demon DOGMA. This does, however, account for the dearth of writings on the subject. All I can hope to do is transmit some basic knowledge to give you a jump-start to developing your own path.

So you will not find any "secret, unrevealed techniques of the ancient adepts" here -- the real adepts had their own techniques, and they likely wouldn't work as well for you anyway. The essence of magic is non-

verbal and personally unique. The key is the imagination, and the doors are the altered states of consciousness. You can burn all the candles and chant all the incantations you want, but if your mind isn't transported to another place in the process, it isn't going to amount to much.

There are myriad ways to alter one's conscious perceptions in different directions, and part of the journey is learning how your consciousness functions and how to alter it in accordance with your magical intention. It's not like any old high will do for any given purpose. But there is generally more than one method suitable for a particular purpose, at least one of which is attainable by a dedicated practitioner. This also goes hand in hand with the ultimate goal of developing one's own style.

Drugs are totally unnecessary, although I know many Magicians who use drugs magically with great effect and cause neither themselves nor anyone else any harm. Neither is sex required, though it is a powerful way to alter one's state of mind (and definitely the most enjoyable!) and has great magical potential. Many of the "ultimate secrets" of occult orders involve the use of sexual energy for magical purposes, which goes along way toward explaining these groups fanatical secrecy requirements during their heyday in the Victorian Age.

Meditation is a powerful and useful practice, and mastering some form of it is a basic requirement to get anywhere with magical work. There are easily dozens of "schools" of meditation, and each one has something to offer to the Magician. The goal is to become proficient at a form of psychic quiescence, to aid one in attaining gnostic trance via mental inhibition. So it doesn't matter what form of meditation you decide to practice - choose one that fits your personal preference. A simple system of meditation will be detailed later, and the reading list at the end of the book suggests a few easily obtainable books that can get you started if you wish to teach yourself. Alternatively, there are many teachers and classes available to the public that can be used. Don't worry about whatever philosophical teachings that they may wish to "educate" you with in the course of learning their meditation system, for these can be easily discarded once the actual techniques are mastered. (Probably the least dogmatic of the popularly available styles is the Sylva Mind Control System.)

The advantage of mastering a meditation technique is that once it is learned, it is always available for use and requires little in the way of paraphenalia. Quite often simply being able to but oneself into a moderately deep trance state for a few moments is more than enough to

provide the requisite gnostic trance to empower a magical working. The section on meditation in this book will provide you with a simple system to use that many people find very effective, and requires no great effort other than the determination to keep at it until you get the hang of it. But if you have already invested time and effort in learning to chant "Om" until your third-eye chakra opens then by all means don't abandon it in favor of the system presented here.

Neither will you need to spend time, effort and money in gathering a collection of "magical tools", unless you happen to like working with such things. I do myself, so there is a chapter devoted to methods of devising magical tools. But I know many powerful magicians who can work bare-handed to tremendous effect. A few simple objects are recommended to use as focusing points, at least in the beginning of your work; and you will need some common everyday things like pen and paper. Beyond that, investing in fancy robes, crystal balls, magic wands and formidable looking swords is totally up to your personal taste. You won't be sent out at the first full moon of summer to locate a yew tree and remove the highest branch with a single stroke after depositing a drop of your own blood on its roots.

Finally, I'll say right up front that this path isn't for everyone. This book is not an attempt to proselytise. As a rule, practicing Chaos magicians tend to be a rather elitist crowd in the first place, and the urge to "convert" others is probably much less present than even most neo-pagans and other magical types. If you aren't driven by your own Free Will you're not going to get very far anyway.

All you need is a personal commitment to learn to live in a magical reality.

What Is Chaos Magic?

"All great things must first wear a terrifying and monstrous mask, in order to inscribe themselves on the hearts of humanity."

-- Fredrick Nietzsche

The words "Chaos Magic" reverberate with mystery and intrigue. It's rather safe to assume that this was intentional on the part of those who originally coined the term. Of course, when Gerald Gardner came up with his reconstruction of European Paganism in the 1950's and called it "witchcraft," he must have been equally well aware of the effect that *that* term would have on *his* contemporaries. There's nothing like a touch of the "forbidden" if you want to intrigue people.

The label of "Chaos Magic" suffers from two inherent drawbacks. First, the "cyberpunk" connotations of the term tend to attract some of those misanthropic types who were previously attracted to the label "Satanist" for similar reasons. They see it as some kind of "Satanism Lite," as it were. This subclass of human used to use the term "witch" or "warlock" to describe themselves before the term "Chaos Magic" came into vogue, and "Chaos Magician" sounds so much cooler. Those who once might have painted upside-down pentagrams on their black leather jackets and called themselves "warlocks" have now switched to eight-rayed stars and are calling themselves "Chaos Magicians" instead. So instead of embarrassing the witches or the Satanists anymore, they've taken to embarrassing the Chaotes instead.

The second (and more important) drawback is that the very idea of Chaos Magic inherently defies description. It is highly personal and experimental by its nature. Even those who claim to practice it are hard-pressed to define what it *is*, outside of their own personal version. But neither is it simply "eclectic witchcraft", though it's methods certainly are eclectic. It can only be defined by certain commonalities of thought among those who claim to practice it, and even among some who thought they were just "doing their own thing" and never knew it had a name.

No Holds Barred Magic

Chaos Magic is dangerous, awesome, full of potential and therefore highly compelling. It is "no-holds-barred magic". The rule is that there are no rules, besides learning what works for you and using it to accomplish your will, while avoiding getting stuck in rut of doing everything the same way all of the time.

In the menace and fascination of the very concept of "chaos" lies the power of Chaos Magic. There is no way to accurately describe Chaos Magic, any more than one can accurately describe the Tao. "That which can be described is not the sacred Tao", as the old sage said. In a way, I suppose that the Chaos Magicians are the ultimate "secret society,"

though it is inherent in Chaos Magic itself, rather than needing to be enforced by oath or decree.

So why is it called *Chaos Magic*?

It is called "magic" since, like all other forms of Art of the Mages, it seeks to affect the course of events by non-normal means. Action at a distance. Events that defie logical causality. Altered states of consciousness. Arcane knowledge. Power. Ecstasy.

But what makes it *Chaos Magic*? (Or "magick" -- choose your spelling to taste.) While it may be impossible to describe directly, I can offer a few opinions on drawing the distinction.

One could begin by saying among Chaos Magicians there is the underlying assumption of the "random" and relativistic nature of life, the universe and everything. Reality is stochastic in nature, which is to say that each intelligent entity "creates" reality by their interaction and participation in it. We are adrift in a quantum world of uncertainty. Existance can not be completely described by either religion or it's philosophical successor, science.

Chaos Mathematics shows us that what seems random is in fact *chaotic* and has a higher "order" that can be perceived only from a great enough perspective. Chaos gives rise to reality itself. It might also give rise to the tendency for matter to accrue form and perhaps even intelligence.

Strange Attractors

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "chaos" is Greek in origin. Its original meaning was: "a vast gulf or chasm; the neither abyss, empty space, infinite darkness, the first state of the universe." In English, this was refined to mean "the formless void of primordial matter, the 'great deep' or 'abyss' out of which the cosmos or structure of the universe was evolved." The popular modern interpretation of the word as being a synonym for "disorder" is a recent and somewhat misleading development. Both order *and* disorder are themselves manifestations of the Primal Chaos. The original meaning had more in common with what the Eastern mystics call the Tao. I think this is not at all accidental.

So we Chaosists call this primal connectivity "Chaos" instead of "God" or some other traditional name to remove any anthropomorphic ideas from something that is so totally un-human as to defy comprehension -- at least by intellectual means.

Another reason behind the name is that many of the concepts of modern Chaos Theory can be given metaphysical interpretation. For example, it's obvious that various occult systems have many factors in common. In Chaos Theory, there is something called a "strange attractor," a certain type of coherency that arises in any turbulent system. Mathematically speaking, it merely represents certain ranges of numbers that tend to fall into a recycling set of infinitely regressive values when certain formulae are applied. As it is usually visualized, it's a three dimensional graph (two spatial axes representing the complex plane, plus one color axis) of the value of the iterated function $fc(z) = z^2+c$, where z and c are complex. This yields the now-famous Mandelbrot set of images.

What makes it more than a mere arithmetic game is that when computers are allowed to crank endlessly through the calculations, certain geometric patterns emerge that bear a striking resemblance to our perceptions of various real world phenomena. Zooming in on particular areas of the complex plane, many fascinating visual characteristics are generated, with similarities to the appearance of such things as swirling water and rugged coastlines. Therefore it can be used as tool to make predictions (in this case, how turbulent systems will behave), which elevates it to the realm of science -- where it is properly referred to as Non-Linear Dynamics.

A good example of a strange attractor in the physical world is a vortex; given the right conditions, it will arise in air currents, running water, dust storms -- anything from the Great Red Spot of Jupiter to the whirlpool in your bathtub drain. But regardless of the medium, a vortex will always assume a similar pattern.

To apply this concept to the occult, assume any given magical "system" is the medium in which certain patterns (practices, concepts, formulae, etc.) will emerge -- strange attractors -- that will be strikingly similar to each other.

In magical terms, a strange attractor would be, say, astral projection, or energy centers aligned along the spinal column. Or the interaction with non-corporeal intelligences (gods, demons, spirits, etc.) A kind of pattern that always seems to arise regardless of the particular belief-set that goes along with the actual techniques. Within them all lay the "strange attractors" that can be harvested from the morass of archaic symbolism and put to use by the canny magician.

Chaos Magicians look for these commonalties among seemingly different systems as clues to an underlying factor that can be stripped of

its unnecessary symbolism if desired and put to directly use with any chosen set of symbols. The intent is to reveal the practical techniques that underly the outer trappings and (one would hope) turn the symbolism into a personal expression of Art. Chaos Magic has applied such artistic concepts as postmodernism and deconstructionism to the study of the occult, and has achieved some remarkable insights, particularly the idea that all traditional magical systems are sociologically derived and culturally biased. This is not an indictment, but simply a recognition of the facts. The gods are dead. Long live the gods.

Belief And Meta-belief

To quote one writer, Peter Carroll: "If you want a one-line definition with which most Chaosists would not disagree, then I offer the following: Chaosists usually accept the *meta-belief* that belief itself is only a tool for achieving effects; it is not an end in itself."

Meta-belief is an important concept in Chaos Magic. It is the idea that belief is nothing more than a state of mind, and as such, can be manipulated by the will. Belief is a psychological state that can be deliberately self-manipulated, although it has the power to shape our own reality, and sometimes other people's reality as well. It is the means, not the end; the vehicle, not the destination.

In *The Theatre Of Magick*, Ray Sherwin wrote: "The [Chaos] Magician believes nothing in the sense of having faith. He experiments practically to ascertain if there is any value in the postulates he has either originated or borrowed from elsewhere. It is a fact that we all must hold certain organic beliefs for the sake of convenience. You all believe that the chairs you are sitting in are real -- most of the time. This is not however a mental process, but rather an instinctive or organic one without which life would be impossible." This level of belief is not what meta-belief is concerned with. Rather, it concerns the level of belief that is attained by the method actor, sometimes referred to in the inverted sense as "suspension of disbelief".

The practice of meta-belief confers an awful freedom and an awful responsibility. Practicing Chaos Magic involves the temporary adoption of an obsessive belief system that allows for the possibility of magic to accomplish specific effects, and then the abandonment of that belief system upon the completion of the work. Subsequent, and even contradictory belief systems are adopted in turn as need or desire may dictate. To do this (and not go completely insane) it is of paramount

importance that no one particular set of beliefs is ever accepted as being *ultimately* true.

Relativity

This rejection of moral absolutism, more than anything else, accounts for the sinister reputation of Chaos Magic in modern occultism. Nearly all previous revivals of occult philosophy, regardless of their public reputation, have been maniacal about proclaiming their "truth" and their "high moral standards." Gerald Gardner, in his 'revival' of Witchcraft, formulated nearly 200 moral "laws" to govern the activities of his followers, who to this day fight a never ending battle to convince the world of their benevolence. Aleister Crowley and his successors have churned out reams of prose defending the Thelemic maxim of "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" as being a 'greater' system of morality. Whether it is or not is beside the point. Chaos Magic bypasses the issue entirely; there is no dogma to indoctrinate you into "good" or "positive" moral standards before getting the details of the technique. When you practice Chaos Magic, you must choose for yourself what (if anything) is good or evil.

As a result, Chaos Magic is magic without limitations. Chaos magic is not a new system, or a rehash of older systems, or any kind of system at all. It's a new *attitude*. It's a different way of looking at the Art of Magic -- as an expression of *Art* above all other considerations. Like so many Artists, Chaos Mages tend toward an attitude of elitism, since a great part of the creation of Art is the pursuit of excellence, and pride in oneself and one's creations when excellence is achieved. An elitist attitude (as long as it's balanced with compassion and doesn't descend into bigotry) is forgivable in the Artist, for without it no great work of Art would ever be realized.

Some will say that a system of magic without an attached system of morality to govern its use is "dangerous". While it is a fact that certain misanthropic types could seize upon the freedom of magical expression inherent in such an approach and use it to the detriment of their fellow humans, such sociopaths will always find a way to inflict an equal amount of misery on others whether they practice magic or not. They're very clever that way.

Chaos Magic isn't "new", because every ancient adept who ever struck out on his or her own heretical path was, in effect, responding to the call of Chaos. But when a *system* grows out of any path, when holy books are written, when rituals and manners and moralities are prescribed for

"the followers," it has ceased to be Chaos Magic. It is only by pushing our selves out on a limb that we encounter the Chaos Current, and touch the spark that makes magic a reality.

However, it is not as simple as merely grabbing on to whatever happens to strike your fancy. Bits and pieces of various and sundry old rituals and belief structures, kludged together by a given individual and molded into a "system," albeit a personal one, is not Chaos Magic either.

Locked-in belief is locked-in belief. It is far more important to be free to push the envelope than it is to be "correct" -- or even consistent. Chaos Magic is not simply a reformulated mishmash of old magical traditions with trendy new labels.

Postmodern Magic

In cultural terms, Chaos Magic can be described as the vanguard of Western esoteric practice. Unlike it's predesesor, it involves more spontaneity and eschews a rigid framework of rituals and procedures. It also explores the techniques of shamanism and sorcery, something most Western magical traditions have always tended to shun as being "beneath" them. It is influenced by many modern cultural trends, such as cyberpunk, postmodernism and deconstructionism. It tries to integrate many of the current theories in science and philosophy like quantum physics, synchronicity and, of course, chaos theory with occult phenomena. There are even influences from occult history, such as Aleister Crowley, Austin Osman Spare, Taoism, Tibetan Buddhism, many forms of native shamanism and even from certain science fiction and fantasy writers, like H.P. Lovecraft, Michael Moorcock, Terry Pratchett and William Gibson.

Chaos Magic as commonly defined today derives primarily from the work of Austin Osman Spare and Peter J. Carroll. (See the chapter on History for details.) Both rejected most of traditional magical practice as being unnecessarily complicated, culturally bigoted and generally ineffective, and fearful of the powerful but dangerous techniques of sorcery and shamanism. Both also considered traditional occult teaching to be far more concerned with imparting a system of morality than anything else, making them in actual fact *religions*. Spare was the first one to draw the connection between magic and (in his time) the relatively new field of psychology, freeing occult practice from the necessity of a religious world-view. Carroll, along with Sherwin, founded the Illuminates of Thanateros (IOT) and attempted to also integrate the concepts of Chaos Theory and Quantum Mechanics with the occult and paranormal.

Due to these influences, Chaos Magic is perhaps the first kind of ceremonial magic that doesn't approach the subject as an antique art. Magic need not be handed down from ancient adepts to be "real". Instead, Magic is something to be experimented with and improved upon. Virtually all other systems (they don't call them "traditions" for nothing) assume that "The Ancient Masters" already uncovered all of the secrets of magic long ago, and all we poor moderns can hope to do is recapture a glimmer of the glories of the past. This antiquarian attitude has unfortunately hamstrung the development of the Art of Magic since the fall of Rome.

Chaos Magic is further distinguished from the "systems" of the past by its approach. It sees ritual magic as psychodrama, rather than worship. As such, it is quite similar to the Stanislavsky system of Method Acting. One carefully defines the role one will enact during a magical ritual (including as part of the "character" a belief in the existence of magic itself) and, surrounded by a setting conducive to that role, throws oneself in to as inspired of a performance as one can muster. If a sufficient level of meta-belief is achieved, the gates to effective magic are opened.

Like a method actor, a Chaos Magician seeks to circumvent everyday reality and suspend disbelief. To do this he or she uses the tools of the actor: setting, costumes, props, words, sounds, and especially what Stanislavsky called *emotional memory*. Any powerful, transformative experience can be used to tap into the emotional memory, including sex, pain, confusion, elation, disgust and ecstasy -- especially in paradoxical combinations.

The Gateway To Magic

The techniques of Chaos Magic are applied by the magician to induce and utilize a mental state we call *gnosis*. This application of the term is similar to the meaning used by the Tantrists, where the discursive mind is short-circuited and the magician's intention can be imprinted onto the quantum flux of the universe. Even the briefest moment of gnosis, attained at a point when "the gates are open" and the will is being channelled through the subconscious mind, can be enough to bring about a magical result.

Chaos Magicians use sigils (magical intentions that have been rendered into symbolic glyphs or mantras), ritual techniques from any source, especially original ones, and artifacts of any chosen culture to form a magical space, a temporary autonomous zone in which the

subconscious mind can be directed. Gnosis is the gateway to effective magic. It is the moment of timelessness, the state of magical trance where the mind interfaces directly with the acausal interconnectivity of the universe.

A ritual is basically a map of sub-consciousness, and therefore can be useful as a guide on the trail one would blaze into one's own psyche. However, *prescribed* rituals, along with such contrivances as "books of shadows", "holy books", "publications in class A" and the like, are precisely devised to protect the operant *from* Chaos. In short, there is always room for new Chaos Magic methods, but none whatsoever for Chaos Magic *systems*.

Tao, Zen And Deconstructionism

Philosophically, Chaos Magic bears a resemblance to Taoism, except for the Taoist's attitude of quietism and passivity. Success hinges on ego-annihilation, so there is a lot in common with the Buddhist Nagarjuna and Madhyamaka schools, and perhaps even more so with the Nyingmapa school of Tibetan Buddhism. An examination of the Chod rituals of Tibetan Buddhists will yield valuable clues as to the formulation of effective Chaos rites. The effect of a Zen Buddhist koan on the discursive mind is a small taste of what a Chaos Magician seeks.

The practice of Chaos Magic can be destabilizing, because it's designed to deconstruct belief. Like psychedelic drugs, it can drastically alter your reality. So it's not for the squeamish, or for those who fear what lurks in their deepest selves, for it is from those deep selves that the Chaos Mage forges his or her gods and demons.

Such dualistic concepts as "white" or "black" magic are not applicable to Chaos Magic, at least not in the sense of being good or evil. Magic is a force, like electromagnetism, and has no inherent moral qualities. Peter Carroll wrote in *Liber Null*, "The end results of either path are likely not to be dissimilar, for the paths meet in a way that is impossible to describe. The so-called 'middle way', or path of knowledge, consisting of the mere second hand acquisition of ideas, is an excuse to do neither and leads nowhere." As a result, Chaos Magicians tend toward pushing the extremes, finding balance by swinging from pole to pole, rather than seeking "moderation."

Tragedy And Comedy

Being morally neutral, Chaos Magic is probably not for those who haven't already come up with a well-developed code of personal ethics.

In fact, most Chaos Magicians, though not all, would define themselves (if held at gunpoint) as "black" or at least "grey" magicians, but not as defined by those who see the dark side of existence as merely evil. If their magic is "black," it is because it deals with that which is dark and hidden, and drawn from the primal abyss of Chaos. People with no ethical standards of any kind whatsoever tend toward eventual self-annihilation anyway. Chaos magical practice only accelerates the process, usually ending in some form or another of spectacular insanity. But don't look to Chaos Magic to provide moral guidance. If one desires that, it simply must be sought elsewhere.

It is also magic that dare not take itself too seriously. Chaotes are generally known for having a well developed sense of humor, and this is often expressed in their magical work, from mock-serious invocations of Bugs Bunny as a trickster god, to the practice of ending every ceremony with a round of roaring laughter. Though the humor may tend toward the satirical, there is a large measure of genuine amusement at what a colossal joke the universe actually is, and how much fun it can be to laugh along with it.

Politics and Religion

In recent times, occultism has been bound up to a large extent with political preference. Most people require some sort of framework on which to hang their opinions and preferences, which makes a mix of magic and politics in a holistic system much more attractive than politics alone. The emergent magical systems of the present day, such as Thelema and Neo-Paganism, are popular precisely because they combine a socio-political belief with a magical appreciation of reality. It gives their politics a "higher purpose". Politics, the art of manipulating others into conforming to (or at least acknowledging the predominance of) a particular set of cultural values, has nothing whatsoever to do with Chaos Magic. Chaos Magic exposes the folly of politics by showing us that all efforts to bring order to this dimension are ultimately futile.

Attempts to organize around fixed belief structures are attempts to increase the certainty of existence. This is antiethical to the concept of Chaos, where belief is spontaneous, as life-force is spontaneous and evolution itself is spontaneous.

And in any case, an over-politicized magical group is invariably stultified and unable to cope with the swift changes in consciousness that can occur within the group, especially when their consciousness develops in response to spiritual and magical considerations. How can we seriously expect a system that combines magic and politics to be

anything but drastically unstable? This is why virtually all attempts at "pagan eco-politics", "feminist spirituality" and other such cross-breeds have been such dismal failures, hardly raising a blip on the cultural radar screen before dissolving into scism and infighting.

Similarly, it can be said that religion and Chaos Magic are fundamentally incompatible. The one restricts, the other liberates. The one requires that intellect be twisted to accommodate a prescribed ludicrous belief system and adhere to it perpetually, the other freely adopts ludicrous belief systems of its own choice and for its own purposes -- and then destroys them. Religion -- and most magical systems are and always have been essentially religious in nature -- requires a single mind-set for all people, for all times, in all circumstances. Chaos Magic demands personal, flexible tenets of belief; in other words, meta-belief. Religion requires certain thoughts and actions to be classified as good or evil. Chaos Magic attempts to understand and embrace all aspects of existence, with moral value to be judged only by the individual.

Therefore, Chaos Magic is not concerned with such amorphous mystical goals as attaining Nirvana, finding your True Will or crossing the Abyss, at least not directly. If you wish to worship the Goddess or commune with your Holy Guardian Angel, you would do better to look elsewhere; modern Neo-Paganism offers a vast smorgasbord of various amalgamations of religion and magic, from Wicca to Thelema, from White Light Brotherhoods to the Church of Satan. The goal of Chaos Magic is developing practical magical techniques, that create real, perceptible changes according to the will of the magician. This is not limited to external physical effects, but also (and perhaps more importantly) includes operations designed to alter the psyche of the magician in profound ways -- but in ways the magician has chosen or wishes to explore, rather than in a predordained manner. The "structure" of Chaos Magic, if it can be said to even have one, is a *non*-structure. It is vehemently non-hierarchical. Chaos Magic is magical anarchy, but in the true sense of the word -- it is magic without *leaders*.

Embracing The Void

With Chaos Magic, the principle is that you can experience anything you wish as you wish it; this is the Chaosists take on "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." Therefore it is up to you where and when, and with what you involve yourself.

In short then, Chaos Magic is Chaos Magic. It is not a new religion, nor is it just a new magical system. It is not a "system" at all. Don't ask

others to define it for you in sociological, political or religious terms. Although they may be able to construct a dogma that makes sense, it will not have anything to do with Chaos.

Or as Fats Waller put it when asked about the nature of Jazz: "If I have to explain it to you, you'll never know!"

Chaos, being Chaos, has no attributes save itself. This leaves the difficulty of describing it, because it is not an "it". Chaos Magic is a non-dualistic gateway, which has confounded even those who "originated" it by being so multifarious that its development will always advance in unpredictable directions. Chaos Magic will always grow independently of any one source. No one can "teach" you Chaos Magic. To paraphrase Austin Spare, "All a teacher can ever do is show you your own magnificence." So all I can hope to do with this writing is to entice you to follow your *own* path. I only point my finger at the moon; you must travel there yourself.

Chaos Magic is an extension beyond our reality and beyond the traditionalist systems. To call it a "system" simply underlines the trap humans fall into when needing to conceptualize. If one is unsure how to proceed, and has no experience in magic at all, one is sure to find within the complexity and variety of traditional paths a mix of methods that suits his or her nature. However when he or she has honed his or her talents on these tried and tested systems, the next step must be the Void and the necessary development of original methodologies -- which is the heart of Chaos Magic, and that which will propel the Art of the Mage into the 21st century, free at last from the constraints and superstitions of the past.

This new way of practicing the Art of Magic is as free as possible of all moral dogma, a way solely oriented to personal discovery. Because the practice aims to assimilate and then surpass the limited dualistic approaches to Magic which has hallmarked the traditions and shackles us to the past, it is by its nature beyond our comprehension, and beyond our ability to predict what direction it will take.

But its interface is Chaos, so by popular consensus, "Chaos Magic" is its name. And it can be described most succinctly in the words of Hassan-Il-Sabbah: "Nothing is true. Everything is permitted."

How Does Magic Work?

"Do we, holding that the gods exist, deceive ourselves with insubstantial dreams and lies, while random and careless chance alone control the world?"

-- Euripides

Before proposing any particular mechanism, it would be proper to first define what Magic is and what a practitioner might expect from the practice.

In Bill Whitcomb's excellent book *The Magician's Companion*, he describes four levels at which magic operates: physiological, neurological, mental/linguistic and material.

At the physiological level, the results are manifested in the body of the magician. Yoga and other physical regimens focus strongly on this level. Most meditative practices involve breathing exercises that facilitate altered states of consciousness. Shamanistic healing practices are also concerned with effects on this level.

Yoga is a good case in point. Much of the criticism of the "reality" of magic arises from the inability of the tools of science to quantify it. But most of the effects derived from Yoga practice (or Tai Ch'i, or several other meditative mind/body disciplines) are such things as a general sense of well-being, heightened alertness, fewer and less severe illnesses, more "energy", more restful sleep, etc. -- things that cannot be easily quantified by technical measurements. But they are unequivocally real to anyone who practices these disciplines.

Furthermore, just about anyone who takes up serious practice will manifest almost identical results; it is not a case of "purely subjective" effects. They are predictable and repeatable across a wide range of human subjects -- and have been for thousands of years. But you can't measure these effects as an outside observer. The only way to "prove" that this is the case is to take up the practice yourself and judge the effects for yourself. The same can be said for all four types of magical effects.

The neurological level refers to those parts of the deep mind where the sub-conscious, the non-verbal, the instinctive is to be found. At the neurological level, magical practice can give one far greater control over one's emotional, "gut level" reactions to that great experience called Real Life. Ritual or sigil work can be used to overcome phobias and to counter obsessive states, or do exactly the opposite and induce such subconscious reactions that the magician might find useful. Sigil Magic (explained later in this book) uses simple techniques to implant deliberate subconscious cues in your own mind to access a given mental state at will.

Magicians are psychonauts that explore the fringes of inner space. (Please excuse my somewhat poetic description here.) Chaos Magic often involves the use of sorcerous techniques culled from various forms of shamanism, and altered states of consciousness are of great importance to both. The premise is that magic can only be effective if the subconscious (or "pre-conscious") mind is doing the magicking. This level can be most readily accessed via altered states.

Various psychoactive drugs can be used to access the neurological level of the mind, and again this is common to almost all forms of

shamanism. The works of John Lilly, Terrence McKenna, Robert Anton Wilson and Timothy Leary can be instructive to the magician wishing to learn to navigate these inner regions.

It should be pointed out that techniques exist to access these states without pharmacological assistance (which is of dubious legality in most parts of the world.) Most forms of meditative practice can be directed toward altered states via mental inhibition. Sensory deprivation can also be used to access this level. Chemognosis is not without it's dangers, both physical and psychological, and should be approached with respect and care.

Mental/linguistic operations involve the rearrangement of belief systems and world-views, and they are crucial to the entire operating paradigm of Chaos Magic. The power of belief is undeniable. Beliefs not only have the power to shape one's own perceptions of the world, but to affect the perceptions of others as well -- this is the foundation of using meta-belief as a magical tool. The universe seems to have a way of providing experiences that tend to reinforce any given belief -- witness the great variety of fundamental world-views, both past and present.

Psychological literature speaks of "The Stockholm Effect", named after an incident in that city in which persons kidnapped by terrorists were constantly bombarded with "propaganda" by their captors, and ended up adopting the captors belief-system. The kidnapping and "conversion" of Patty Hearst in the late 1970's by the Symbionese Liberation Army is another prime example of this effect -- she not only became sympathetic to their cause, but joined their ranks and helped them rob banks and plant bombs!

The point being that we adapt our "reality" to fit our belief structure, not the other way around. If one is forced to adopt the lifestyle and daily practices of a fundamentalist Christian, a soldier or a submissive "slave", one will eventually come to adopt the belief structure that goes along with it, regardless of previous beliefs. Some modern psychological techniques such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming work on this level have much in common with Chaos Magic.

This effect is sometimes referred to as "the power of positive thinking", although it can also encompass negative thinking as well. Much ritual work, especially invocations (where the operator assumes "godforms" of archtypical icons) function at this level. Pathworkings, long-term magical operations involving a slow process of building on consciously developed psychological structures, are useful as a means of "meta-programming" the mental state.

On the physical or material level, the goal is to effect changes in noumenal or "everyday" reality. This is what most people mean by "magic", though in fact it is only a part of the picture. Many psychic disciplines, especially Eastern styles, downplay the importance of these effects to the point of actively discouraging them when they do occur. These practitioners, and most serious magicians in the West, realize that physical manifestations are not the only goal of magical practice, and perhaps not even the most important one. Furthermore, without the at least some experience of the previous levels described, one can expect little in the way of results that effect the material world.

A distinction should be drawn here between supernatural effects and what are called preternatural effects. Supernatural is defined as that which occurs entirely outside the physical laws of the universe -- in short, miracles. Preternatural, on the other hand, is defined as that events that, while they may be on the edge of the curve of possibility, the mechanics can be explained by physical processes. In my experience, this is how most magical effects manifest -- as uncanny "co-incidences", flashes of illumination or events that would appear to be (and are explainable as) "pure luck". In my practice of magic I have experienced uncountable preternatural effects, while the "supernatural" ones -- things that defie my best efforts to explain by "natural" means -- could be counted on one hand.

Though other metaphysical practices may see physical manifestations as something to avoid, Chaos Magic regards material results as being very important to the practice of magic, and should be actively sought after rather than repressed. For one thing, there is something about the experience of encountering an event that, because it is so weird and seemingly impossible, it impresses upon the mind that magic is REAL in a way that no amount of theoretical discussion or deep meditation can ever do. This increases one's confidence in what one is doing, and thence makes magic easier to accomplish on all levels, in a self-perpetuating loop.

"Results Magic" deals with largely non-reproducible effects, or particularly timely synchronistic events, or non-ordinary perceptions that can be explained by the functions of the previous levels, or by "pure luck". But it is the romance of this strange world of improbability and unexplainable phenomena that gives most magicians the inspiration to follow the path of occultism. There is no way to "prove" the existence of this level of magic, but the same can be said of the other levels as well. Like the Yoga student, the only way to "prove" it is to prove it to

yourself; the only way to experiment is by using your own mind and body as the laboratory. And whether they seek material results or not, I know of no magicians who have spent any appreciable time in practice who don't have a collection of experiences that call the strict materialist view of the universe into question.

So what, then, is Magic? One of the best definitions ever offered comes from Aleister Crowley: "Magic is the Science and Art of causing change to occur in accordance with the Will." He elaborated further with his "Postulate of Magic," as follows:

"Any required change may be effected by the application of the proper kind and degree of force in the proper manner through the proper medium to the proper object."

If an act of Magic succeeds, it is because it conformed to all parts of the postulate. If it fails, it was because one or more parts of the postulates were not conformed to. This definition is obviously very broad, but as such it serves to illustrate an important concept: Any willed act is, by its nature, a "magical" act.

Another important concept was put forward by science writer Arthur C. Clarke: "One man's magic is another man's engineering. Sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. 'Supernatural' is a null term."

Consider that "technology" in its purest definition, is simply the application of technique. If I wish to speak to a friend who is not physically present, I may choose to use the following "magical" operation:

I consult a large book of arcane numbers, and determine the specific formula for my friend's name. I take my magical tool in hand and place it against my head. With my other hand I trace the magic number for my friend into the special tablet made for this purpose. A series of distant sounds like birds or insects ensues, and ends abruptly when I suddenly hear the voice of my friend issuing from the magical tool!

If you haven't already guessed I was making a phone call, look over the preceding paragraph again. But it fits the strict definition of the magical act; I caused a change to occur (in this case, I summoned my friend to hear my voice and speak with me over a great distance) in accordance with my will. Had I performed this act in the presence of a scholar from Queen Elizabeth I's time, he would have instantly accused me of sorcery!

It also conformed to the postulate. If I had entered the wrong number (improper kind), or punched the buttons with a hammer (improper degree) or dialed them in backwards (improper manner), or looked up the wrong name (improper object) or tried to use a toaster instead of a telephone (improper medium) the "magic" would have failed.

The preceding example might be considered a bit trite, but it serves to illustrate the point.

However, this is not satisfying as an explanation of how the paranormal effects of magic might actually function. The most often used explanation is not an explanation at all -- the God(s) do it. In many, if not most, systems of magical practice, there is the presupposed existence of "greater forces" in the Universe, and magic is accomplished by entreating these forces to intercede on behalf of the supplicant. This sidesteps the question, but keep in mind that such workings of devotion can be useful when used in the proper context as a meta-belief device. Sometimes it behooves the magician to believe in certain gods, and other times that belief becomes a hindrance.

A lot of people, myself included, need some kind of plausible explanation to account for magic in a logical way. This is important, because the first act of meta-belief is the belief in magic itself, and on this all other beliefs must hinge. Otherwise, the conscious mind plays the eternal skeptic, and makes the belief states required to do magic in the first place hard to obtain. Once a satisfactory explanation of the mechanism is inculcated, the conscious mind can be induced to get out of the way and be quiet while the belief-states of the subconscious are manipulated. So the following ideas are offered to this end.

What is the actual mechanism involved? Theories abound, and there have in recent years been several that try to take into account the latest revelations of modern physics. Still, all operating theories of magic must presuppose the capability of the human mind, under certain conditions, to be able to manipulate the probability flux of existence.

The "explanation" for magic tends to conform to the dominant world-view of the period. In prehistoric times (and among a few surviving cultures today) all things in the world have a "spirit" and by controlling the spirit one may control the thing. When paganism arose, magic was the province of the gods and magical technique took the form of supplication to these gods to wield their magic on behalf of the supplicant. This approach (usually called "prayer"), continued right through monotheism in it's various forms. Though the modern Neo-

Pagans think of themselves as having evolved beyond the prejudices of monotheism, their magical technique is still very much the same.

With the rise of science and the materialistic world-view, "the God(s) did it" was no longer a viable explanation for most reasonably intelligent people. So some kind of mechanical model had to be developed to explain paranormal phenomena. Most of the explorations along these lines end up with the "invisible ray" model; there are "vibrations" of a nature that makes them undetectable by scientific instruments, but they behave in a way almost indistinguishable from electromagnetic radiation. Humans, power objects or what-have-you are capable of emitting, storing and/or manipulating these vibrations to specific ends.

I have major problems with this idea, since these "rays" do not seem to follow the kind of laws that all other energy forms do, such as the inverse square law or the speed of light. They seem to be capable of assuming any properties that the practitioner requires, and these properties vary widely between different traditions. (However, as with the "gods" paradigm, it can be useful to assume the existence of "rays" as a meta-belief tool for obtaining certain effects.)

I must admit that the confusion of scientific and magical terms like "energy" is, to me, one of the most maddening things about the traditionalist magicians, perhaps even more than their absolutist belief structures and the dogmas they breed. It's all the more maddening because they think it's such a modern, "scientific" way to explain magical phenomena -- which is in fact an insult to magic as well as science!

To think that energy models can explain magical phenomena is idiotic. To quote theoretical physicist Henry Margenau, "Similarly the term energy, which has a perfectly definite scientific meaning, is constantly used in phrases such as 'mental energy' which signifies nothing unless ignorance of the laws of physics on the part of the speaker."

In recent times, the word "vibrations" has come to be used in the same manner, which is even more silly than using the word "energy". It's become almost impossible these days to talk about the paranormal or occult without resorting to these terms. The concepts of chakras, kundalini forces, astral bodies, auras and the like, make beautiful poetry and even very useful meta-belief tools. But to confuse them with any sort of pragmatic function is to make the old Zen mistake of confusing the moon with the finger that points at the moon. Such concepts are a trap, a comfortable velvet-lined cage that will surely stunt your magical development as well as your freedom of thought. Soon you'll be nodding

your head in agreement when, like the courtiers who could "see" the Emperor's new clothes, you start "seeing" the vibes and auras.

But there is another explanation that allows for a "transference" of something to and from the mind of the magician that has nothing to do with "rays", vibrations, magnetism or anything of the kind. That something is pure information. It has already been experimentally proven by mainstream science that under certain conditions, atomic particles appear to transfer information about their state of existence to other particles, and the other particles act on that information! This is mind-boggling to the strict materialist types, but the experiments have been replicated many times and leave little room for doubt. There have been recent successful experiments using what is called "quantum tunnelling" to transfer instantaneous information, and it is being proposed as a basis for an entirely new class of computer systems.

(It would almost appear that the Universe is alive at the quantum level, and can express itself with almost conscious deliberation. Of course, this comes as no surprise to us magicians, as we have been telling everyone this fact for thousands of years.)

There are a couple of ways to look at these theories that satisfy my conscious mind's craving for logical explanations. One possibility is that there exists a "network", an interconnecting web of quantum-state information transference that allow matter and energy to interact acausally, or what the physicists call non-locally. Theorist Rupert Sheldrake called this the "Morphogenic Field". There is considerable experimental data that indicates that in many circumstances quantum particles can interact with each other acausally. Many writers in the recent past have suggested this is the "back door" in science that allows for the existence of occult phenomena. (See the reading list in the appendix to this book.) The scientists will point out that such experimental results have only been obtained at the quantum level of atomic particles. However, recent advances in brain scanning technology have opened up some interesting possibilities.

These technologies have shown that the brain does, in fact, function at the quantum level of reality. A brain cell, or neuron in the brain carries thought patterns by means of an electrical impulse jumping across the synapse, the connecting point between the cells. This process involves an infinitesimally small amount of electricity (only a few hundred electrons) and a equally small amount of neurotransmitter chemicals (a few hundred molecules.) This is at the so-called quantum level of reality,

where randomness and probability rule, and certainty and predictability are not possible.

Advanced scanning techniques have shown that thought processes set up what could be called holographic patterns in the brain, and that these patterns first initiate in tiny sections of the brain, then spread throughout the whole organ in coherent patterns of linked neurons. It's not too much of a stretch to posit that the brain might be able to set up a "cascade" of quantum level events that can interconnect acausally with matter or energy patterns outside the brain, and transfer information across time and space in such a way as to effect the probability of certain events occurring or not occurring.

For those uncomfortable with the idea of anything being emitted from the body/brain, there are another couple of theories to consider.

One presupposes clairvoyance (the ability to perceive events outside of one's local space and/or time) and various controlled experiments performed by followers of the gods of Science have yielded evidence of its existence. "Remote viewing" experiments conducted by both American and Soviet government's espionage organizations gave results not easy to explain by coincidence or "lucky guessing".

Accounts of near-death experiences (NDEs) by persons lying comatose on operating tables have strikingly accurate descriptions of what was going on in the room -- including visual perceptions that were far out of the range of their point of view and conversations in nearby rooms they could not possibly have heard even if they were fully awake. Judith Hooper and Dick Teresi's *The Three Pound Universe* (Tarcher), an excellent book about the human brain written by two well respected neuroscientists, includes a chapter that details such well-documented events that the authors admit have no "scientific" explanation.

This theory makes use of the idea of the famous "butterfly effect", the element of Chaos Theory derived from the study of turbulent systems like weather patterns. One of the postulates of Chaos Theory is called extreme sensitivity to initial conditions -- the idea that a very small change in conditions can cascade into very large scale effects. The classic example is that even the flapping of a butterfly's wings at a particular point in time and space can be the determining factor of whether or not a hurricane develops over a spot thousands of miles away. So therefore, applying this theory to magic, the goal of the magician is to know when and where to "flap the butterfly wings".

Let's say I do a working to increase my chances of getting a particular job I'm applying for. On the day of my interview, I get the urge to drink

tea instead of coffee in the morning. On arriving for the meeting, the interviewer asks if I'd like some coffee. I reply that no, but I'd like some tea if that's possible. The interviewer then reveals that she is a tea drinker herself, and how nice it is to meet another tea drinker. This creates a favorable first impression, which leads to my getting the job! (An excellent example of a preternatural effect.)

How did I know that drinking tea would make such a difference that day? I didn't -- not consciously. But my clairvoyant subconscious did know, and made that one minor adjustment in events that cascaded into a successful magic working.

There is one other "theory of magic" that should be mentioned: the "everything is an illusion of the mind" paradigm. I have problems with this similar to the ones I have with the "gods" paradigm. First of all, it sidesteps the question. Secondly, the most dramatically effective magic workings I've ever done always have some very surprising results. If it was only my own mind creating these "effects", then I would expect them to be exactly what I expect them to be. This idea also allows for an interesting way to check one's magical effectiveness -- if the result doesn't surprise you, it is to be suspected.

Moreover, if all of our experience is in fact a creation of our own minds, then the subconscious mind has a powerful hand in this creation. Therefore, by the use of Magic one is tapping the subconscious, the wellspring of creation itself. It is bestowing the power of creation on something beyond our prejudiced, over-logical conscious mind with all of its fears and foibles. If the subconscious is the contact point of the magical universe, then by the use of magic we are able to make our entire existence a function of that Magic.

A Brief History of Magic

Kilgore Trout once wrote a short story which was a dialogue between two pieces of yeast. They were discussing the possible purposes of life as they ate sugar and suffocated in their own excrement. But because of their limited intelligence, they never came close to guessing they were making champagne.

-- Kurt Vonnegut

To understand about rise of the Chaos current, it would be useful to examine what has happened in the years before interest in Chaos Magic first began to gain momentum. A case can be made for the idea that the historical imperative was moving toward the emergence of Chaos Magic as the necessary next step in the evolution of Western occult thought. Though the following description doesn't encompass the rich varieties of Eastern magical and mystical practices, this is not meant to belittle those philosophies. Chaos Magic is a quite Western form of occultism, with it's roots firmly in Occidental reality-tunnels. For all that, however, it probably has more of a Taoist attitude toward metaphysics than any other Western style of magic.

An Ancient Idea

Probably the first occult philosopher to expound a doctrine that resembles present day Chaos Magic was Iamblichus (250-325 CE), founder of the Syrian school of Neo-Platonism. He's still considered quite the heretic even by modern philosophers, for he split up Plato's assumed realities of the spirit world and inserted intermediary categories between them (philosophers hate it when somebody makes things more complicated.) He also tried to reconcile Platonism with the pagan beliefs of the Egyptians and Assyrians. Iamblichus promoted the idea that even though the pagan gods did not truly exist, magic could be performed by the ritual conjuration of cosmic forces that take on the appearance of traditional god-forms. Furthermore, which traditional god-forms were used didn't matter. In effect, he was promoting the idea of meta-belief.

With the collapse of Rome and the advent of the Dark Ages, there was not much growth in Western magical knowledge, except perhaps by the Sufi Moslems. The medieval alchemists passed their cryptic texts down through the ages, but until the Renaissance the Catholic Church kept a pretty tight lid on esoteric knowledge.

The Enlightenment saw a few "natural philosophers" arise, such as Dr. John Dee, Henry Agrippa and Paracelsus, but their work had to be

carefully couched in Christian terms to avoid serious run-ins with the Church.

The Romantic Age

It wasn't until the 19th century that occultists could pursue their studies openly. This caused an upswing in popularity of the "mystic arts", but still the study of the occult was something akin to paleontology -- the entire focus was on rediscovering the "great secrets of the Ancients". Helena Blavatsky's Theosophical Society is an excellent case in point. It wasn't until the 20th century that we can begin to see the pattern emerging that would lead to the evolution of Chaos Magic.

To do this, we need to draw some comparisons with the growth of occultism following that renowned magician-rogue Aleister Crowley's revamping of Old Aeon Occult Renaissance-type Magic shortly after the turn of the century.

Infatuated with the idea of the "great occult secrets" said to exist by the romantic philosophers of the late 19th century, Crowley sought out and found the greatest exponent of magical knowledge of his age, the gloriously corrupt and deliciously decadent organization known as The Hermetic Order Of The Golden Dawn. After his initiation, Crowley quickly rose through the ranks and soon became embroiled in the internal squabbles and intrigues that ultimately destroyed the order. But not before he had become privy to whatever knowledge they had to offer.

To his credit, Crowley took the neo-romanticism of the Golden Dawn and, combined with insights gained from his studies of Yoga and other mystical systems, he cut out a lot of the crap. His goal was to come up with a system of magic that could appeal to the scientific mind of the 20th century. Unfortunately, he didn't take it to its logical conclusion, in that he failed to dissociate magic from its religious symbolism. In fact, he used it to establish a new religion, Thelema, which endures to this day in the form of the Masonic order he joined and later dominated, the Ordo Templi Orientis or OTO.

The Godfather Of Chaos Magic

Synchronously, another Englishman, Austin Osman Spare, the first Western mind to bridge the gap between intellectualism and shamanism, develops his "freestyle obsessional system of magic" and delves into the Void concept. Spare is commonly held to be the first practitioner of "Chaos Magic", and many subsequent practitioners, myself included, draw upon his work. Spare's Sigil Magic techniques fulfill the basic

requirements of the working Chaos Magician: they are simple, completely free of dogmatic baggage and highly effective at achieving observable results.

Although dozens of books have been written about Uncle Aleister, very little was known about his contemporary, Austin Osman Spare, until the emergence of Chaos Magic sparked interest in his work. So a few paragraphs about Spare would be in order here.

Spare was born in 1886, in the London district of Snowden. His father was a police officer, but aside from this little is known about his childhood -- unlike Crowley, he was not obsessed with writing autobiographies. We do know from his writings that he claimed to have come into contact as a child with an "elderly witch" he called Mrs. Patterson. From his descriptions she was quite "witchy" in an almost cliched sort of way, and he claims to have been "initiated" into witchcraft by her. He reported she was able to alter her appearance to that of a young woman, and could conjure "familiar" and demonic spirits to visible appearance. He remained fascinated throughout his entire life by his experiences with Mrs. Patterson, and claimed to be in touch with her "spirit" until he died. An image of a old woman appears in many of Spare's artworks, which is supposedly the likeness of Mrs. Patterson.

After an unremarkable time in London public schools, Spare won admission to the prestigious Royal College Of Art on the basis of his early pen and ink drawings. Though his art tended toward the macabre and bizzare, it was impressive enough to attract the attention of his peers in the art world, where he garnered early critical acclaim. It seemed a successful career in art was his for the taking.

However, it was not to be. Spare was apparently quite the idealist, and the turn of the century was characterized by such "bohemian" cultural trends as Naturalism, Expressionism and the Decadent and Dada movements, as well as the burgeoning occult revival. He rebelled against his middle class upbringing, and rejected the pursuit of a career in the bourgeois world of commercial art.

It's known that sometime after the turn of the century, he crossed paths with Crowley and became a member of his magical order, the A.A. (Argenteum Astrum) for a short time. But he was obviously such a strange and frightening character that Crowley, "The Great Beast 666" himself, cast Spare out of the A.A., declaring him to be a "black magician"!

Around 1912, Spare began to produce a series of privately published monographs accompanied by his dramatically surreal drawings. With their dense and almost impenetrable prose, they show considerable influence by the work of Freud and Jung, whose theories were the cutting edge of the new field of psychology. Like Freud, he saw the human mind as consisting of both a conscious and an unconscious, with a "psychic censor" between them. Spare applied these insights to his study of occultism, and developed a "system" of pragmatic, psychological magic he dubbed the "Zos Kia Cultus".

Spare had no kind words for his "magical order" contemporaries, or for the fad of Spiritualism, with its seances, ouija boards and table-rappings that swept Europe and America, which could be compared to the "New Age" movement of modern times.

The most significant work for the contemporary magician is The Book Of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology Of Ecstasy, published in 1913. In it, Spare details his system of Sigil Magic, his most important contribution to the Art. See the chapter on Sigils in this book for a detailed description of the technique. Subsequent publications such as The Focus Of Life and The Anethema Of Zos ("Zos" being Spare's magical name for himself) succeeded in totally alienating Spare from his fellow metaphysicians, which he denounced as vehemently as he had the world of high art. But there is great power in deciphering the enigmatic works of both art and prose which he left behind.

Though Spare had withdrawn from the art scene, he still did the occasional magazine illustration or frontispiece for a book. From 1927 until his death in 1956 he lived in a London slum, a virtual recluse. His only forays into the "art world" were occasional exhibitions at the local pub, where he often could be found trading drawings for pints of ale.

Another British occultist and author, Kenneth Grant, who was a disciple of both Crowley and Spare, inherited Spare's unpublished writings and may someday actually get around to publishing them. But in the meantime, a great many of Spare's writings may be obtained in digital form from various Internet websites.

The Modern Era

By the 1950's both Crowley and Spare were gone. The most interesting phenomenon to come out of the decade was the elimination of the British "anti-witchcraft" laws, and the publication in 1954 of Modern Witchcraft by Gerald Gardner. At the time Gardner claimed he was "unearthing" the ancient pagan magical practices of early Celtic Britain,

but later research tends to support the conclusion that he originated much of the "traditions" himself, and was influenced strongly by Crowley. That and the proliferation of various quasi-Masonic "Rosicrucian" groups such as the AMORC, the kind that ran small ads in National Geographic magazines.

The relaxation of many of the hidebound moral restrictions that occurred in the 1960's removed much of the stigma associated with the occult. In the 60's and 70's not only did Gardner-style witchcraft covens become increasingly popular, but other movements ranging from hippie "druid" cults to the Church Of Satan sprang up all over the world.

The Weird Uncles Of Chaos Magic

Then in the late 1970's, two young Brits, Ray Sherwin and Peter Carroll, with a strong interest in the occult began to publish a magazine called The New Equinox. Both were connected with a burgeoning occult "scene" developing around a metaphysical bookstore in the East End called The Phoenix. The story goes that both men became quickly dissatisfied with the state of the Magical Arts and the deficiencies they saw in the available occult groups. So in 1978 they published a small announcement in their magazine proclaiming the creation of a new kind of magical order, one based on a hierarchy of ability rather than invitation, a magical meritocracy. It was to incorporate elements of Thelema, Zos Kia Cultus, shamanism, tantra and Taoism. They called their creation the Illuminates of Thanateros (IOT), enshrining the dualism of the gods of Death (Thanantos) and Sex (Eros).

Carroll and Sherwin began to publish private monographs detailing their system of magical practice, some which had been articles in The New Equinox, others which were intended as instruction to members of their order. They began to attract a following in England and Germany, including some influential occult writers and practitioners. But before the decade was out, Sherwin would resign in protest that the IOT was beginning to resemble the Fraternal orders that were once anathema to the concept of the group. Carroll would refine the direction of the IOT as magical order and manifest it as The Pact of the IOT, or simply The Pact. Before long, the "Chaos Magic Order" began to behave chaotically, and several schisms broke the group into factions such as RIOT in Germany and The AutonomatriX in California. Eventually even Carroll quietly disassociated himself from the group.

The Pact still exists as of this writing, as does the AutonomatriX and other various groups; see the contacts listing in the appendix for details if working with such entities is your cup of poison.

Ever Onward

Since the 1960's, popular interest in the magic and the paranormal has steadily increased and made occult book publishing a profitable business. Many old and previously rare manuscripts have been reprinted, and what used to be occult "secrets" are now available at any large bookstore chain. Even the most secret rites of the Masonic-style orders and witchcraft covens can now be obtained in print or on the Internet. This is probably the best thing that could have happened to occult studies, because with all of the attention that is focused on it, much of the misleading information, secrets-for-secrets-sake, and sheer bullshit has been critiqued and discarded by those with no stake in preserving it. However, this has been replaced by a greater volume of new information written by occultists who are experienced in the newly researched and synthesized techniques.

Therefore, with all this going on, Chaos Magic was inevitable. Using cross-pollination, brilliant new occultists with no position to protect refined the old methods and coupled them with new discoveries from established research areas -- theoretical physics, neurolinguistics, quantum mechanics, chaos theory, etc. New works are published (see the reading list at the end of the book), and treatises are privately printed and circulated that compare and contrast the disparate methodologies. Groups of like-minded psychonauts come together to explore these methods, revise them according to their own experience, then disperse to re-form in new combinations and disseminate them further in an ongoing evolution. Meanwhile, the new technologies of computer networks, electronic music production and desktop publishing spread the new patterns of thought ever more quickly around the planet.

Now we stand on the cusp of the millennium with tools and techniques at our disposal that magicians of ages past could not even dream of, much less possess. Digging through mouldering old books in dusty libraries no longer serves much of a useful purpose. It's unlikely that there are any more "ancient secrets" left to uncover, at least nothing that we modern magicians would find useful -- or that we couldn't more easily discover for ourselves.

Like our alchemist predecessors at the end of the Dark Ages, are at a juncture of Western esoteric history that will leave its mark on the next thousand years. It would be a great shame not to provide our descendants with some enduring myths to inspire them as they conquer the stars.

How to Begin

Then the Old Man of the Earth stooped over the floor of the cave, raised a huge stone from it, and left it leaning. It disclosed a great hole. "That is the way", he said. "But there are no stairs", I cried. "You must throw yourself in", he replied. "There is no other way."

-- George MacDonald

The power of magic cannot be found in a recipe book. If it were only that easy! Unfortunately, it is highly unlikely that one will stumble upon the hidden grimoire or mystic amulet that will instantly grant one "magical powers". The ability to perform real magic is attained only through diligent practice, hard work and, well, "divine inspiration".

When one surveys all of the traditions of magic over the centuries, one notices that certain forms and procedures appear again and again. So if one strips away the outer symbolism and only retains that which is repeated across many systems, one is identifying the "strange attractors" which point to an underlying principle. It's reasonable to assume that these procedures arise for the same reason that any intelligent being who uses geometry will stumble across the value of π sooner or later. It's something integral to the nature of the human mind/body and the reality we find ourselves in.

Here lies Chaos Magic's nod to tradition. But the Chaote must be extremely picky about which traditional techniques s/he adopts, and

examine them dispassionately to determine what is useful technique and what is artifice.

Gnosis

One concept is absolutely indispensable to magic of any kind. The key to making magic work is the ability to achieve an altered state of consciousness. But not just any old altered state will do, or drunks and stoners would be the most powerful mages on the planet. The staggering inability of 500,000 acid-stoned hippies to stop a rainstorm at the Woodstock festival no matter how hard they chanted is poignant testimony to this fact.

The required mental shift has been called many names in history: samadhi by the yogis, jnara by the Tantrists, "awake" by the Sufi Moslems. It has been referred to as the Naugul, the Abyss, the crack between worlds. In a nod to the traditions of the old Gnostic sects, this state has come to be called by most Chaotes (and shall be referred to in this book) as *gnosis*.

Gnosis is the direct perception of the Void. It is the state when the discursive mind shuts down, and there is unfiltered access to the subconscious.

The most common experience of gnosis to the average person is the sexual orgasm. At the peak of orgasm, the mind essentially stops thinking, and the consciousness is focused on a single point in space-time. Once this concept was grasped and it's psychic usefulness realized, several mystic-magical sects developed the technique to various high levels. Among these are the Tantrists of Asia, the Mediterranean Gnostics, the Roman cults of Dyonious and modern offshoots such as the Fraternus Saturni and the Ordo Templi Orentis (OTO). Aleister Crowley became obsessed with sexual magic and nearly all of his writings and techniques have a strong sexual element.

However, sexual climax is not the only path to the gnostic state (although it is probably the most fun.) The subject of sex magic gets it's own chapter later on in the book, so we won't dwell on it yet. It serves the purposes of a magician to be able to have other methods of achieving gnosis at their command besides sex, and the development of other techniques has the side effect of also making sexual gnosis easier to attain and control.

Meditation

To be an effective magician, it's very useful to make a concentrated effort to learn at least one technique of meditation. For our purposes, this is defined as a system of self-control by which one can stimulate alpha-wave activity in the brain, which is the hallmark of a effective meditation system. We will discuss one technique here that naturally lends itself to being used for magical purposes such as scrying and out-of-body experiences. It is simple and effective, but one may choose another if so desired.

Find a quiet, comfortable place in which to practice, and arrange to be undisturbed for at least an hour or so. Wear loose fitting clothing or better still, no clothing at all.

This style uses what the Yogis call the "dead pose" -- in other words, flat on your back. The surface should be comfortable, but not so much so that it tends to induce sleepiness. A Japanese futon bed is ideal, but a foam pad (like the kind sold in camping supply stores) or a rolled-out sleeping bag are quite acceptable.

Spend several minutes getting "adjusted" so all of the little discomforts are minimized and you can lie undisturbed. You should end up with your arms slightly away from your body and legs slightly spread apart, so no part of your body is in contact with any other part. Then you must lie totally motionless for the duration of the exercise.

The first step is to begin taking deep, regular breaths; either only through the nose, or breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. Try to take an equal length of time breathing in as breathing out. Spend several minutes concentrating only on regular breathing before moving on.

The next step is to focus on individual parts of the body and "relax" each on in turn. Begin with the feet; say to yourself (silently) "my toes are relaxed and light as a cloud". Repeat this phrase until you begin to feel in your toes a sensation of "warmth", "lightness", "tingling" -- the subjective descriptions vary but you'll know it when you get it.

Once you've achieved this, change the phrase to "my feet are relaxed and light as a cloud", and feel the sensation begin to move upward. Proceed in this manner relaxing each body part in turn. Once you have relaxed you legs, proceed to your fingers and up your arms, then the hips, abdomen and chest, converge the sensation at the shoulders and work up to the neck, face back of the head and finally the scalp. Make sure you are thorough - don't forget such parts as the genitals, buttocks, small of the back, shoulder blades, etc.

When the entire body is relaxed, begin to imagine yourself as if you really are as light as a cloud and you are gently floating up into the air above the cushion. By this point you should feel profoundly relaxed and slightly euphoric. This is a light gnosis-state or "magical trance" that will be exploited later for magical purposes, but for the moment just concentrate on the feeling itself and the way you attained it.

Bring yourself "back" by imagining yourself getting heavier and heavier, in a reversal of the previous procedure. Eventually, slowly begin slight movements of your muscles; flex the toes and fingers, shrug the shoulders, roll the head gently from side to side. Take a few moments to gently "stretch out" before rising from your cushion.

It may take an hour or more to get results at first, or you may only succeed in getting your feet and fingertips to relax and feel "tingly". Regular practice is the key, as it will get easier the more you do it.

This technique of progressive relaxation can also be performed in a comfortable sitting position -- both feet on the floor, arms on armrests, head supported by a pad or pillow. Some people may find this position easier when advancing to the next step of visualization. Ultimately, the goal is to be able to rise and move about while still remaining in the trance state.

If you've never had any meditational training before this, I would strongly urge you to persevere in the practice for at least 4 weeks, spending at least one hour a day. You should strive to be able to enter the "light trance" state at will within a few minutes time. At that point, you're ready for the next step.

Visualization

Visualization is the process of using the imagination to induce specific visual illusions in oneself at will, what Karl Jung called the *active imagination*. It is the ability to make yourself "see things" that are not physically present by strongly imagining them and behaving as though they were. In other words, self-induced hallucinations.

Magicians hold that sufficiently powerful visualization by one person can have an influence on the psyches of others in their presence as well as themselves. The most mundane example of this phenomenon is the situation where one person stands in a street and looks up at the empty sky intently, as if there were something up there. Within moments a crowd has gathered, all looking up at the same non-existent thing. Some will even swear that they see "something"!

Another example is the effect of watching a performance by an expert pantomime. If s/he describes the "solid" objects of the performance with sufficient skill, the audience will come to "see" the invisible barriers, doors, windstorms, etc. - so much so that people who attend performances by masters such as Marcel Marceau think for brief moments that they actually do see Marceau's invisible "props".

Visualization is one of the "slight-of-mind" tricks that are a part of every magical system ever devised. Remember that magic functions by tapping into the psychological state we call "belief". Powerful visualization is indispensable for putting the magician into a belief state conducive to deriving magical effects.

What follows are some basic exercises in magical visualization. One should first spend some time getting into the first stage of magical trance, then practice these exercises once a day. Many studies have shown that meditation greatly improves one's learning ability, especially immediately after a session, so we may as well take advantage of it, right? The techniques in the following section on Magical Protection can be practiced concurrently with these; the technique of protection described is itself a visualization exercise.

Visualization Practice

A good way to practice visualization and get a handle on what the experience is like is to use the visual phenomenon of "after images" as a learning tool.

For this exercise, you need some brightly colored construction paper (fluorescent colors work particularly well if you can find them), some large white card stock paper (11 x 17 is perfect), scissors, tape or paper glue, and a blank white wall (an extra large piece of white posterboard hung on a wall will do nicely.)

Take some scissors and cut some approximately 1 foot long strips of colored paper about one-quarter inch in width. Now use these to paste or tape together a five-pointed star figure as pictured below:



Mount this on the white card stock. You should end up with what looks like a large flash card with a star in the middle.

Make four of these cards using different colors. The best colors to use in the construction of the star are orange, purple, green and red. The reason will be clear in a moment.

Arrange yourself facing the blank white wall with your "flash cards" in easy reach. The wall should be brightly lit. Choose one of the cards and hold it up in front of your eyes. Stare fixedly at it without moving your eyes for at least one full minute. You may want to pin it to the wall in front of you to avoid having it move. After a minute or two, quickly remove it and stare directly at the blank white wall. You should see an after image of the star figure on the blank wall, in a hue that is the opposite of the card's on the color wheel. (In other words, the orange star will yield a blue image, the purple a yellow image, the green a red image and the red a green image. These are the traditional "Elemental" colors of water, air, fire and earth respectively, and are as good a place to start as any.)

Once you have an after image showing on the blank white wall, try holding your gaze very still and "trace" the apparent outline of the star with your fingertip. This is a typical action used in "setting wards" or traditional banishing rites.

Next you can try doing the same thing, but look out into the room instead of at the blank wall. The after image should seem to float in mid air in front of your eyes. Try tracing it's outline with a fingertip again.

Then try the exercise with all of the different colors. You may have to wait a few moments between each one for the previous image to fade away.

Eventually you can create more and different flash cards to practice with, if you feel inclined.

All this is only to give you an idea of the "look and feel" of magical visualization. The final goal is to be able to "see" the figures, or any other image you choose, by sheer imagination alone. But I've found that these exercises are an excellent way to speed up the learning curve. It gives your memory something on which to hang the visualized perception, making it easier to obtain.

The next step is to practice summoning the images without the use of the cards at all. One way to progress toward this goal is to start by first obtaining the after-image, but trying to keep the image "going" even

after the visual effect begins to fade. Progressively use the cards less and less until you can do without them.

Do the above exercises at least once a day for another few weeks at least, while continuing with your meditation sessions. When you find you are able to get yourself into a light trance state in less than 10 minutes, and can visualize simple geometric forms to a reasonable degree of "visibility", you'll have the basic mental disciplines needed to do effective magical work.

The Juggler's Meditation

Here we're going to deviate from the traditional approach. Almost all of the old magical traditions use some form or another of the mental skills described above. However, the general direction of their discipline in almost all cases is to encourage complete stilling of the mind as the goal. Such quieting of the thought processes is a valuable tool, as it can quickly connect one to the Void and the attainment of the gnostic mind-state. However, stopping one's mental processes completely by sheer concentration alone is a damnably hard trick, where even a few seconds of "no-thought" can only be attained by extreme effort. Expect to spend months or even years mastering such a technique.

As an alternative, here's a technique that seems to me to be able to launch one into a gnosis state functionally equal to the scant seconds of mental quiescence obtained by the inhibitory methods mentioned above. It takes an exactly opposite approach to the goal -- call it "meditative overload". It also makes use of the skills of meditation and visualization that you've been practicing (you have been practicing, haven't you?)

Everyone is aware that the mind can be active with several unrelated thought processes at once. If you're walking down a familiar street, one can easily avoid the obstacles of other pedestrians, curbs, traffic, etc. without having to devote conscious awareness to the process. While walking, one can also have a song running through one's head, while at the same time be thinking about a meeting one has later, and what one is going to say at the meeting, AND be buttoning one's jacket or rolling up sleeves all at the same time. This is not unusual at all. So we're going to expand on this mental trick that we all already know how to do.

Start by visualizing a simple form with your eyes closed -- say a bright blue square. Now, instead of trying to quiet your mind, start a song going in your head. Don't stop visualizing the square! Next, pay attention to whatever it is you're standing/sitting/laying on. Feel the

texture and the weight of your body on it. Don't stop visualizing the square! Keep the song going! Then, try to recall the smell and taste of a delicious food. Of course, keep the blue square, song and texture active mentally! If you can, keep adding things to concentrate on using a variety of sensory types.

What you'll soon notice is your mind "time-sharing" between the various mental activities -- almost like a juggler catching and tossing the progression of different objects in the air. But this is NOT a contest. The whole idea of this technique is to FAIL. Eventually, you will add one too many mental activities, whatever your own particular capacity might be. Your mind will seem to move faster and faster switching from one conscious awareness to another until ...CLICK! You will drop all of the balls, so to speak. Suddenly, your overloaded mind will shut down, if only for the briefest of seconds. Congratulations - you have hit the gnostic state. This really works -- try it and see.

Sensory Deprivation

Another useful practice is known as sensory deprivation. The effects of extended periods of solitude have been known throughout history; the monk's cell and hermit's cave have a well documented reputation for their effects on the mind. But in the past it was believed that "the power of God" accounted for the experiences described by the meditating monk.

The first scientific experiments in sensory deprivation were conducted by American and Soviet space researchers, to determine the effects of long spaceflights on the mental states of astronauts. To their dismay, it became clear that mild disorientation and loss of time sense resulted after only several hours, with extreme effects such as hallucinations and delusional thinking occurring in less than a couple of days.

But what was horrible to a strict technologist was seen as something useful and desirable to others. One early researcher, Dr. John Lilly, developed the "isolation tank", a coffin-sized enclosure that allowed the subject to be floated in body-temperature salt water in total blackness and silence. His books detail the effects experienced by Lilly and his fellow psychonauts, and they are highly recommended to the student of magic.

The benefit of such a practice is to increase the awareness of one's own internal universe. The subjects of such experiments generally reported that the hallucinations and impressions they experienced were

"meaningful" to them in some way. A student of magic is in a particularly privileged position to make use of these effects.

In the past decade or so sensory deprivation has become quite well known, inspiring Hollywood treatments such as the film "Altered States". But the elaborate flotation tanks and other expensive equipment depicted in the film is not necessary to experience the effects of sensory deprivation. In fact, it has been shown that complete darkness and silence are not required to induce these effects. It can be also accomplished by merely keeping all sensory input uniformly constant.

This is one exercise where it is very useful to have an assistant who can "look after things" while it's going on. Some people, when deprived of sight and hearing, become easily obsessed with the idea that the phone will ring, someone will knock on the door, or the house will catch on fire -- this makes it very hard to relax and immerse oneself in the experience. Another person can also help you set things up, as you will see in the following description.

Deprivation Meditation

There are several commercially marketed "brain-wave" machines available that are used to accomplish the same thing as this exercise, but they tend to be on the expensive side, starting at \$100 or so and going up quickly. Using the technique described below you can spend less than 10 bucks (assuming you already own an inexpensive radio/cassette player) and find out if you might want to justify the expense of the fancier machines.

For this exercise you will need the following equipment:

- two white ping pong balls**
- two large (4" square) gauze pads**
- a razor knife (to slice the pads and ping pong balls)**
- medical paper adhesive tape**
- a portable "boom box" radio/cassette player**
- lightweight stereo headphones**
- a desk lamp with a 25 - 60 watt red light bulb**

Setting up:

Using the razor knife, slice the ping pong balls in half, and discard the halves with the manufacturer's marks on them. Then cut a hole in each gauze pad slightly smaller than the size of the ping pong ball halves. If

you like things neat, cut the corners off of the pads to make them roughly circular. You're going to make a crude pair of "glasses" out of the ping pong balls, using the gauze to pad the edges and the tape to hold them in place over your eyes, as follows:

Place the pads over the eye sockets so that the eyes are looking through the holes. Place the ball halves over the eyes with the edges resting on the gauze. They should clear the eye sockets enough so that blinking does not disturb them. Then the whole thing is gently taped in place.

The radio is tuned to a space between stations where there is no sound but a steady background hiss, known to audio engineers as "white noise". The bass/treble or equalizer controls can be used to soften the sound -- try decreasing the high and the low frequency controls (the bass and treble) until you get a soft, gentle sound like a distant waterfall. The headphones are placed on the ears and the volume adjusted so that the noise drowns out any external sounds.

Finally, turn out all the lights in the room except for the red light bulb -- if possible try to aim it directly at the eyes.

You can now see how useful it is to have an assistant to help!

This can be done either in a comfortable sitting position, or lying down. Once you're all set, plan to spend several minutes just getting comfortable, much as described in the previous section on basic meditation. (In fact, the procedure described there can be used in combination with the sensory deprivation exercise with great effect.) Then try to clear the mind and give free rein to whatever thoughts or images might arise. If you feel like speaking aloud, do so. It's also possible to have the assistant take notes or have a second tape recorder running to make a record.

From this point, the procedure is to basically do nothing, and allow the sensation deprived mind to range where it will. The longer one persists in this exercise the more effective it will be -- expect to spend at least a few hours to get the desired effects. With practice, one can learn to direct the visions one obtains, but this is beyond the scope of this book. I recommend the works of John Lilly to those with an interest in exploring these realms.

Vocal Vibration

There is a power in the voice, and not a single religious or mystical practice fails to take advantage of this fact, magic included.

In various magical texts, one will encounter the term 'vibrate' being used to describe some kinds of vocalization ("Vibrate the following words of power...") In mundane terms, what is being described is the entire human body's ability to resonate sympathetically with the voice, and the sensory effects that can be experienced by doing so. The "secret" of Magic Words is this: it doesn't matter what you say as much as it matters how you say it!

Oprea singers are specifically trained to position their bodies and flex their head muscles in a way that provides maximum resonance for their vocal chord's vibrations. The magician can use the same effect to magical advantage. The chapter on "Basics" provides an example of "vocalizing in the vibratory mode", as I've seen it called in some particularly pompous occult texts, as part of the Gnostic Thunderbolt Ritual. The trick is to learn to feel the resonating effects of different pitches and vowel sounds in specific parts of the body, like the lower belly or the throat. If you have someplace where you are not worried about singing out loud, try singing simple long vowel sounds ("aaaaaaahhhh...") and shift the position of your head / neck / chest until you can feel the sound of your voice vibrating through your body.

The Death Posture

Mention should be made of what Austin Osman Spare called the "Death Posture". There are several variations on this idea, but they all involve putting the body into an extremely unnatural, uncomfortable position until the point of exhaustion is reached and the conscious mind rebels and collapses, thereby obtaining a gnostic state. This is not unlike various yoga techniques -- the lotus position is not intended to be comfortable! It's intended to cause the mind to overload with discomfort until the body is no longer "felt".

By definition, a "death posture" brings about a sort of short duration "death". So it can be as simple as covering up the eyes, ears and nose with the fingers and "holding your breath until you turn blue" -- in other words, until your conscious mind gets overridden by your autonomic brain function and forces you to draw a breath.

One of Spare's descriptions called for locking your fingers behind your back, pushing them backwards and up as far as you can (until it hurts!) while standing on your toes, holding your breath and tensing all of your muscles until they quiver. Now hold this until you collapse...

The most common use for death postures is the charging of magical sigils, which will be covered in a later chapter.

(***CAUTION*** Death postures are physically demanding and should not be used by those with heart or lung conditions, high blood pressure or other ailments that restrict strenuous physical activity. If in doubt, don't -- there are many other means to accomplish the same thing.)

The Magical Diary

It's a very good idea to keep a diary of your work, especially when starting out on your magical career. Some teachers of magic are pretty maniacal about keeping complex daily journals, but I personally tend to be a bit more lax in this regard so I'm not going to dwell on it. Keeping a record of your actual work is quite useful though. Things are going to happen to you that your normal analytical mind is going to try very hard to forget ever happened! So keep notes of the work you've done, along with your personal impressions of it. You might also jot down any weird, unusual things that happen to you, along with any significant dreams.

Some people keep separate dream journals as well. Much information can be obtained about your own state of mind by examining your dreams. To make it work you need to keep a notebook and pencil right by your bed and learn to grab it and start writing the moment you wake up, while the details of your dreams are still fresh.

The magical journal also allows you to gauge your own progress and reflect on what you've been through. You don't need anything fancy -- a simple spiral notebook will do fine. I have a habit of keeping a "spellbook" in which I write down the texts of rituals I've actually performed. I find writing it down before I perform it seems to inculcate the purpose of what I'm doing into my mind, making it more effective when performed.

Applications

Although these techniques can be practiced "for their own sake", I find it far more motivating to have specific goals in mind, even if they are far down the line. This is also in keeping with the general concept of Chaos Magic as being an operative Art, not a form of philosophy. So the next chapter will be dedicated to basic applications of the previous skills in a magical context.

The Basics of Chaos Magic

"I am real!", said Alice, and began to cry.

-- Lewis Carroll

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the beginning practitioner to some basic tools and procedures with which to perform Chaos Magic. These techniques are by no means definitive, but are presented to serve as a starting point from which one's own personal magic repertoire can develop.

Banishing

Any discussion of magical technique will generally begin with the concept of banishing. Banishing rituals are usually the very first magical procedures that the new student learns.

When reduced to their common denominators, banishing rituals are intended to set a psychic demarcation of time and space, within which ritual action is to take place. This is what's important. It can be compared to what a chemist might do in a workspace -- make sure that the area is free of contaminants by cleaning it thoroughly; otherwise the results of the work might be spoiled.

Old banishing rites generally involved such things as visualizing the drawing of flaming circles around the operator, in addition to burning stars in all directions, robe-clad angels and/or castle-like towers on four sides, shafts of white light shooting through the middle of it all, while the operator screams at all the demons to get out! There is variation in the kinds of imagery used, but it's usually equally complex and superfluous.

I know of very few magicians who have been literally dragged into a sulphur pit by ravaging demons for failing to do a proper banishing. However, this is not meant to indicate that such techniques are not useful and important.

Most incarnations of Western Hermetic magic (Golden Dawn, Thelema, various shades of Witchcraft) use some variation of The Lesser Banishing Ritual Of The Pentagram (LBRP) as their primary banishing rite. The LBRP (affectionately known as the "el-burp") traces back to the 19th century British occult order, The Golden Dawn.

Briefly, the LBRP involves "grounding" oneself firmly in the center of a space, then proceeding to "draw" four visualized pentagrams in the air corresponding to the cardinal points of the compass. In the original version, each pentagram is accompanied by the visualized image of one of the four Judeo-Christian archangels (each associated with one of the four Elements of Earth, Fire, Air, and Water) "standing guard" on the periphery of the ritual space. If this idea appeals to you, there are a dozen or more books available that describe the ritual in detail, so I won't go into it much here. The Wiccans have their "Calling the Quarters", the Thelemites the "Star Ruby", so there are many variations on the theme one can explore.

However, this is about Chaos Magic. One of the premises is that magic proceeds from the deep mind, and few people really have the time and determination to internalize the imagery and meaning of the traditional

archangels deeply enough into their minds to make it work well. Remember, these things must connect with your non-verbal, subconscious mind strongly in order to be magically effective. The image of a winged human clad in flowing robes must have been really impressive back in the 19th century, but after being exposed to Hollywood efforts like Stargate, Hellraiser and other blockbuster "occult" morph-fests, it doesn't have much of a kick for the 21st century mind anymore.

The following ritual was developed by my friend and fellow Chaos Magician, Tzimon Yilaster. It is a variation on the LBRP, but without the elaborate (and for most people questionably effective) archangel imagery. It also allows for a great deal of personal variation. It can be performed as a quick "one direction" focusing procedure, an elaborate "call the four quarters" prelude to subsequent ritual work, or any shade between. It's called the Gnostic Thunderbolt.

The Gnostic Thunderbolt

The Gnostic Thunderbolt ("GT") is performed using a combination of visualization, vocalization and breath control. No tools are needed, although one may use a wand, dagger or other device as a "pointer" if desired.

The GT draws on the concept of "energy centers" that occupy certain positions in the body. This is one of those "strange attractors" that appears in a wide variety of magical traditions. Generally, these energy centers are arrayed along the spinal column, from the base of the pelvis to the top of the head.

Various traditions disagree with exactly where and how many of these centers exist; from the five points of "Odic Force" to the Tantrists, who identify hundreds. This leads me to think that the "strange attractor" being identified here is simply a particularly useful visualization technique -- it need not have any basis in fact (whatever that means...)

So for our purposes, we will assume five energy centers: The head (behind the eyes), the throat, the center of the chest (around the solar plexus), the abdomen and the genitals.

It's also possible (though not required) that certain colors be associated with each center. The best approach would be to begin practicing the GT without choosing particular colors, then allowing the color choice to "evolve" according to the individual. But to nod to tradition, the typical choices are head = blue, throat = orange, chest = yellow, abdomen = green and genitals = red.

As for the vocalization part: the idea here is to use pure vowel tones, rather than memorizing elaborate "archangel" names.

The Rite:

Purpose: The Gnostic Thunderbolt is a mutation of, and can be used interchangeably with, the Pentagram Ritual. Its purpose is to imbue motivation and momentum to the participants, whilst banishing unwanted influences at the same time. It is highly recommended for opening a temple, and as a preliminary to other work, but is not well applied to healing aims.

Techniques Employed: Breath control, sound concentration, image concentration, sound vibration.

Description:

(With the following vocal sounds, each one is in turn sounded at a progressively lower pitch. Start the first on the highest note you can hit, and work downward until the last syllable is the lowest note you can hit.)

1. Inhale. Starting just beyond the head, either shoulder, or either hip, draw the first point of the Thunderbolt. Simultaneously, visualize a blue sphere lighting up between the eyes, and sending a thread of light to the point. Vibrate "liiii..." in a high-pitched tone until the lungs are emptied.

(Think of the "AY YI YI" war-whoop sound frozen on the last syllable. The back of the tongue is almost blocking the throat, with the lips drawn tight across the teeth.)

2. Inhale. Trace a straight line from shoulder to opposite shoulder or hip, or from the head to either hip. Visualize an orange sphere lighting up in the throat, sending a thread of light to the second point. Vibrate "Aaaah..." in a slightly lower tone. (A rather straightforward "short A". Just open the jaw slightly from the first vowel sound and allow the tongue to drop a bit.)

3. Inhale. Trace a second line, again as if drawing a pentagram. Visualize a yellow sphere in the center of the chest, and sending its light to the third point. Vibrate "Ehhh..." in a tone lower than the previous vibration. (The "schwa" vowel -- kind of a cross between short "A" and short "eh".)

4. Inhale. Trace a third line. Visualize a green sphere in the genital area, sending its light to the fourth point. Vibrate "Ohhh..." in a lower tone. (An "oh" sound; the tongue is allowed to fall into a relaxed position and the throat is open, lips slightly rounded.)

5. Inhale. Trace the fourth line. Visualize a red sphere encircling the feet and disappearing into the ground, and sending its thread to the fifth point. Vibrate "Uuuuh...". (A low "uhhh" sound, made by relaxing the jaw as much as possible with the lips still rounded.)

6. Do not draw the closing bar of the pentagram! Instead, remain completely motionless and hold your breath for as long as possible. Concentrate your attention fixedly on the sound of your blood rushing through your carotid arteries. Know that the rumbling you hear is the eternal explosion of the Thunderbolt. You are part of the thunderbolt, moving endlessly and mindlessly onward.

7. Continue to hold the image and sound in the mind while holding your breath as long as you can. When you finally must breathe, envision the thunderbolt fragmenting with a tremendous roar and sending sparks into and through you.

8. Repeat the seven steps above, drawing the thunderbolts about you to describe a 3-dimensional shape of whatever kind suits you.

9. Declaration of intent, i.e. "We will that we never end where we had begun. We will that we shall begin." or "I declare myself prepared to do the Great Work of Magic" or "We believe this space to be cleansed".

It's recommended to practice this banishing (or one of your own choice) on a daily basis, at least at first -- upon awaking is a good idea. Eventually you'll be able to perform it silently by imagination only, making it available at any time or place it might be needed.

The Magical Space

The Magical Space is defined as a physical location that has been set aside to do magical work. It is your personal "temple", but don't get hung up on the orthodox religious overtones of that word.

By simply performing the banishing ritual above and ending with, "I dedicate this space to the work of Magic" or something similar (try to use the same phrase consistently, though) a Magical Space is created. By performing the same procedure but ending it with, "I declare this Magical Space to be closed" or the like, the Magical Space is destroyed -- until next time. Consider this the first practical application of the banishing ritual.

When you declare a Magical Space, you should "feel" that you are separated, isolated, secure, and comfortable while within it. This is the "feeling" that you are striving to achieve. When you get that feeling, you've succeeded!

Having a separate room set up the way you like is of course ideal, but not everyone has the resources to do this. The room itself is not a Magical Space, it is merely a convenient place to declare a Magical Space with as little preparation as possible.

A Magical Space is in fact "portable", since it can be declared literally anywhere you happen to find yourself. Remember that the whole idea of Magical Space is an area that is under the complete and total control of the magician. So even though one could declare a Magical Space in an empty field or a city street, having a comfortable room, or part of a room, available for use with all of your favorite accoutrements to lend it the proper ambiance, makes the whole thing easier to control.

Many (most?) occult traditions set down specific props and furniture that must be assembled in a specific fashion to qualify as a magic "temple". With Chaos Magic, it's up to you to determine what makes a Magical Space magical for you. It's far more important that something makes you feel magical, regardless of what some long-dead occult priest thought was proper.

So here's your chance to indulge whatever weird, superstitious impulses you might have. If candles, skulls and stuffed ravens make it for you, by all means use them. Or maybe strobe lights and fluorescent sigils on the walls makes you feel magical. Or tie-dyes and macramé. Or a room full of potted plants -- it makes no difference, as long as you feel that what surrounds you separates your Magical Space from the mundane world outside. If you need ideas, any number of books on occult traditions can provide suggestions. Take what strikes your fancy and make it your own.

It's advisable to be consistent, so that merely setting up your "props" makes you feel like you're slipping automatically into a "magical trance." You're trying to use a specific set of objects to cause an automatic response in your subconscious, like the bell did for Pavlov's dogs. Repetition reinforces this kind of response.

When you're in Magical Space, the distractions of the outside world must be kept to an absolute minimum. Disconnect the doorbell and leave the phone off the hook. Inform roommates and neighbors you are not to be disturbed during these times, unless it's literally a life and death situation.

The Magical Altar

The Altar is the magican's workbench. If you work with tools and props, it's where they are placed so they are easily available. If you're making sigils, incense, oils or potions, it's literally a "workbench".

So for practical purposes, the Altar should be of a height and area that is convenient to work on. A simple table with a few foot square top is ideal. Having it of a height that allows you to sit on the floor in front of it comfortably is a good idea. Small coffee tables make excellent Altars following this design.

Some prefer a table that can be stood in front of, so that one can easily move about the room during the performance of a ritual. The traditional shape is a "double-cube" -- two cubes stacked on top of each other, of a height that roughly reaches the magician's navel. Actually, one of those "Audio/video stands" with the glass door in the front, (especially the ones on wheels allowing it to be positioned anywhere in the room) is ideal; the shelves inside hold supplies and tools in a convenient place.

I've found that the "stand-up" Altar is more practical for elaborate ritual work, where the Altar need only hold a few candles and a tool or two, or perhaps an open book. It allows more spontaneous motion, wide gestures, dancing, spinning and other physical expressions. For jobs like incense production or divination readings, the larger top "sit-down" style is preferable. So ideally, you could have BOTH -- the short one against the wall, the tall one on wheels so it can be packed up and rolled into the closet when your Baptist Aunt Minne comes around...

Again, some consitantcy is advised. If you can't dedicate a particular table for magical use only, pick a special candle holder or centerpiece and always use it. It's presence declares 'this table is my Magical Altar'. Create or acquire a special covering -- an Altar Cloth -- that you think gives it a magical "look-and-feel". You can make one yourself or search in the fabric stores and scarf shops for just the right thing. Since you're likely to be burning candles and incense, it might be wise to avoid easily ignited synthetic fabrics like polyester and acetate. Cotton or silk are durable and washable and harder to send up in flames.

The idea is that setting up your Altar becomes the first step in creating your Magical Space. As soon as you do it, the room feels "energized" because your subconscious gets the signal, 'It's time to do Magic!'

Colors and Candles

Candles have a long and distinguished history in magic, and nothing else does quite the same job of "ambience". Get a good pair of candle holders and an assortment of various colored candles, though you

might want to lean toward mostly white and black. Since we're on the subject of candle colors, it's a good time to mention color and it's relationship to magic.

Many magicians burn candles of specific colors depending on the kind of operation. In general practice one lights the room with the color of candle that pretains to the purpose of the work. Lighting the candles can be done as part of the overall preperation before you begin, or can be incorporated as part of the ritual procedure itself.

What color goes with what operation is a subject of much debate, but ultimately there is no absolute rule in Chaos Magic as to color association. Many use the eight colors defined by fantasy writer Terry Pratchett and promoted by Peter Carroll of the IOT. They are as follows:

Red: War, Aggression

Orange: Mind, Intelligence, Intuition

Violet: Sex, Lust, Passion

Yellow: Ego, Self-confidence

Green: Love, Healing

Blue: Wealth, Material

Black: Death, Dissolution, Entropy

Octarine: Transcendence, Illumination, High Magic

"Octarine" is described as one's 'personal' color of magic; so it varies with the individual. For candle burning purposes, it can be most simply represented by white, or by a particular color of choice.

Use these attributions or experiment with your own. Many sources can be consulted for ideas. Certain things like gold relating to money are pretty obvious. Aleister Crowley's reference book, 777, contains scores of interrelated attributes that can also work well.

There are procedures that can be used to "dress" candles for magical purposes. A simple way is to rub them down with a scented oil appropriate to the candle's assumed attributes, while meditating on the properties you intend to imbue into the candle.

Always use new candles. Candles used for your magical work should not be used for other purposes.

(Here's a tip: Invariably, wax gets spilled on an altar cloth. Some circles cut from sheets of plastic can be placed under the candle holders to keep wax off of the cloth. A commercial cleaning fluid called "Goof-Off",

available at most hardware and paint stores, can remove dried wax from cotton cloth. Great stuff.)

Incense

Incense is a powerful tool in magic, because the olfactory organs are more closely "hard-wired" to the brain than any other of the senses. Everyone is familiar with how easily a given smell can evoke an entire set of memories connected with it, even more so than visual or audio cues. Magicians make use of this effect by assigning specific scents to specific mind-states and by continuous reinforcement, use them to quickly and effectively recall these states.

The Chaos Magic approach is not to rely on "ancient texts" or any other authority to tell you what a certain smell is supposed to mean, but rather to experiment and determine for yourself what kind of scent will call forth what mind-state.

One approach is to build your own set of relationships by doing meditation exercise that concentrate on a specific emotion or state of mind, and burn a chosen incense while doing so. By repetition, your mind will build an association between that scent and a given mind state. You can use the "traditional" lists of incense correspondences (such as in 777 or various popular books on aromatherapy) as a starting point, but it's more important to work on programming your subconscious reactions to certain scents, regardless of how you derive them in the first place.

Magical Tools

What else goes on the altar? Well, like any workbench, it's where one places one's tools.

Magical tools and the techniques behind them could fill a book of its own (and it has.) Here I'll just try to cover the basics that can be used to build on. Tools are artifacts and are an expression of Art in the material sense. The most powerful magical tools express one's magical personality in a unique way.

Tools can be highly useful, especially when just starting out your magical practice. Like incense, they can be used to focus one's mental efforts.

Traditional magical tools generally follow certain "formulae" derived from a particular tradition's teachings. They usually express the tradition's world-view as well. So Wiccans tend to use rough-cut

branches, hand-made knives and the like, while ceremonial magicians can sport accoutrements that would be the envy of the Catholic Pope.

Magical toolmaking probably reached its pinnacle (or its decadence, depending on your point of view) with the Golden Dawn. Books on Golden Dawn tools are easily obtainable should you like to pursue that line to its logical conclusion, but it's not a requirement.

The most effective magical tools are those you make yourself, are given to you freely as gifts, or found in some unique and interesting way. In all cases, acquiring them is a memorable event, and this may be the "strange attractor" that allows them to be more magically useful. If you must go out and buy a particular piece, the traditional advice goes, "Buy a perfectly black hen without haggling." This is taken to mean that: A) the hen must be "perfectly black"; that is, it must be absolutely perfect for what you intend it for, and B) you must pay whatever is asked for it, even if it's a premium price.

Magical tools should only be used for magical purposes, and kept safely stored when not in use. Habits such as wrapping in silk, storing them in special containers and the like is a good idea, as it emphasizes the "specialness" of them and that makes them more effective. To keep your tools intensely personal, no one but you should handle them (unless they're someone you would also allow to handle your other private parts...)

One can begin with only the simplest of implements, so here follows some suggestions on the construction and use of magical tools. As archetypes I'll be drawing from the "traditional" magical tools: the wand, the dagger, the cup and the disk.

A "pointing device" is often useful, for drawing visualized patterns or otherwise focusing the attention on a particular point.

The most basic tools for this purpose are the wand and the dagger. They express the "male" or creative/outgoing/expansive side of our dualistic universe. The phallic imagery is fairly obvious.

The wand is basically a stick, decorated in some way that makes it an extension of the personality of its wielder. The dagger is a knife, generally double-edged. While usually not as elaborately embellished as a wand, it is at least painted or decorated in a personal way.

A wand can be fashioned from a simple wooden dowel obtainable at any hardware or lumber store, or made from a suitably straight branch of a tree. Although a wand can be of any length, it's a good idea to start with

one short enough to swing about without bashing anything, say 12 to 18 inches in length.

Carving, wood-burning or painting the wand in some special way that expresses it's purpose is a good idea. Epoxy putty can be used to fasten stones or other objects to the ends. Acrylic paints of excellent color and durability can be purchased at any artist's supply store. A light spraying of clear acrylic finish will add to durability (be sure the paint is fully dry before spraying on the finish.)

A dagger, also known to witches as an "athame" (pronounced "ah-THA-may" or "ah-THAM") can be handmade as well, though it's more difficult. All normal precautions pertaining to the use of tools (gloves, eye protection, etc.) should be followed.

Take a simple metal file of appropriate size, and heat it with a gas stove or butane torch until it glows dull red. Depending on how hot your flame is, it may take more than an hour for the metal to glow red, but it will eventually. Then let the metal cool down naturally, and it will be soft enough to work with.

Now use a second metal file to grind the softened one down to the shape of a dagger. Progressively finer-toothed files can be used to make the blade smoother. A hacksaw might be useful to fashion the end to a point before filing. Professional power tools like grinding wheels are nice if you have the access and skill, but a hand-tooled dagger can have a unique "rustic" look that is very artistically satisfying. Leave the tang or "handle" end of the file as it is, as this is the place where the hilt will be attached.

When finished, heat the metal up again to dull red, and then grasping it with pliers by the tang, plunge it into tepid water, stirring it until it cools down, and dry it off. Then heat it up again; you'll notice it glows with a more pale orange color than before, then begins to darken. When this happens, plunge it again. The metal is now hardened and can be polished with fine sandpaper or steel wool, if desired.

The hilt or grip can be made of wood, oven-hardening clay or casting resin. A simple way is to take a short piece of suitably shaped wood, drill out a hole deep enough to hold the tang, fill it with epoxy glue, and push the tang into it; tie, clamp or block it in place until the glue sets. The handle can be carved or painted in the same way as the wand, in some unique and artistic way that you find satisfying and that expresses it's purpose.

The other side of duality, the "female" or nurturing/receptive/ contractive side, is represented by the cup and/or disk.

The cup can be used for preparing oils, holding ritual libations such as wine, or filled with ink or dark liquid and used as a scrying or meditative focus.

Cups can be made of metal, glass, or ceramic, but if you intend to drink from it you should avoid pewter or oven hardened clay like Fimo, as they can leach poisons into liquids. If you don't have access to glass blowing or ceramic equipment and skill, you can take a pre-made cup and paint it to express your personal touch.

The disk can be used for holding sigils during the "charging" process, preparing incense and other powders, or as a meditative focus. To this end, the disk is usually painted with patterns or glyphs which are a personal expression of one's magical self. There is no rule for this -- consider it a challenge to your magical development! Ready-made disks of wood can be purchased at arts and crafts stores, or easily made from clay -- or you can take a piece of wood and a knife and whittle away! Something at least six inches in diameter is practical.

Even if you choose not to use elaborate props, a pointing device can be something as simple as a large stone or crystal, a container a nicely made cup or bowl, as long as they're treated as something "special". The above descriptions are only suggestions, not rules. I've seen some very interesting magical tools, from common objects like rings and bracelets, to weird stuff like spinning platforms and "Swiss Army" athames!

Once your tools are made, they should be "charged", or dedicated in some way to the work of magic. One can simply prepare a magical space, place the tool on the altar and meditate on it's meaning and properties. Or a more elaborate ritual can be devised (or culled from various available books) to perform over the tool to "charge" it.

What you're trying to do is impress the tool's meaning and "magical power" on your subconscious mind. Chaos Magic holds that it is there and ONLY there that magical power resides. The physical basis has no power in and of itself. This is why someone else's magical tools are most likely useless to anyone other than their owner (and points out the futility, aside from the ethical considerations, of stealing some other magican's tools.)

Magical Costumes

Clothes make the man (or woman), it is said, and the magician's wardrobe has inspired some of the most artistic expressions of the costumer's craft.

Any actor can tell you that something profound occurs when wearing a costume; a shift in consciousness occurs that is most definitely a useful meta-belief device. Just like setting up an altar and declaring a magical space, donning a special set of clothes, or even one simple article only used for working magic, does much for putting one in the right "headspace" to do magical work.

The most common (and cliché'd) magical outfit is the robe, generally plain black or white. Beyond its traditional connotation, there is something sensuous about wearing a robe, especially when it's ALL that you're wearing!

A robe can be made easily from a large piece of fabric like a sheet. Dye it an appropriate color, if necessary and cut hole for the head to go through. Viola! -- It's a robe! Of course, you can be as elaborate as your skill or willingness to spend money can take you, but simple works just fine.

Practice!

At this point you have enough information to go ahead and practice magic. Don your robe, place your tools on your altar, take your wand or dagger in hand, and perform the Gnostic Thunderbolt (or similar self-composed procedure) to declare your magical space. Do it! There is no substitute for direct experience, especially in Chaos Magic. You need not do anything in particular beyond creating your space and spending some time meditating within it, but DO IT. Then do it again. And again. And prepare to go on with some of the suggestions offered in this book, but more importantly to begin to devise your own.

Congratulations -- you're a practicing magician!

Sigil Magic

*The means used and the way it happens are simple, the inverse of scientific. I use a formula, created by instinctive guess and *arbitrarily* formed, not evolved by hypothesis and experiment. The law of sorcery is its own law, using sympathetic symbols.*

- Austin Osman Spare

If you get nothing more from this book than the concepts explained in this chapter, it will have been worth the price you paid (unless you borrowed the book, in which case you should support your hard working occult author and run out right now and buy your own copy!) The most important thing about sigil magic is that -- it works!

The theory goes like this: the conscious mind is not directly capable of performing magic (in fact, it *inhibits* magic,) so the subconscious mind must have the magical intent implanted in somehow it so that it might "unconsciously" manipulate aetheric information to bring about the result.

Not only does this theory model the function of sigil magic, but can be used to model *any* form of effective magical technique. Shamanistic sorcery obviously involves direct interface with the magician's subconscious, breaking down the barriers by extreme disciplines and psychoactive drugs. Complex systems of ceremonial magic can be effective, but only if the subconscious mind is trained to autonomically recognise the symbolism of the system and act on it's linguistics unconsciously. The adept may then use the tools of the system to formulate effective magical procedures. This explains the long apprenticeships and intense religious instruction that characterizes the traditions. There is no inherent magical "power" in any particular set of symbols; it is only the subconscious manipulation of whatever symbols are chosen that make them magical. But it is more magically effective for the student of a system to accept the dogma of it's tradition -- that it's symbol-set is inherently magical -- without question, to provide the required belief-state to make it work.

As Chaos Magicians we substitute meta-belief technique for dogmatic adherence to a particular model. Religious acceptance is replaced with passionate performance that taps into the unconscious archetypes that underlie all the religious symbolism of humanity. By use of the active imagination, and certain "slight-of-mind" tricks such as sigils, we breach the barriers of the subconscious by guile rather than by main force (as in shamanism) or by seige (as in traditional ceremonial magic.)

Sigil Theory

In general terms, a sigil is any glyph or symbol with mystical or magical significance. But for our purposes, we will use the word to describe a glyph created using the methods originated by Austin Osman Spare (see the chapter on History for details on Spare.) Though Spare never revealed exactly how the concept of sigil magic came to him, he was an accomplished graphic artist, so it's possible he got the idea from seeing watermarks on paper. The newly (at the time) published works of Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung might have provided the theoretical foundation for the "subliminal" nature of sigil workings; that between the conscious and unconscious (or subconscious) mind there stands a "safety valve", a filter that surpresses all non-logical thoughts and impressions, which Spare called the "psychic censor".

Sigils are monograms of thought, for the government of energy ... a mathematical means of symbolising desire and giving it form that has the virtue of preventing any thought and association on that particular desire (at the magical time), escaping the detection of the Ego, so that it does not restrain or attach such desire to its own transitory images, memories and worries, but allows it free passage to the sub-consciousness.

--A.O.Spare, "The Book Of Pleasure"

Sigil Magic uses these glyphs as a means to bridge the gap between the conscious and subconscious mind. It compares in some respects to traditional "talisman magic", in which predetermined symbols (such as planetary or astrological ones) are used to embellish a physical device that will encompass the "power" represented by those symbols.

Generally, the talisman is subsequently carried by the user as a "charm".

In contrast, a sigil is a customized tool designed to bring about a specific effect, and it's physical basis is only used once at the time of the subconscious implantation, after which it is generally (although not always) destroyed.

Also, a sigil is an original artistic creation, produced by conceiving a sentence that expresses a magical intent, and converting that sentence into a pictorial representation. The point is to obtain an image that can carry the intent past the psychic censor and into the subconscious mind, where it becomes magically effective.

The great advantage of sigil magic is that no particular belief-set is needed to work with it; there are no discarnate entities to summon, no deities to appease, no invisible rays to emanate from your solar plexus (unless you want to create them yourself as a meta-belief device). And there are no special tools or equipment needed beyond a pencil and paper, and even these can be abandoned by the adept practitioner.

The Making of a Sigil

There are three main parts to the construction of a sigil: formulation of a Sentence of Desire, conversion of the sentence into a graphic representation or glyph, and implantation of the glyph into the subconsciousness.

Of the three steps, the creation of the Sentence of Desire is the most important -- and the most difficult. Due to the psychological make-up of the human subconscious, there are certain guidelines that must be followed to obtain predictable results.

First there is the need for absolute precision and lack of ambiguity. I've heard of a test that is used in military officer's training schools, in which the squad leader is assigned a mission and required to cut a set of orders for the squad that he or she thinks is totally unambiguous. Then those under his or her command will try to follow those orders to the letter, but in such a way that is NOT what the leader really intended -- they try to purposely misinterpret the orders. If they find it impossible to do so, the leader passes the test. So a good way to test one's Sentence of Desire is to see if you can come up with any alternative meaning other than what was intended. If so, try formulating it in another way.

This need for precision must be balanced with the need for brevity. The Sentence must be concise, using just enough words to express the meaning and no more.

Also, the sentence must be expressed only in positive, not negative terms. The subconscious has the annoying habit of perceiving everything positively. For example, if you want to create a Sentence to protect you from traffic accidents, do not express it as "I will not be in a traffic accident" -- the deep mind ignores the "not" and hears this as "I

will be in a traffic accident"! Instead, express it as something like "I will drive safely".

Spare preceded all of his Sentences with the prefix "THIS MY WISH..." followed by the description of what was desired. I've always felt this was a bit soft, so I tend to use "IT IS MY WILL..." Some practitioners drop the prefix entirely, and claim it works fine. But it may be more effective to make the Sentence a strong declaration, so the prefix is a very good idea.

Producing The Sigil

The sentence is then written out on paper in all capital letters, usually near the top of a large piece of paper -- the lower part will be used during the construction of the sigil.

We'll use as an example:

IT IS MY WILL TO EARN ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY A NEW CAR

There are two ways to approach creating a graphic sigil, as follows.

Method 1:

Scan the letters and cross out any repeating ones, as follows:

IT xS MY WxLx xO EARN xxxUGH xxxxx xx Bxx x xxx Cxx

Which leaves us with the following letters remaining:

I T S M Y W L O E A R N U G H B C

Method 2:

Same as above, but break the Sentence into it's component parts first:

IT IS MY WILL -> IT Ix MY WxLx = I T S M Y W L

TO EARN ENOUGH MONEY -> TO EARN xxxUGH MxxxY = T O E A R N U G H M Y

TO BUY A NEW CAR -> TO BUY A NEW CxR = T O B U Y A N E W C R

At this point, the resulting list(s) of letters can be used to make either a graphic sigil or a mantric sigil. We'll cover each one separately.

Graphic Sigils

Out of these letter-shapes, a combined image is formed. In the case of Method 2 above, the separate images are prepared first, then combined together to yield a single glyph. The letters can be linked to each other, or superimposed on top of each other, in any manner desired. What's

most important is that the resulting image is "impressive" and satisfying to it's creator.

Here's the way I might go about rendering this example. Keep in mind that this is MY way of doing it and for it to be effective for you, it would have to be created by you and of course would be different.

On a seperate piece of paper, I would make a basic, rough sketch linking the various letter shapes together, combining some of them as I go along (for example, an "M" is a "W" upside down, "I" is contained in "T", "F" is part of "E", etc.):

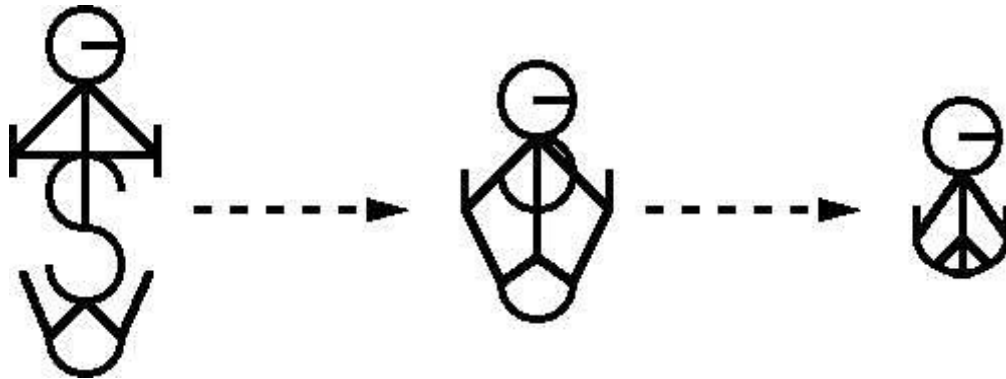
In the case of method 2, each section is rendered into a rough drawing first, then the drawings are combined into a single glyph. The process is pretty much the same either way. Method 2 makes it easier to create a sigil from a somewhat longer Sentence without ending up with almost every letter of the alphabet in the mix all at once!



At this point I would discard the first piece of paper with the original sentence and list of letters on it. From this point onward, it is not looked at as derivative of certain words, or even as a list of letters, but simply as a picture. But during the process, your mind is absorbing the hidden meaning unconsciously, and will "remember" it subliminally. Keep in mind that sigil magic was originated by a highly skilled artist, who fully understood that the act of creation itself is powerful magic.

So the image is simplified and refined, with the goal being a pattern that the mind can easily visualize. This is the reason for trying to make it artistically impressive somehow, like an easy to recall logo. However, what we're aiming for is something that can be recalled by short term memeory, but not by long term memory -- since ultimately we will be required to forget about the sigil. So too much simplicity is also not correct.

To take it another step:



Now the image is looking more streamlined and elegant. Enclosing the entire image somehow helps make it more concise, so drawing a circle or similar shape around it is also common.

There is a third method of creating a graphic sigil. It involves drawing a simple picture of the intent. This has the advantage of starting from a graphic image instead of having to derive one from letters, but the disadvantage of having more of a chance of being ambiguous.

Using the above example again, you could draw a little stick figure with your initials on it sitting behind the wheel of a car. The picture is then "morphed" in some fashion to alter it beyond recognition, and then treated as a glyph in the first example.

In the example below, two figures representing two people (with their initials on their bodies) have a wall drawn between them, perhaps for an operation to force a separation or end a relationship. The original drawing is combined and simplified:

So there you have a sigil! Now it's time to bring it to "life." If you like, do a final rendering on a fresh piece of paper, trimmed to just large enough to hold the drawing, and discard all of your sketches and notes.

Charging The Sigil

Even the term "charging" is a nod to tradition more than an accurate description of what is done to activate a sigil. In the old traditions of talismantic magic, once an amulet was created by whatever means, it had to be endowed with "energy" by some action of the magician. The world-view of the day determined what this "energy" was; in prehistory it would have contained a spirit, later a god or demon, eventually "life force" or "vibrations" provided the explanation. (Whether that kind of

magic is effective or not isn't important here. I think it can be, but not for the reasons that it's practitioners think it is.)

Sigil Magic is a completely different approach. Making a sigil work is, in a way, the opposite of "charging". The idea is to open the gates of the deep mind and cause the sigil to be "absorbed" into it. The magician doesn't charge the sigil, the sigil charges the magician!

To do this, a state of gnosis must be achieved, and at that point, the sigil must be introduced to the deep mind. There are many variations on how this can be accomplished. The simplest is to hold the image of the sigil in front of your eyes and stare intently at it at the peak of gnosis and, to use Spare's description, "drink it in to the mind." It's very hard to use words to describe something so ineffable as this action. For me it is a state of high trance, of "not-thinking", but at the same time, with an obsessive concentration on the image of the sigil to the exclusion of all else. *Not the meaning of the sigil*, but simply the graphic image itself as pure abstract, unconnected to any meaning -- a picture and nothing more.

Here's where such exercises as meditation and death posture you encountered in the previous chapters can be used for a practical purpose.

You can arrange the sigil where it can be seen, and assume a death posture until physical collapse occurs. You can meditate on the image itself until meditative trance ensues, or incorporate it as one image in a Juggler's Meditation exercise. One of Spare's suggestions was to paint the sigil on a mirror and stare "through" it to the image of your own eyes, holding your own gaze without blinking until the sigil "dissappears". (He also suggested exhausting oneself playing tennis, but then he was a bit crazy...)

Two other methods will have their own chapters devoted to them -- charging by means of psychodramatic ritual, and by means of sexual gnosis. But for now we'll move on to the next kind of sigil.

Mantric Sigils

The method of deriving the strings of letters is identical. To use the same example as above:

I T S M Y W L O E A R N U G H B C

Next, the letters are rearranged in some random fashion -- I use "scrabble" letter tiles for this purpose. The idea is to obtain a series of "nonsense words" using the letters.

So one possible combination would be:

YARGMES CILBOW THUN

This is the sigilized mantra.

Again, the sigil must be charged, and the above methods of achieving gnosis are applicable, but instead of staring at a picture, one chants the mantra. Of course, the two methods can be combined for even more effective workings.

Losing the Meaning

According to Spare's theory, a sigil whose meaning is consciously remembered at the point it is charged is a sigil that won't work. So you **MUST** find a way to "forget" the meaning behind a sigil to make it work.

There are practicing Chaos Magicians who would dispute this, and claim that as long as you have the sigil where it can be perceived, either in sight or strongly imagined, it doesn't matter what the conscious mind is doing as long as gnosis is reached. One possible way to look at it is that the very act of achieving gnosis involves shutting down the discursive functions of consciousness anyway. But then you can find Chaos Magicians who will dispute just about any claim you can think of, so everyone must experiment and determine what works best.

One way of deliberate forgetting is to create a few sigils for different purposes, put them away out of sight for a couple weeks or so until you can't remember which one was which, then charge them either all at once or one after the other.

There is also the "under-the-nose" method: an object that is seen every day in the same place in the same way tends to fade into the background of consciousness eventually, and it is no longer actively "seen". Using this method allows for the creation of more durable sigils in the manner of traditional talismans, though it would have to be arranged to be *seen* rather than, for example, worn around the neck or carried in a purse.

Another method is by using ritual action to distract the conscious mind and keep it occupied with such tasks as performing "meaningless" words and gestures, delivering a memorized script of actions, strong visualization of images or other actions. Mantras, dancing, drumming or other repetitive actions can also lull the mind into a quiescent state. Well designed rituals incorporate a self-consistent and artistically satisfying set of symbols that inform the structure of, and provide direction for, the actions that take place. A sufficiently well chosen set of

symbolic tools can drive the action itself without a pre-arranged procedure, allowing for improvisational forms of ritual work.

These ideas are covered in more depth in other chapters. What's important here is that sigils can be, and often are, operative components of ritual work. They are used as the focus of the ritual itself, and the mechanics are simply the manner in which the meaning is lost to the conscious mind and the sigil is charged.

Finally, it's important to separate one's self from the act of charging after the implantation of the sigil is accomplished. Don't do any meditation, other magical operations, talk about the working with anyone, have sexual orgasms or even do a lot of heavy pondering about the universe. The idea is to *shut* the doors to the subconscious and give the sigil, and *only* the sigil, a chance to become firmly implanted without any spurious thoughts connected to it. It also keeps it from easily floating back into the conscious mind until the short term memory dumps it, which according to psychologists takes about three hours.

So wash the dishes, go for a bike ride, read a book that's NOT about magic, watch an old Marx Brothers movie.

A note about keeping diaries or journals of sigil work:

Some magicians are maniacal about keeping records of everything they do, and this is a defensible practice. But the purpose of a diary is to *remember*, and the purpose of a sigil is to *forget* -- paradox!

One way around it is to make a record of one's statement of intent *before* the actual working is performed, and then put the diaries away for several months and only then look them over and determine what the results have been. Another suggestion has been to paste flyleaves over the entries, bearing a date after which the description underneath can be looked at, so as to prevent accidentally informing the conscious mind of the work before it has manifested.

This covers the basics of sigil magic. As long as the basic formula is followed, there is a lot of room for personal interpretation and expression.

Variations on a Theme

Some of the more interesting applications of sigil technique I have used:

* Create sculpted sigils out of clay and manipulate them in various ways during charging. This is especially effective for using the "pictorial" method. For example, two figurines can be made to represent two particular people, even with such things as hair or fingernail parings

mixed in with the clay, a variation on the "witch's poppet" or voodoo doll. The clay figures can be combined, mashed together to imply a coming together of the people they represent.

Clay sigils can be crushed in the hand or underfoot to destroy them, or even have firecrackers imbedded in them and blown up!

*** Paint the sigil on one's body (on a visible place, such as the belly) with water-soluble paint, then take a bath and let it slowly dissolve away while watching it. This is especially useful for enchantments such as healing the body.**

*** Draw the sigil on paper or cloth with disappearing ink (available from novelty and costume shops) and stare at it as it slowly evaporates.**

*** Create a sigil on a piece of filter paper using food coloring as ink (choose a color appropriate to the work.) Place the paper in a funnel over a container and pour water or oil through it into the container. It will pull the "ink" along with it and color the liquid, which can then be used as a "magical potion".**

Obviously, the variations are limited only by one's imagination, as long as the basic requirements of the technique are fulfilled.

Sigil magic is simple and powerful. A good way to begin is to choose some simple, unimportant result -- one to which you aren't personally attached. Like:

IT IS MY WILL TO SEE A TALL WOMAN WITH PINK SHOES

Such a wish is entirely unimportant, but not something that one runs into every day, so it's a good test. See how long it takes for the wish to manifest. The practical side of such exercises is that success, though the result is not important itself, increases one's confidence that MAGIC WORKS, which in turn makes success more likely for more important objectives.

There is no way to prove the efficacy of sigil magic except by trying it yourself.

The chapters here describe many ways to incorporate sigils into ritual action, where the additional manipulation of the subconscious, and distraction of the conscious mind can enhance the effectiveness of the technique.

Chaos Magic Ritual

*So I walk on uplands unbounded, and know that there is hope
for that which Thou didst mold out of dust to have consort with things
eternal.*

- The Dead Sea Scrolls

Of what use is ceremonial magic ritual?

Even if one accepts the premise that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophies", do not the mechanizations of ritual magic seem quaint and antiquated? How can we go about performing magic rituals without feeling somewhat foolish? Is there some other point to it all than the mere acting out of a rather childish fantasy world?

Yes, there are indeed very good reasons to learn and practice the Art of Ritual Magic, even from a totally empirical point of view. There are a great many practical advantages to be realized from the practice. Far from negating the premises upon which the usefulness of ritual magic rests, modern science, particularly psychology, supports many of the ideas encompassed in ceremonial work.

We will proceed from the premise that Magic is a part of our reality. We will accept the definition of Magic as stated by Aleister Crowley: "Magic is the Science and Art of causing change to occur in accordance with the will." A change is perceived by an individual as being desirable or necessary, and by an expression of magical will this change is induced to occur, without the direct, causal interaction with the object of the change.

It is foolish to think of Magic as being concerned with an ability to start fires with a glance or force slot machines to pay out jackpots by concentrating on them. From a purely logical viewpoint, if one had the power to do such things, one would hardly be expected to even *care* about doing them in the first place!

The most powerful and useful changes one can cause to occur are those changes wrought on *yourself*. Your entire universe begins with yourself, and any change you bring upon yourself will be reflected in the entire universe. Bring about the proper changes in yourself and the universe will be yours to command.

The Formula Of Magic

A careful survey of Magical traditions and techniques across various cultures reveals a common foundation. The "formula" of Magic can be reduced to this simple equation:

Will + Active Imagination + Gnosis = Magical Act

The use of ritual in the performance of Magical acts is universal because the performance of ritual is the most effective means to accomplish all three of the requirements of the Magical act simultaneously. These three things can be called the Keys Of Magic.

The times when magic has worked best for me, in terms of getting the results I was aiming for was: when I needed something REALLY bad, (will) I devised a very impressive way to express it (imagination), and was able to launch myself into an intense gnosis state (you get it...)

Will

The first Key Of Magic is Will. Will itself is a magical phenomenon. Though modern science can scan the brain and locate the points at which nearly all types of thought originate, "Will" cannot be traced. A subject can be wired to sensitive detectors and told by an experimenter, "Lift your hand". When the subject complies, the detection apparatus will locate the brainwave patterns that originate the impulses that travel down the nerves to the muscles, but the original "event" of willing the hand to move does not appear on any known scan. As soon as the motor-control section of the brain goes into action, the impulses begin their journey. Logic indicates that the "willing" of the hand to move must precede the commencement of the impulses themselves. But the brain action of this "willing" cannot be found!

We will not explore the deep ramifications of this fact here. For our purposes, it is enough to say that Will cannot be detected or directed by conscious means. There is more to Will, even in the more limited definitions of the concept, than mere desire. To simply WANT something is not the same as Willing it.

The power and function of Magical Will is often, as Spare put it, "believed by taking it up as a hobby at a time of great disappointment or sorrow." Such was the case in my own experience. There is something about being driven by great need or fear of consequences that can spark the Will into manifestation. Once this is accomplished under such duress, the experience can often be "recaptured" later and brought under control.

Directed Will is more than simple "positive thinking", which is entirely a function of the conscious mind. Not that positive thinking isn't useful, but magical Will is far more powerful, when used in conjunction with the other three Keys.

Crowley built an entire religious philosophy, called Thelema, on the concept of True Will, which is roughly defined as being a particular person's "real purpose" in life, whatever that may be. This is not to be confused with what one simply wants in life -- in fact, one's wants or desires might be in actual conflict with one's True Will. The most important thing in life, according to the doctrines of Thelema, is discover one's True Will and follow it. If everyone did this, then no one would be in conflict with anyone else and the world would function with clockwork perfection.

It's obvious that this is a religious concept, as one must simply have faith that the above description is true, without any way to demonstratively prove it. So if the reader is interested, refer to the many

available books on Thelema. Chaos Magic is not concerned with religious dogma. So although the books on Thelema also capitalize the word "Will", they do so to indicate "True Will" as defined by their religion. In the case of this book, it is to distinguish "Magical Will" from mere desire.

But for one's desire to become magically effective, it must be accepted by the subconscious mind as well as the conscious -- or even instead of the conscious -- mind. This is how "will" becomes "Will". Therefore a way must be found to "implant" the magician's desire into the subconscious where it can be effective. This procedure is most clearly demonstrated by the mechanics of sigil magic. However, this is the end to which all magic ritual -- regardless of it's source -- is directed.

The traditional magical systems did this by first indoctrinating the new follower into the system's philosophy and symbolism, then building more-or-less effective ritual formulae on that framework. Of course, this means the student must accept this symbolism and belief-set on faith -- making it again a religious endeavor. As with any magical form, the mind must be twisted into accepting a ludicrous belief system. What is different about Chaos Magic is that the ludicrous belief system is chosen temporarily and voluntarily, and then abandoned after the work is done so a different one can be adopted next time.

Sigil Magic is popular with Chaotes because it uses the symbolic system that one is already indoctrinated with -- one's native language. And although it is very effective even in it's simplest forms, it can be used as the foundation of a more elaborate ritual working to make it even more effective.

The point of it all is that desire can be converted into Will by means of ritual magic.

Imagination

Imagination is a requirement for any artistic endeavor, and magic is no exception. Chaos Magic demands a LOT of imagination, because you're not going to be spoon-fed everything you need to know. However, beyond imagination in the general sense, a particular type of imagination is needed; this is what Karl Jung called "active imagination".

The kind of imagination that is magically useful is that which the magician uses to induce self-directed visions, emotions and belief-states. Simply put, it's imagining something so strongly that it actually

becomes "real." The banishing rituals described in the chapter on basics use this kind of imagination.

The goal of magical imagination is to induce BELIEF. As discussed in previous chapters, this is the "mental/linguistic" level of magical function. Belief is a function of the subconscious, rather than the conscious mind. To manipulate the Will one must be able to manipulate belief. To manipulate belief, one must manipulate the subconscious. It is to this end that the symbology of Magic Ritual work is directed.

Probably the most important concept in Chaos Magic is that of meta-belief. This is defined as a "belief structure" that encompasses all other belief structures. In practice, it is the ability to manipulate patterns of belief into pre-determined structures that are magically useful.

The art of Method Acting, as studied by millions of aspiring thespians, is concerned with exactly the same psychological mechanism. The would-be ceremonial magician would do well to study the works of Stanislavsky and Strassberg.

Method actors are famous for "researching" their roles. If one is to play a prisoner, they might arrange to be locked up in a jail for a few nights. Or if the role is a hunter, they go on a hunting trip with an experienced guide. They try to imprint the emotional reactions to these alien environments into their minds so those reactions can be recalled later during performance.

Magicians will often incorporate such environments directly into their work if possible. Operations concerned with the elemental symbolism of Water might be performed on the shore of the sea, for example. I have performed or assisted in operations that involved full water immersion, leaping naked over bonfires, burial under stones, tattooing, piercing and branding with hot irons, drawing and drinking of blood, escape from graveyards at night, full body mumification, and enactment (with full "costume") of the magician being devoured alive by ghouls. All for the sake of invoking a particular set of emotional reactions for magical purposes.

Gnosis

The concept of gnosis has been discussed in previous chapters, but in ritual work it's put into actual use. The ritual is designed so that gnosis can be achieved either as an integral part of the procedure, or a "space" is provided to allow for the magician to attain the gnostic state. All of the ritual up to that point has been carefully constructed to both distract the conscious mind, and prepare the magical intent to be implanted into the

subconscious when the gnosis point is reached. This is the basic "formula" for effective magical ritual.

Since there are many, many ways one can achieve the gnostic state, the technique used should be compatible with both the style of the ritual work and the goal of the working itself. Mismatching the means by which gnosis is attained with either of these considerations can not only be ineffective, but detrimental to one's magical development and even one's mental health. For example, gnosis obtained by sexual exhaustion may be appropriate to workings of desire and passion, but highly inappropriate for empowering curses.

Constructing a Ritual

Inspiration for a magical ritual can come from just about anywhere, and be as simple or complex as one desires. It can be instructive to study published ritual workings from various sources, keeping in mind the formula described above. Think of it as if you were writing a play with a particular audience in mind -- yourself. Accordingly, whatever is most likely to impress *you* will be most effective.

It's probably best to start out practicing completely alone, so that you're neither embarrassed about performing in front of others, nor trying to impress others with your performance. You'll probably feel pretty silly at first, but this is quite normal -- don't let it stop you! There's no one around to critique you, and nothing "bad" is going to happen if you don't do everything perfectly -- the worst that will happen is, well, nothing.

If you've been practicing your banishing ritual and setting up your magical space, then you're likely used to dressing up in the silly clothes and babbling the nonsense so that you're feeling more comfortable with it. Now it's time to try some more elaborate stuff.

Whether you're performing something you composed yourself, or from some other source, it's always best to memorize anything you have to recite. A wise person said that any ritual that cannot be easily memorized is in need of simplification. But for practice sake, or even for performance if the memorization is just too difficult for you, write or type out the text to be recited in large letters (to be legible in dim light) and place it on your altar where it can be read without having to hold it in your hands. A compromise is to make up some "cue cards", like regular 3x5 index cards, with the text written out and stacked in order, to be referred to if needed.

Prepare everything you need in advance so that once you begin, all of the required items are easily within reach. As with any operation, take steps to insure you will not be disturbed until it's over.

As for mistakes during ritual work: it's going to happen. It happens to even the most experienced ritualists. Don't worry about it! It's more important that the overall "flow" of the work is not disturbed, and freaking out over skipping a step or mispronouncing a word is far more disturbing than any mistake can be. The most important thing, as any stage actor can tell you, is that you don't stop! Carry on through to the conclusion as best you can before fretting over errors, unless a real disaster has occurred (like setting your robe on fire...)

Ritual and Emotional Memory

One of the most useful things about ritual is that as one becomes more experienced with it, certain actions, sounds, scents, images, etc. become connected in the subconscious mind with certain active emotional states. This is emotional memory, and it can be put to practical use by the canny magician.

The training of a method actor involves learning to control and utilize one's emotional memory. In recent years, some of the tools of the method actor have found their way into the practice of certain kinds of psychotherapy.

Psychodramatic ritual can be magically useful as well. What follows is a description of a method to formulate a personal "banishing" ritual using these techniques.

The basic foundation of this ritual is the traditional Banishing Ritual Of The Pentagram, with it's emphasis on the four cardinal directions and relating them to the traditional "elements" of Fire, Air, Earth and Water.

Which direction relates to which element is really an arbitrary decision. To the Ptolemaic Greeks of Alexandria, where the idea originated, it was likely related to their geographic situation. Fire was to the south, because it obviously got hotter the further south one went. To the east lay the arid, wind blown expanse of the Arabian desert. To the north was where the silt of the Nile provided the fertile earth for growing food. To the west lay the great sea, a seemingly endless expanse of water.

The arbitrary nature of these "elemental directions" is obvious. Below the equator, it gets colder as you go south, not hotter. In fact, the seasons themselves, thought to be so archtypical and "sacred" to Wiccans and other neo-pagans, are completely reversed! So one is

completely free to reinterpret the elemental directions if so desired. (But for the sake of example, we'll stick with the traditional directions for now.)

In fact, it's far more useful to make use of what mental/linguistic states are represented by the classic Elements than their old pagan attributes. This could be described as follows:

Fire = Action
Air = Inspiration
Earth = Manifestation
Water = Intuition

[Variation of GT with elemental focus here]

Ritual Framework for Results Magic

The basic framework I use for developing rituals is as follows:

- 1. The magical space is declared. A banishing or opening procedure is performed, and the operator adopts a state of mind suitable to the work.**
- 2. A statement of intent is pronounced. This is very important. When working with magic, one must be able to define one's will, in simple and unambiguous terms. Ambiguity and imprecision are likely to be rewarded with negative results. If your lucky, this means nothing will come of it. If you're not so lucky, the results will have a negative impact on your life -- an object lesson in "be careful what you wish for, you might get it."**
- 3. The ritual action is performed. This is designed to accomplish both the distraction of the conscious, discursive mind and the expression of the intention in symbolic terms the subconscious mind can recognise. This can allow for much variation, from the simple construction of a sigil out of the statement of intent to an elaborate procedure of symbolic actions that embody that intent in psychodramatic terms.**
- 4. The condition of gnosis is achieved. In a well constructed ritual, there is a natural progression of the ritual action into the action required to induce gnosis. Generally the ritual procedure leads up to a certain point and segues into whatever mechanics are involved in obtaining the gnostic trance.**
- 5. After recovering from gnosis, the magical space is closed. The ritual action should be brought to a definite conclusion, for both artistic and psychic reasons. Then the magical space is "destroyed", so that the**

subconscious mind is temporarily sealed and the magical intent is allowed to inculcate without distraction or interference.

I strongly endorse a particular practice very common among Chaos Magicians -- banishing with laughter. After performing the final and closing move in a ritual, throw your head back and have a BIG LAUGH. Laugh at yourself, at the silly words and gestures you just finished doing, at the whole insane business of ritual magic itself.

This serves a number of purposes. It draws a sharp distinctive line between ritual time and non-ritual time. To use meta-belief as a tool, you must be careful to cast away the mind set you adopted to perform a particular rite as soon as you're finished. Method actors are taught they must not try to remember lines they memorized for their performance after they show has closed. (There's a reason why their profession is known to have more than average psychological problems.)

Also, when the subconscious has been recently opened and implanted, it tends to remain somewhat suggestable for a while, so it's not a good idea to have anything else being leaked in. Laughter is the mind's most accessible defense mechanism, and invoking laughter "slams the door" on the subconscious. This lets the implanted magical intent to settle in without confusion or interference.

The examples given here are actual rituals I have personally performed, and from which I have manifested the desired results. They have also been used by at least one other person who has also manifested the desired results. However, there are no guarantees. Elements like the depth of gnosis and the effective implantation of the will into the deep mind are turbulent variables subject to the dynamics of Chaos, which by definition can't be predicted. But the formula is sound and has been shown to be effective. The only way to find out for yourself is to TRY IT and draw your own conclusions.

Here's an example of an derivative ritual work of my own which draws inspiration from a traditional magical system -- in this case the practices of Voodoo.

I got the invocation (the part spoken "to the gods") from an old book about Voodoo practices (except for the last three lines, which I composed myself.) I can't be sure if the source was "authentic" or not, but I liked the sound of it. The original version called for a lot of drumming, trance-dancing and rum drinking, which could be incorporated into a performance if your so inclined. It also used garlic cloves for the actual charm, which I replaced with a sigil.

The Halo Charm

The word Voodoo is composed of the words Voo (translation: introspection) and Doo (the unknown). The collection of religions generally lumped together under voodoo is also known collectively as the "Cults of the Orishas (saints)."

The Verdoun, Santerea, Macumba, and Candomble religions of the Carribean and South and Central America are variations on the same "roots;" the Lucumi religions of Southwest Coastal Africa. The unfortunate persons captured, enslaved and taken to the Americas in the 16th and 17th centuries by the Spanish and Portuguese were faced with insult added to their injury; they were forced to adopt Catholicism or die.

However, the Africans outwitted their captors by adopting the Catholic veneration of saints as a cover for the continuation of their native religion. Their religion thrives to this day.

Many of the practices of Verdoun can be described by the term "Kitchen Magic;" simple spells, charms and amulets meant to ease the passage of the practitioners through their everyday lives. Considering their lot in life, the originators of the Orisha Cults needed all the help they could get!

This working creates a talisman of charisma, a fetish to be carried on one's person when going before a powerful or influential person in order to be granted some boon. Instead of the traditional slice of garlic used in the original Voodoo rites, we will substitute a sigil charged by means of chanting a mantra over a spinning stone (a common central altar piece in Verdoun temples.)

Music is an important part of Voodoo practice, especially trance drumming, which can greatly enhance a gnostic state. If no hand drums are available (or the participants are totally inept as drummers) a recording of drum music can be used, especially recordings of authentic Carribean drum music. Or use both, with the participants playing along with the recording.

This ritual can be performed alone or as a group. In group settings, a single person is appointed the H'ougan or Mambo (male or female leader) who recites the invocation and performs the first charging of a sigil, followed in turn by the other participants.

Since this ritual calls for drawing a drop of blood from the finger, a **STERILE** needle, scalpel or razor knife should be used, or a medical lancet sold by drug stores for diabetic testing.

Materials:

- Yellow paper
- A black pen
- Blue felt or velvet
- Needle and thread
- Blood drawing device
- A stone disk set upon a rotating base (a "lazy susan".)

The Rite:

1. Graphic sigils are prepared from the statement of intent given below. They should be drawn in black ink on yellow paper. A sigilized mantra to be chanted over it is simultaneously derived.

2. Statement of Intent: "It is our will to create talismans of Charisma, to be used to bring favor from those who can grant our desires."

3. The invocation is recited:

(claps hands three times)

Mighty Orichae!

We call upon you in the name of

Olordumare, ruler of us all!

Obatala, grant us your favour!

Call upon your daughter Yemaya,

Mother of the 16 Orichae,

to command her son Ochun,

Master of river and money,

to fill our charms with his power!

Hear me, Ochun! Grant this boon!

As proof of our devotion, we offer

our blood to seal the pact!

4. If music or drumming is used, it begins and continues throughout the following procedure. Each participant draws a drop of blood from the

thumb and places it on the sigil. One at a time, each sigil is placed upon the spinning stone and rotated clockwise, with the participant keeping his or her eyes fixed upon it as he or she does so. This is the point at which gnosis is to be achieved. This can be supplemented by taking the sigil from the stone after it has rotated several times, holding it in front of the eyes, chanting the mantra and spinning in place until severe dizziness and collapse ensues.

5. After gnosis is achieved and the sigil is charged, it is taken from the stone by the participant, who returns to his place while continuing to chant the mantra.

6. When all have completed their turn at the spinning stone, the sigils are folded and placed into a square of blue velvet or felt, which is then sewn shut.

7. Banish by laughter.

The charm should be carried on one's person, against the skin (but unseen) when it is necessary to influence someone who has the power to grant one's desire.

-----Now let's analyze this ritual and determine the underlying factors that make it effective.

Simply speaking, it is an elaborate procedure to accomplish the charging of a sigil for a specific purpose. The colors of the sigil and the bag were chosen to be symbolic of the operation of the sigil: the sigil is black (dark, hidden influence) imposing itself on the yellow (ego, conscious mind) -- a hidden influence on the consciousness of another person. The Jupiterian blue represents expansiveness and generosity.

The statement of intent clearly defines the purpose. The invocation is a means to distract the conscious mind with a meta-belief device; this suspends disbelief and allows the consciousness to be occupied with names and images of the Orishas, thereby opening the subconsciousness for implantation. The chanting, the drumming, the concentration on the spinning stone (and the induction of dizziness) is the manner by which gnosis is achieved. Sewing the sigil into the cloth takes the place of the more usual burning or destruction of the physical form, and allows it to be "summoned" (by carrying it unseen) when its psychological and magical effect is needed.

The Halo Charm ritual is an example of a magical working done to accomplish a specific effect in the "outside world". The following example is one designed to induce a change in the inner psyche of that

magician. It's also one that is entirely original, in that I borrowed nothing from any traditional system or texts.

This ritual also introduces another "strange attractor" in magical work -- the use of "barbarous incantation", which calls for a bit of background information.

Barbarous Tongues

"Magic words" have a long and colorful history in the occult. Almost every system of magic makes some use of strange sounding words and names, often accompanied by dire warnings about "correct" pronunciation. Mispronouncing a magic word is seen as an invitation to disaster. Since Chaos Magic is not beholden to any tradition, including pronunciations, this is not a consideration.

In terms of Chaos Magic, barbarous incantation describes the use of a unknown or unfamiliar language or jargon as a slight-of-mind trick to distract the consciousness. Even Aleister Crowley acknowledged that the real intent of barbarous incantation is to heighten and expand the trance-inducing effect of ritual work. In *Magick In Theory And Practice*, he wrote:

"It is therefore not quite certain in what the efficacy of [barbarous] conjurations really lies. The particular mental excitement required may even be aroused by the perception of the absurdity of the process, as when once Frater Perdurabo [Crowley himself], at the end of his magical resources, recited "From Greenland's Icy Mountains" and obtained his result.

"It may be conceded in any case that the long strings of formidable words which roar and moan through so many conjurations have a real effect in exalting the consciousness of the magician -- that they should do so is no more extraordinary than music of any kind should do so."

What seems to make barbarous words operative (beyond the purely "hypnotic" effect) from a magical viewpoint is that they can be used as "sigils". The operator knows subconsciously what they're supposed to mean, but the conscious mind is distracted and confused trying to literally decipher them as they are being pronounced.

There are many barbarous "languages" throughout the history of magic. One famous tradition, Enochian Magic, has an entire vocabulary of words. Certain Chaos Magic groups make extensive use of a constructed vocabulary of barbarous words called "Ouranian", although the concept behind Ouranian is that anyone can create Ouranian words

by inducing a trance state and deriving them in some "randomized" manner, like a Ouija board. One can build up an entire vocabulary of personal Ouranian words, which could be considered a literal variation on the Alphabet Of Desire concept described in the chapter on sigils.

Austin Spare used the simple technique of spelling words backwards to render them into consciously confusing but subconsciously effective barbarous incantations. We shall use this technique in the following ritual work.

This rite could be properly described as a working of "Black Magic", as black is symbolic of dissolution and transformation.

The Unbinding Rite

Background:

There are times in every person's life where an attachment has been formed that is no longer needed or desired, and in fact can cause psychological and psychic distress. The most common example would be the end of a love relationship, but undesired attachments can also be to platonic friendships, teachers, families, and even such things as certain times and places in one's life.

The Unbinding Rite is designed to bring such emotional/psychic attachments to a definite end, by symbolically "cutting the ties" that bind one to an undesired person, place or thing, and at that crucial point, inducing gnosis by using the instinctive fear of falling over backwards to drive the intent into the subconscious.

Materials Needed:

- Materials to create a graphic sigil
- Black candles
- A sharp dagger, with a way to hang it from a belt worn by the operator
- 25 feet of strong nylon rope
- A 12" square of black cloth
- A means to attach the rope to a strong support -- strong enough to hold the weight of the operator, such as a large eye-hook driven into a solid wall, or a support post that the rope can be securely tied around. There must also be at least 12 feet of clear space in front of the connection point.

The procedure of this rite calls for the operator to fall over backwards. To prevent injury, a couple of strong friends capable of catching the

operator is strongly recommended. There is also value in the psychological effect of being "supported" by one's friends. If it must be performed alone, a cushion or mattress should be placed behind the operator to prevent injury.

Preperations:

A sigil is prepared to represent that from which the operator wishes to break away. In the case of a person, their name can be converted into a sigil by the graphic method.

The power of the rite can be enhanced by the use of a "fetish" constructed out of items that have a powerful connection to the relationship. For example, if it was a love affair one could use a letter, photograph, personal memento, etc. of the other person to create a small "collage", over which is fastened the sigil. Then the entire construction is attached to the wall or support where the rope is to be tied. If an eye-hook is used it can be driven directly through the middle of the sigil.

Finally, one end of the rope is attached securely to the support point, and the rope is laid out on the ground. The belt with the dagger is donned.

The Rite:

1. A banishing is performed, with emphasis on "sealing" the templespace from outside influence. The black candles are lit.

2. A statement of intent is recited:

Example: "It is my will to be set free from my attachment to _____, which I no longer need nor desire!"

3. The rope is taken up, and tied securely about the chest. While doing so, the first incantation is recited.

**I MA DNUOB OT UOY
TRAEH OT TRAEH DNIM OT DNIM
EW ERA DETCENNOC**

(I am bound to you. Heart to heart, mind to mind, we are connected.)

4. The operator steps back, drawing the rope taut. The operator strains at the rope, and recites the second incantation:

**I MA DETCIRTSER I TONNAC EVOM RO WORG
SIHT NOITCENNOC SI ON REGNOL YM LLIW**

(I am restricted. I cannot move or grow. This connection is no longer my will.)

5. The operator leans backwards, allowing the rope to support their full weight. At this point, those who would catch the operator should get into position. The operator draws the dagger and raises it, holding it over the taut rope. The third incantation is begun:

I LLIW EB EERF!

(I will be free!)

This is repeated, faster and faster, with deep inhaling and exhaling of the breath. The object is to attain a trance state via hyperventilation and emotional excitement. The operator allows all of the emotion wrapped up in the situation come to the surface, and feels the frustration and restriction that craves release. When the emotions reach a fever pitch, the dagger is brought down with force on the rope, slashing it in two.

6. When the rope breaks, the operator will fall **VIOLENTLY** backwards with surprising force. This will induce an involuntary reaction -- fear of falling -- with the attendant rush of adrenaline. This is the gnosis "flash" that empowers the rite.

7. The operator is caught and gently lowered to the floor. No attempt at conversation should be made until the he or she has had time to recover from the shock, and then only perhaps some small words of encouragement and support.

8. The operator unties the piece of rope from around the chest and casts it away. The sigil is taken down from the wall and burned with the flame from a black candle. The ashes, along with the pieces of rope, are tied into the black cloth. It should be buried in the ground before the next sunset.

9. Close the magical space and banish with laughter.

I leave it as an exercise for the reader to analyze the Unbinding Rite in the way the Halo Charm was analyzed for the underlying magical components.

Creating Your Own

By now there should be a pattern emerging, and if you can grasp it you can apply it in any context you like to create rituals. In ritual work, nothing succeeds like excess, so let the imagination run wild. Whatever you might need or desire in your life, you can find a symbolic expression of it and make it magically effective. Get ideas from books on

the occult, even fictional ones. Rearrange and embellish them, keeping in mind the key elements you must include to make them work. Once you've had some experience building on what has gone before, make the leap to pure originality. Creativity really is the source of all magic.

Servitors - Work in progress...

Magic and Sex

Like any other facet of the subject of sex, sexual magic is perhaps the most emotionally charged and misunderstood.

I think I "discovered" the power of sexual magic as a teenager. I was interested in the occult as a young lad, and a group of friends and myself fancied ourselves "witches", though we had read nothing about Gerald Gardner or Wicca. Our image of witchcraft was more infomed by Hammer Films than by Margot Adler. We were not interested in an "earth religion." We were interested in casting powerful spells of destruction on our "enemies" and getting laid.

We had no idea what we were doing, but that didn't stop us. We had found only a few books: Eliphas Levi's Dogma and Ritual of High Magic, Crowley's Magick In Theory And Practice and Tarot Revealed by Eden Grey. Along with Montague Sommers History Of Witchcraft we had all we thought we needed to practice magic.

As with most teenagers, the getting laid part was very important to us. There wasn't a whole lot about the subject in the books that we had, but (as is still the case today) it was a powerful motivator for the study of magic. We did seem to be getting a following of teenage girls anxious to be "witches", so there was clearly a practical reason to continue our studies. We knew there was such a thing as "love spells", and if we couldn't find them in books we'd make them up ourselves! Little did we know that much of what we considered unfathomable in Crowley's book was about that very subject.

Also, as with most teenage boys, masturbation fantasies were the major sexual expression we had. Somehow I hit upon the idea that if I concentrated on a particular girl while masturbating (not too hard to do) but added a visualization of sending my "magic power" to the object of my desire at the point of orgasm, it would enchant her into being sexually attracted to me. I added the refinement of writing out her name backwards -- it was in one of our books as a way to make up "magic words" -- and (ahem) "annointing" the paper with my sexual fluids. I was doing a form of sigil magic and I didn't know it at the time. The crazy

thing was (and it may have inspired me onto this path for the rest of my life) it actually worked!

I wasn't the most gorgeous hunky guy as a teenager, although I was certainly no hideous beast either. Nonetheless, I seemed to drastically improve my number of sexual conquests once I discovered this technique. I even stole my best friend's girlfriend using this method. Though this may have occurred even without the "sex magic" (it was, after all, the early 1970's and the sexual revolution was in full swing,) this was also one of my first lessons in magical technique -- and magical ethics.

Sex and Magical Orders

Some magical orders teach entire systems of sexual magic, like the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) Others incorporate it closely into their teachings, like Gardnerian Wiccans with their emphasis on sexual duality in all things. Almost always it's cast in euphemism and shrouded in confusion and secrecy. In the earlier parts of the 20th century, this was perhaps necessary to avoid persecution by the civil authorities. This is seemingly less necessary as we move into the new millennium, but I suppose the old ways are hard to give up. We will focus for a moment on the two aforementioned groups and see how they approach sexual magic.

Ordo Templi Orientis

The OTO was not created by Aleister Crowley, but he came to dominate it after his induction and left it with his personal stamp. The OTO is a degreed hierarchy (see the chapter on Magical Groups) but the instruction in sexual magic does not occur until the three highest degrees, the 7th, 8th and 9th. Back in the early 1900's, they could keep up the front of being just another quasi-Masonic lodge to the outside world and to those in the lower degrees, and reserve their "inner secrets" only for those invited to join the high degrees.

According to Francis King in Secret Rituals of the OTO, the 7th degree initiate is taught a system of phallic worship, and is instructed to build a "phallic totem" altar and devote themselves to its veneration. In the 8th degree they receive instruction on the use of masturbation as a magical technique. The 9th degree expands the teaching to include heterosexual union as magic, in the manner of the Eastern Tantrists -- hence the "Orientis" of their name. There is in addition to this an "unofficial" grade called the "11th degree" (the 10th degree already having been

designated as the being the leader of the Order) and refers to homosexual union as a magical technique, in particular anal intercourse. The OTO still restricts access to it's "inner secrets" insofar as published accounts go. The aforementioned book, Secret Rituals of the OTO, was withdrawn from print by the publisher after the threat of legal action by the OTO for copyright violation. As a result, copies of the original hardcover book in good condition can fetch hundreds of dollars from collectors. However, descriptions of a similar magical order, the Fraternus Saturnus (also most active during the early 20th century) can be obtained in the book Fire and Ice by Eldred Thorrison (Llewellyn Publishing). This book is an excellent source of information on the quasi-Masonic style of sexual magic.

Wicca and the Great Rite

In organized Wicca, such as the sects of the Gardnerians and Alexandrians, there is a hierarchy of three degrees, designated 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Sexual magic is introduced in the 3rd degree, whose initiation involves the so-called "Great Rite" -- heterosexual union. As a religion based on dualism, Wicca stresses the dualistic description of all phenomena, based on their cosmology of a Goddess and a God. In the Great Rite, the initiate has sexual intercourse with the High Priest or High Priestess of the coven, who is assumed to be representing the appropriate deity.

Many Wiccan covens, especially the Gardnerians, also incorporate scourging (whipping) into their initiation ceremonies. Although it is presented as a "purification" rite, being whipped by a naked member of the opposite sex, while one is naked as well, has undeniable sexual overtones.

In some covens, these techniques of initiation have devolved to mere symbolism. The scorging is done with a silk cord. The Great Rite is a purely symbolic, with the female holding a chalice and the male inserting a dagger into it in a parody of sexual union. Sometimes the coven leaders offer the initiate the choice of performing the Great Rite in either symbolic or actual terms, which tends to allow the more sexually squeamish to participate in Wicca than would otherwise be interested in joining the religion. In my opinion, this has diluted the original magical power that the originators designed into the religion. In Western culture, sexual union with a "stranger" in the context of ritual magic is an act of glorious blasphemy against the norms of society, and consequently

great magical power is unleashed. Symbolic substitutes simply cannot have the same "punch" as the real thing.

Practical Sex Magic

Teenage fantasies and religious symbolism aside, sex can be a powerful magical tool, if not the most powerful. One can build an entire magical system out of sexuality, but this subject is fit for an entire book and I'll not try to describe it in depth here. If you're interested in this, I recommend Secrets of the Sex Magicians by Frater U.D. or Modern Sex Magic by Don Michael Kraig, both from Llewellyn Publications. Both describe a system of training and technique based on magical sexuality.

But you need not immerse yourself completely in the sex magic paradigm to use the tools of sex magic. The basics are almost astonishingly simple.

One of the simplest is to create a sigil (using the method described in the chapter on sigils), masturbate to the point of orgasm, and as climax occurs, gaze unblinkingly at the sigil and "drink it in" to your mind. DO NOT concentrate on the meaning of the sigil, but rather see it as nothing more than a "meaningless" symbol.

This can also be done with a partner -- Taping sigils to each other's foreheads is one of my favorite techniques. Or one partner can orally or manually stimulate the other while he or she concentrates on the sigil.

A little creativity and imagination will yield many useful variations. Sexual fluids can be used to anoint the physical basis of a sigil, or to draw the sigils themselves.

Partnered Sex Magic

While the above description of taping sigils to foreheads is "partnered", it's really only a form of mutual masturbation as far as sex magical work is concerned. Working with another person is probably the facet of sexual magic that is the most encumbered with obfuscation, superstition and inaccuracy.

The vast majority of written works on sex magic focuses on heterosexual partnering. In the "classic" works, such as those by Crowley, Beverley or Culling, the female is invariably in the position of "assistant" to the male magician. By contemporary standards, the sexist attitude is so blatant as to appear almost quaint.

The other major category of books on "magical sexuality" seem to be of the "New Age" persuasion, all chock full of psuedo-mystical gobbledy-

gook. Books by authors such as Margo Anand (The Art Of Sexual Ecstasy) and various reprints of the Hindu text Kama Sutra are full of glossy, "vasaline-on-the-lens" photography of pretty people with dreamy expressions doing the wild thang in a very sedate sort of way. The true aim of these books seems to be as self-help tomes for people with relationship problems. They are not very useful as a guide to using sex for practical magical purposes.

Group Sex Magic

In my experience, group sex magic has incredible power and a tendency to blow up in your face.

Anti-Sexuality and Magic

As often as sexuality is used as a guiding principle of magic, it is also actively suppressed. The Catholic Church is the premier example of this, with their insistence on a celibate priesthood. But one need not look as far as the Christians to find this attitude prevailing.

One often finds "enforced celibacy" as a part of some magical training system. There is nothing inherently wrong with this, for denial of sexual outlet can be used as a means of building tension, which can be re-directed toward other uses.

However, the problem as I see it is that denial of sexuality is often seen (thanks to the aforementioned Christians with their monks and nuns and priests) as somehow "holy" or more "enlightened" than simply having a normal, healthy sexual life. I lay this charge on the Christians because I don't see this attitude prevailing in other non-Western cultures where Christianity has little or no influence. Quite the opposite, really. While the Western magicians were struggling with finding a way to teach the techniques of sexual magic without being arrested on morals charges, the Eastern Tantrists had been doing so for thousands of years, their temples covered with carvings and paintings depicting every sexual position conceivable. Same with the "pillow books" of the Medieval Japanese.

Celibacy can be approached as a "sacrifice" and put to use as a magical tool, but I fail to see the great advantage of a magician denying his or her sexuality as a way of life. Like fasting, it can be useful up to a point, but to deny oneself food (or sex) for too long is NOT HEALTHY. Far too many bogus "mystical" groups have used this as a ploy, substituting worship of the leader for sexual desire to keep the followers in line while waiting for the flying saucers to come pick them up.

Chaos Magic is not about *denial* , but living life to the hilt, of going out on a limb, of immersing oneself in experience. Use sex as a magical tool if you will, or not if you will. But don't let anyone tell you that you need to eliminate sexuality from your life in order to gain magical power. If you must, simply keep your sexuality and your magic in seperate boxes and have a healthy sex life. Please.

Combat Magic

Disclaimer: The author cannot be held culpable for the use or misuse of any of the techniques and concepts discussed in this chapter. I refuse to be responsible for the irresponsibility of anyone stupid enough to make frivolous use of Combat Magic. If you can't deal with the consequences of your actions, don't do it. You have been warned.

Combat magic is defined as the use of enchantment techniques to bring harm to another person or persons. Love and war being the human animal's favorite pastimes, aggressive magic is probably second only to love spells in sheer popularity and interest.

It's likely that many of those with a previous background in magic will be quite upset that a chapter such as this is included in this book. To some, combat magic is an abomination, and should never be spoken of except when accompanied by a dire warning to avoid it at all costs. Clichés about giving loaded guns to children will be dutifully spouted. I don't agree with the analogy. It would be more accurate to describe it as giving a child a box full of the parts to construct a gun, along with

gunpowder, lead and shell casings with a reloading machine to make the bullets. It's highly unlikely that a total novice will be able to assemble the parts into anything harmful, to themselves or anyone else. By the time they accumulate the knowledge necessary to construct something dangerous, they will also know how to avoid shooting themselves in the foot.

What remains are the ethical considerations of arming people with the weapons of magic. Personally, I consider it to be similar to teaching people any other kind of martial art. It's very rare to hear about a black belt holder in karate going around beating people up for no good reason or getting into bar fights.

Like martial artists, most magicians with sufficient power to actually bring harm to anyone else:

- A) Have better things to do with their time.**
- B) Have come to know that there are usually more efficient ways to deal with potentially violent situations**
- C) Have achieved a centered mind and the self discipline that makes senseless violence unappealing.**

There will always be exceptions to the rule, of course. But such psychopaths are very inventive, and will always find a way to inflict misery on their fellow humans whether they practice magic or not.

Aggression by means of magic must be approached with the same attitude of seriousness one should bring to any other form of aggravated assault. If one cannot conceive of doing physical violence against an enemy, then certainly one will be equally unable to do so psychically. Any coward can swagger about brandishing a gun, but be totally incapable of handling the consequences of pointing it at someone and blowing their head off.

Magical curses have been known not only to inflict grievous harm on their intended targets, but on any others in the target's proximity as well -- and quite often instead of the intended target. Magical violence (like any form of violence) is an extremely blunt instrument. The greatest disadvantage of magical attack is its maddeningly bad accuracy. All of these negative connotations are multiplied when two or more magicians attack each other. Peter Carroll aptly described it as fighting a duel with hand grenades.

I know a very powerful magician who once told me that his favorite combat spell was the "Greater Evocation of the .357 Magnum Bullet

Between The Eyes." He said it never fails. Though spoken in jest, it would be wise to keep this anecdote in mind when considering the use of combat magic. If one cannot continence the use of my friend's type of "magic spell", then one has no business considering the use of any other type either.

Being forced into a situation where resorting to violence is the only option available is the height of bad planning and stupidity. Very often, this means the situation has gotten so out of control that it is already lost. Long before such a point is reached, the canny magician will have found means to exploit the adversary's weaknesses to his or her advantage, or as a last resort, manipulated their enemies in such a way as to render them unwilling or unable to press an attack. As Sun Tzu said in The Art Of War, "Supreme excellence in warfare is the ability to defeat the enemy without the necessity of engaging in battle."

Nevertheless, there are going to be times when aggression is a reasonable and prudent course of action. Often a counter-offensive or even a preemptive strike is called for, if only to keep one's enemies off balance. But keep in mind that it is to be approached with the same attitude as physical battery, assault with deadly weapons, and murder. To do otherwise is to risk the dreaded "boomerang effect" of legend and lore.

The "Karmic Boomerang" Effect

Contrary to popular belief, it is the opinion of the author that such effects are not due to some universal "moral injunction" against the use of aggressive magic. At least in my experience, such "karmic certainties" as the Wiccan's 'Law of Threefold Return', in which any harm done with magic will rebound on the perpetrator by a factor of three, rarely seem to function reliably. In fact, without including reincarnation as part of such a philosophy, it is painfully obvious that the evildoer goes unpunished by the gods as often as the good die young! The ancient pagans knew better than to leave human retribution and justice to the gods, unlike their modern imitators.

A far more likely explanation, one that accounts for the unreliable nature of such karmic backlash, is that it is the aggressing magician's own subconscious fears and guilt complexes that set up a sympathetic two-way link with the intended victim of a magical attack. Accordingly, the magician ends up invoking his or her own nemesis as well as the enemy's. This means that in order to avoid being the victim of feedback

from one's own magical attacks, one must find a way to divest oneself of all emotional sympathy with the target after the hex has been cast.

This psychosomatic whiplash effect is quite successfully exploited by many neo-pagan cults and "white magic" orders to inflict an arbitrary moral code on their followers, presumably to prevent the young and restless from usurping the power of the hierarchy. Virtually all of them will inform those who attain the "inner circle" of adepts that such injunctions as the Law of Threefold Return are merely blinds devised to keep the neophytes from "hurting somebody" -- that "somebody" being the entrenched leadership.

On the other side of the coin, some "black magic" practitioners or groups go about slinging curses hither and yon with utter disregard for the potential consequences. Like the schoolyard bully, they often run up against somebody bigger and meaner than themselves. Or the magical links they forge in the process become chains of guilt and paranoia that sink them into the charnel pit of their own id. Death, extreme misfortune or uncontrollable insanity are the usual result.

That very often magical attacks are mounted for reasons of revenge may also account for the perception that combat magic cannot be used without it bringing destruction on oneself in the process. Revenge is the most emotionally charged of all possible motives for violence, and such emotion will always invoke it's dualistic opposite, sympathy, in the subconscious mind. If revenge is one's motive, it would be wise to explore other avenues of action such as spells of binding.

Practical Combat Magic

Combat magic can be subdivided into two basic categories, which we shall dub the Red and the Black; they could also be termed "war" magic and "death" magic respectively. The means of avoiding harmful backlash from each type is different, and suited to each style as detailed in the following sections.

Red Magic:

The distinguishing factor of Red Magic is that it is not practiced covertly. In fact, it's effectiveness is in direct proportion to how brazenly obvious one is about performing it. The classic form is the "cursing in the public square" style of the old stories about evil witches; the hideous old hag places a curse upon the victim in public in front of many witnesses - sometimes from the gallows. In what is probably the most celebrated work of Red Magic in history, Jaques DeMolay, leader of the mystical Knights Templar, was sentenced to death in 1314 by Pope Clement V and

King Phillip IV of France for sorcery and heresy. From the gallows he cursed them both, declaring they would die within a year. Both men were dead within six months.

However, it is not required that one expose oneself as an aggressor; the other classic form is when the victim is the recipient of a nasty looking sigil in the mail or finds a "voodoo doll" nailed to the door or a dead cat hanging from a tree in the front yard.

The common denominator is that the victim is quite certain he or she has been singled out for a magical attack. This has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that depending on the enemy's state of mind, the fear and paranoia generated by the certain knowledge that one is on a magician's shit list can be a very effective weapon all on it's own. In fact, psychologists accredit this psychosomatic effect with being the sum total of the effectiveness of magical attack. However, there are many recorded accounts of total skeptics succumbing to curses. This is because it's quite doubtful that even the most materialistic unbeliever is totally free of all of the superstitious baggage humans are heir to. This makes their situation even worse, for they will hesitate to take any prudent countermeasures, or seek help from someone who can.

The disadvantage is that an enemy forewarned is an enemy forearmed. As any citizen of Haiti can tell you, the way to deal with a witch doctor's curse is to go out and hire another witch doctor to counter it - which is usually only possible if one knows one is being cursed in the first place.

Red Magic is the magic of War, and the key to it's success is maniacal aggression and the raising of emotions of hatred to a point at which they invoke gnostic trance. The war dances of various primitive cultures are excellent examples of this technique. The ritual burning of effigies is another operative example, as is stabbing "voodoo dolls" with pins. While these may be effective modes of attaining the required gnosis, the direct identification of the enemy in the process is what opens up the magician to the risk of backlash. To those who would wreck war upon an enemy, this is a secondary consideration - a soldier always assumes that any mission may result in their own death as well as the enemy's. But for most who would use combat magic, it would be preferred to survive unharmed rather than to die as a martyr.

To avoid this, it is better to sigilize the enemy into an abstract symbol, and raise the required emotions of hatred and malice by focusing on something other than the target itself. Then when gnosis is achieved, the sigil is ritually destroyed and the Will is sent forth without the conscious connection that can bring about psychic "retribution".

The Chaos Bolt: A Red Magic Operation

The following is a description of a form of Red Chaos Magic called "Chaos-Bolting". For those of you who harbor fantasies of magically casting bolts of lightning from your outstretched hands at your adversaries, this is as close as it gets (at least on this plane of existence.) Remember, this operation is not limited to use against individuals, but is also effective against such entities as corporations, governmental institutions and rival magical groups.

Dressing oneself in the raiment of a warrior is highly effective - the ceremonial battle dress, masks and war paint of the shamanistic tribal cultures are examples of how their warriors placed themselves into the gnostic trance state for combat, and it can be used by the magician with great effect. If wearing native American costumery or swords and shields do not invoke the martial spirit for you, consider using the fatigues, helmets, boots and firearms of the modern soldier. What matters is that it makes you feel like a warrior.

Materials: Paper and pen (to make graphic sigil), dagger, fire (either a small bonfire or a fireproof container to burn paper in), red candles, "Mars" incense, a clean needle or similar device to draw blood from your finger.

Preparation: Using the Graphic method, create a sigil out of the name of the enemy or enemies. After the sigil is drawn, it is charged by drawing blood from oneself and anointing it. Then, using the Mantric method, create a sigilized chant from a statement of intent that details the horrible fate that is to befall the enemy (see the chapter on Sigils elsewhere in this book.)

Arrange several red candles in a circle around your space and light them, along with copious quantities of incense. If one is outside and there is no danger of starting a brush fire, drawing a circle around oneself with flammable liquid and igniting it is a highly effective technique.

Procedure: Now comes the hard part. You must whip yourself up into a violent frenzy, without thinking about your enemy at all. There are quite a few ways to do this, and all of them involve some unpleasantness. Here's where Emotional Memory comes into play. Try to recall a time when you were maniacally angry about something. Invoke in your mind the feelings you experienced. You might enlist the help of an assistant, who will deliberately mock you, insult you, or even strike you physically

(those into S/M play can think of this as an extension of it and use the tools and techniques they already know.)

While all this continues, begin to chant the mantra and stare at or visualize the sigil of the enemy. Do not think about the enemy! Doing a personal variation on a Native American "war dance", even a Hollywood-cliché version of one, can be used to push one closer to the brink of the "red gnosis", where one is aflame with righteous anger. Pounding the ground or other objects (hopefully inanimate ones) with clubs or other weapons, or even the firing of guns or the setting off of explosive devices can be effective in attaining the proper mental state.

At the height of the anger trance, the sigil is visualized as being contained within an equal-sided triangle. Know this triangle to be the bottom surface of a three-sided pyramid, shaped like a long, sharp spike pointing directly away from you. This is the Chaos Bolt. As gnosis reaches it's climax, the triangle is visualized as rapidly shrinking in size and vanishing. Know this to be the result of the Chaos Bolt flying away from your point-of-view on it's way toward the target.

To conclude, burn the sigil paper, preserving the ashes. Package them up into a suitable container (i.e.. a small black box, or perhaps a bullet casing) to be delivered to the enemy somehow -- anonymous mail, nailed to their door in the dead of night, etc.

Now collapse in a heap and have someone throw cold water on you. For maximum effectiveness and safety from backlash, one must make whatever effort is required to not think about the enemy from that point on.

Black Magic:

"There is nothing good nor evil, but that thinking makes it so."

- William Shakespeare

In Chaos Magic terms, Black Magic also can be called Death or Entropy magic. Entropy being the antithesis of Chaos, in a way it could be thought of as being antiethical to Chaos Magic itself. However, every tool has it's uses, and Chaos Magic recognizes no a priori moral force in the manifest universe. Fire can cook your food or destroy your house; morality has nothing to do with it.

Not all Black Magic is used for combat purposes. On occasion the magician may find it useful to perform what are known as "Chod" rites, or ritual enactment's of his or her own death (and the fear thereof) for initiations or for the purposes of banishment. When the fear of death (or

a particular way of dying) becomes an obsession, the magician can perform a ritualized version of it and by confrontation conquer the fear. Chod rites, designed to emulate death and rebirth are also highly effective as initiation ceremonies.

Unlike Red Magic, where maniacal aggression is the key to success, entropy spells must be cast with a mental attitude of complete cold, impersonal emotionlessness. The thrill of battle is replaced with a desire for nothing more than a clean, quick and efficient kill. The greatest advantage to using Black Magic for combat purposes is that it is accomplished with complete stealth, and the targets have nothing but themselves and/or pure bad luck to blame for what befalls them.

Black Magic is insidious in it's nature, and so the precautions one must take against psychic rebound are very important. The use of servitors as "agents" designed to carry the entropic intention to the target is highly recommended, as it keeps the magician "one step removed" from the target. In keeping with this attitude, you might notice that the intended victim is herein referred to as the "target", rather than the "enemy" as in the section on Red Magic. This is to stress the detached attitude that must be maintained to work effectively and safely with Black Magic.

In it's essence, a Black Magic working is designed to carry subconscious information to the target, encouraging it to destroy itself. This can manifest as sheer recklessness that, sooner or later, will result in a serious or even fatal accident. It can also take form as neglect of the health or inattention to dangerous circumstances. In any case, the target will be totally unaware that there is a spell at work, unless they are magicians or extreme paranoids.

"It's Their Funeral": A Black Magic Operation

This is an operation that falls under the definition of "sympathetic magic". It is recommended to obtain some sort of object that is personally connected with the target -- Hair, nail parings, an article of clothing, etc. Otherwise, a photograph, drawing or if nothing else, a sigilized rendering of the target's name can be used.

The object is to conduct a symbolic funeral for the target. Of course, to hold a funeral a "body" is needed, so this operation is a variation on the "voodoo doll" idea.

The rite should be conducted in the middle of the night during a new moon, preferably in an underground basement. The entire room should be shrouded in black, and lit only by black candles. A dusky scented

incense (i.e. myrrh or mugwort) should be burned in copious quantities so that the room is stifling with smoke.

Materials: Modeling clay; a small wooden box (with separate lid) roughly in the shape of a coffin, painted black; nails

Preparation: Using modeling clay, construct a human looking doll. Leave a hollow section in the middle, into which is placed the personal object from the target. The hollow section is then filled with more clay and covered up. The sigil representing the target's name might also be inscribed onto the surface of the doll.

Procedure: The basic theme of staging a funeral for the target allows for a wide range of procedures. In any case, the doll is placed in the coffin, a funeral is conducted over it (accompanied by dirge-like music, if possible), it is nailed into the coffin and buried. Get a copy of a Catholic liturgy from a bookstore or library, dress in black robes and conduct the ceremony of burial. You might also write your own -- the possibilities are many.

Once the doll is nailed into the coffin, you must than bring yourself into the "Black Gnosis". Deep meditation can accomplish this if you are sufficiently practiced at it -- Indian fakirs use it to stop their own hearts. For the rest of us, there are the many variations on the "Death Posture" discussed elsewhere in this book. Regardless of the technique, the goal is to still yourself to complete quiescence -- to "die", even for the briefest of moments.

You must do all of this operation with an attitude of cold impersonality -- this is absolutely essential to avoid backlash. You can be no more emotional about calling death upon the target than stepping on a cockroach. If you can't manage to be totally emotionless, you would most likely want to avoid this kind of operation altogether.

A note of caution: here is a particular instance where achieving gnosis by sexual exhaustion is probably not a good idea. Having a death spell subconsciously connected to your sexuality might result in undesired links that could be detrimental to your mental health.

Countermeasures

What do you do if you find yourself on the receiving end of a magician's ire? Receiving a nasty-looking sigil in the morning mail or finding a voodoo doll nailed to your door can ruin your whole day. And what about those oh-so-dramatic "magical wars" between magicians or occult groups?

Magical warfare between magicians is generally waged for one of two reasons -- professional jealousy, or to serve as a graphic warning to others. But one rarely encounters an actual magical attack. In fact, in my experience, the overwhelming majority of all "magical wars" are nothing more than self-aggrandizement by people with far too rich of a fantasy life and a vastly overexaggerated sense of self-importance. After all, to be the victim of a magical attack means that one must be pretty damn important and/or powerful to have attracted such negative attention!

In the case of an actual attack, the usual situation is that someone is so pissed off at you for real or imaginary reasons that they decide to try to curse you magically. Such a decision is usually prompted by their inability to attack you in any other way (usually for reasons of basic cowardice) and a desire to remain anonymous to avoid retribution. Rarely does the attacker continue to wage battle over any length of time -- such attacks are almost always a "one shot" affair.

There are a few things to remember to help keep paranoia in check. It's damn hard to perform effective combat magic, and one has to be very strongly motivated to make it work. Even for those who have the requisite skill, it's an extremely energy draining process.

The first and most important line of defense is the magician's innate poise and control of the subconscious. Performing a banishing rite, such as the Gnostic Thunderbolt, on a regular basis can be very effective in keeping oneself free of unwanted magical energy, real or imagined. Regular meditation practice keeps one in touch with one's own psyche and better able to detect any outward influence before it has a chance to manifest itself.

Servitors can be evoked as personal "guardians"; most Chaos Magicians I know keep a few around for this purpose. The exact design parameters of defensive servitors can range from "watchers" that serve as early warning systems, to decoys designed to deflect untoward influences and prevent them from "finding" their intended target.

An excellent example of this is the "deflection" doll, a variation on the voodoo doll concept. A doll is created (much like the one in the "funeral" rite above), but it is endowed with personal objects from yourself, rather than an enemy. A ritual is devised to charge it with absorbing any magical force directed from the outside at it's creator. The doll is then hidden in a location where you would normally be found, such as your home, car or place of work. Occasionally you recover the doll and "cleanse" it by ritual means; for example, by holding under clean

running water. However, extreme care must be taken to keep it from falling into the wrong hands!

But what if one finds a nasty looking sigil, or something as grotesque as an animal ritually killed, on one's doorstep with the afternoon mail?

First of all, don't panic! Disorganized and paranoid thinking is the wedge that can allow the spell take hold all the more easily.

The first step is to neutralize it as quickly as possible. It must be removed, but contact with the skin is not advisable. Here's a suggested countermeasure:

Drop a black cloth over it and wrap it around it as you pick the gnarly thing up. Take some black ribbon or thread and tie it many times around the whole bundle. Traditionally, a triangle has been used by many cultures as a "container" for demons, evil spirits and the like; take a large piece of paper or cloth, draw a triangle on it and place the offending object in the middle. (I keep a pre-prepared "Triangle Of Art" image on a piece of large posterboard around for times like this.) Exercise your meta-belief that this triangle keep it bound up and neutralized at least temporarily, and give you a chance to work out how to deal with the problem.

What to do next depends on discovering the nature of the curse. Divinatory methods, such as the I Ching, can be used to try to determine what the object represents and why it was sent. Sometimes a real or imagined offense against someone else can be rectified or atoned for in a way that will drain the curse of it's power.

Sometimes the physical nature of the object gives valuable clues as to how to counteract it's effects. For example, if the object consists of an animal or animal parts (especially chickens or goats) and accompanied by blood or tobacco ashes, it's likely you've offended a voodoo practitioner somewhere along the line. (How in the world did you let that happen?) Then it's off to the library or occult bookstore for a book on Vodoun practices and countermeasures used by the witch doctors and mambos of Haiti. You might even be able to find a professional who can help you neutralize the curse -- for a price...

For another example, say it's a sigil that includes the symbol of Mars (which would be appropo for a working of Red magic.) There's a good chance that the perpetrator used archtypical Martian imagery in devising the sigil. One could then devise an invocation of Mars that calls forth the Martian godform in it's purely "positive" aspect of protection and self-

defense, which when performed over the object, tends to neutralize the purely negative Martian side of attack and destruction.

In any case, the final step is to dispose of the object by burning it, cloth and all, or tossing the whole mess into a lake or ocean -- or both. You might conjure up a sigil of your own designed to bind the curse harmlessly and add it to the mass to be destroyed.

Then perform your banishings and keep your imagination from running wild. And consider seriously whether or not you wish to escalate the conflict. Merely appearing to have suffered no ill effects from the curse, or to have not even noticed it at all, is the most maddening thing you can do to your adversary. As the sage said, "Living well is the best revenge."

Divination

Divination is defined as the ability to obtain knowledge of persons, places or events at a distance, either of space or time. If we accept the concept that all things are interconnected, then like the DNA molecule, any part of the whole contains the essence of the entire organism we call the Universe.

But this connection is tenuous at best, or exists at such a low level of manifestation that the ripples of information that propagate through space-time can only be detected when the mind is open to receiving them, and the psychic censor can be induced to allow them to pass into the consciousness. To this end the many forms of divination technique are directed.

Intuition plays a major part in any description of magic. Much of what you will experience in magical practice will come to you intuitively, whether you plan it that way or not.

Generally speaking, your intuitive powers will tend to develop naturally as a consequence of magical practice. Much of what is called intuition is simply a matter of being aware of what's going on around you. The meta-patterns of existence will simply be more obvious once you've had some experience in manipulating them using magic.

The difficulty arises not from being unaware of the magical world around you, but being inattentive to the subtleties that can be used for practical purposes. Omens do you no good if you ignore them.

On the other hand, constantly looking for omens in every event that crosses your consciousness is also a trap. While, yes, it may be true that everything in the Universe is interrelated, especially on a magical level, the Universe also behaves Chaotically -- a turbulent, non-linear system. Predicting which drop of water will be the one to splash to the northwest when the bucket hits the floor is literally not possible. Certain predictions cannot be made, only tendencies identified. You never know where some little butterfly is going to flap it's wings and alter reality.

Some intuitive links are "natural", such as between twins or a parent and child. There are many documented cases of this link proving to yield accurate information, especially concerning catastrophic events.

Divination seems to be the facet of magical practice that is seen by the general public as the most benign. Horoscopes are published in all major newspapers. Fortune tellers have set up shop in almost every city, town and village in th world. Getting your "fortune told" is a popular and pleasant form of entertainment for millions of people, and may be as close to touching the spark of magic as they will ever get.

It's not the intention of this chapter to give in-depth descriptions of divination techniques or instructions for their use. There is a great abundance of books available in any bookstore that explain these systems in depth. What's important is to choose a technique and spend some time developing it, for it is an important part of being a magician.

Methods of Divination

Divination can be subdivded into two basic forms -- intuition and sortilige. Intutive forms include crystal gazing, reading of tea leaves and "bones", and of course the ever-popular entrails of a goat. Prophetic dreaming also falls into this catagory. The commonality is that there is no mechanical device with a prescribed set of meanings involved, and the divinatory knowledge comes to the seeker as a "vision" or a convincing intuition.

All of these methods involve developing the talent of being able to diminish the "background noise" of the mind enough to be aware of the faint echos of events far away in space/time. This takes practice, though some people seem to have more natural ability in this regard.

Various methods for attaining this goal have been discussed in previous chapters. Deep meditation practice increases one's effectiveness in divination, if the trance state can be induced to operate at a level that still allows the conscious mind to communicate the impressions received. This is the purpose behind such devices as crystal balls or magic mirrors, by giving the mind something on which to fix its concentration, and reinforcing the association of this device with the reception of divinitory knowledge by repeated practice.

The other most effective form of divinitory trance seems to be gnosis via sexual exhaustion, as discussed in the previous chapter on sexual magic. The ecstatic orgies of the famous Oracles of Delphi and other old-world cults of Dionysus served this end. This method, however, presents some logistical problems if it is to be used in this day and age as a general purpose means to prepare for a divinitory session.

Certain psychoactive drugs have been used to induce divinitory trance states, but I question the actual effectiveness of the method and the interpretation of what is really going on. In most examples of this art, both a "seer" and someone to interpret the drug addled babblings of the seer are used. In my opinion, this is nothing more than using the seer as a form of "tarot cards", and the quasi-random ramblings of the seer are intuited for meaning by the one who is *really* doing the divination.

Sortilège means using some quasi-random means to derive a pattern, which is then interpreted using a pre-determined set of symbolism. Tarot cards (and their various offshoots), runes and palmistry are all examples of this. This does not mean that the magical intuition is not involved, or else anyone who used the cards or runes (and were armed with a book of their meanings) would be equally effective as a seer. This is obviously not the case.

There seem to be a few different schools of thought regarding the use of cartomancy (card reading) and its relatives as divination tools.

The first holds that the cards themselves tap into some deep well of symbolic inspiration and are effective archetypes for reality itself. This is somewhat of a religious view, with the cards or runes or what-have-you being held as holy relics whose meanings were set down by the ancient adepts of Egypt or by a god hanging upside down from a tree at the end of the earth. As such, these meanings are sacred and cannot be altered without losing the effectiveness of the system. Much hot air is blown about by those with competing interpretations of these meanings.

Another holds that the objects are meaningless in and of themselves, and are only useful as a means of fixing the concentration of the seer -- Tarot cards as a fancy version of a crystal ball.

Yet another way to look at it (and one I ascribe to myself) is that these devices and the method of using them are a form of enchantment, "reading the wind" of the chaotic potentiality of the universe at a given point in space/time. For this to be effective, the system of meanings must be a form of "language" with a large enough vocabulary to express a great range of potential meanings. Tarot cards work well in this regard as they have a sufficiently large and well-developed vocabulary of definitions, with subtle shadings of meaning obtainable in context.

Professional seers, such as those with bright neon signs in storefronts or their own television infomercials and toll-free telephone lines, often are well-versed in techniques known as "cold-reading" which are not exactly the same thing as true divination. These techniques involve keen observation of the subtle clues provided by the querent combined with application of "average" psychological tendencies of typical societal groups.

Among the generalizations used are such tendencies as men are interested in power (money, career, prestige) while women are interested in love (romance, relationships, marriage). While this may seem trite and even sexist, they are not too inaccurate descriptions of those men and women who tend to be customers of professional fortune tellers.

The pro will take these tendencies, combined with observations of the general mood of the querent (excited, depressed, anxious, etc.) and will ask seemingly offhand questions about the situation, looking for clues to what is really important: saying what the client wants to hear.

Professionals don't stay in business long if they don't give the customer what the customer wants. Usually this takes the form of a combination of flattery and warning. ("You are a good person with much to offer in a relationship, but you might be taken advantage of by someone of low scruples. Do you feel this has happened to you in the past?") In any case, if this line of work appeals to you, I suggest reading "Secrets of Gypsy Fortune Telling" by Raymond Buckland (Llewellyn) and "The Satanic Witch" by Anton Szandor Lavey (Avon) which both contain chapters describing the techniques of professional cold reading.

Magical Groups

"It's time for Animaniacs, and we're zany to the max..."

It is human nature for individuals to feel the urge to form groups. It would be logical to assume that this trait was chosen by natural selection, for tribal groups held a far better chance of survival and rearing healthy offspring than lone male-female pairs.

We've also been socialized from birth (most of us anyway) to desire to associate with others and work cooperatively. Groups have been formed to expedite every form of human enterprise, so there's no reason to expect magic to be any different.

However, like certain other kinds of groups (such as political parties and rock-and-roll bands), the individuals involved in a magical group must possess healthy egos and a great amount of hubris to become proficient and effective in their chosen field. Any aggregation of such strong-willed individuals is fertile ground for personality clashes.

The history of occult groups is replete with spectacular blow-ups, heretical schisms, despotism, betrayal, curses, lawsuits, slander, magical wars and a lot of amusingly idiotic posturing and mudslinging. It would serve no purpose to drag any sordid stories out here, but the literature of the occult is chock-full of as much of it as you can stomach -- have at.

A few enterprises, such as the Ordo Templi Orentis (OTO), Rosecrucians (AMORC), various Golden dawn offshoots and several Wiccan groups have been able to sustain some stability, but all of them seem to be endlessly sniping at each other as to who are the "true" representatives of a particular tradition.

There is a strong tendency for those exploring in the Chaos Current to avoid such strum and drang by steering clear of working with groups entirely. But this is itself a form of restriction, for there are obviously some things that can be done by groups of people that can't be done by an individual alone. Group settings have certain uses and advantages.

At first glance, a Chaos Magician is the ultimate lone maverick, forging a trail into the vast inner wilderness of their own psyche. One of the distinguishing traits of the Art is that it is highly personal and

experimental. How can something so seemingly individualistic be practiced in a group setting?

Magical Orders

First, it might be useful to examine the "traditional" forms of magical groups as an object lesson in "don't let this happen to you".

I want to make it clear from the start that the following descriptions lean toward the clearly "negative" aspects of the groups represented. Of course, only a very few such groups take everything to the extremes detailed below. Nor are they meant to be insulting or denigrating to ALL magical Covens or Orders. However, these systems contain the seeds of abuse as described, even when operating at a much more benign level. Those who have taken it to the diabolical degree described here know who they are...

As operating today, magical groups can be generally subdivided into two basic forms. The first is the form of "coven", which follows the basic template of a small religious group or cult. There is generally a leader whose word is all but indisputable and all other members are subordinate to this person (occasional variants allow for a male/female pair to have nominal leadership, but usually one can look closely and determine who the real power holder is in the relationship.) Membership is usually somewhat restrictive, i.e. by invitation only.

Leaders generally employ the "I-am-only-a-vessel" style of leadership, by which the God/dess, Secret Masters, Extra-terrestrials, what-have-you choose to communicate their will to the followers "through" the leaders. For the leaders, this conveniently sidesteps issues of responsibility; if it's "the will of the God(dess)" then they can't very well be blamed if things go badly, but can reap the credit when things go well. There may be some sort of lip service given to democratic process within the group, but in general it's pretty easy to see who holds the power and that whatever they want is ultimately what the group gets. But for the most part, people who are attracted to such a group in the first place *want* someone to tell them what to do anyway.

The "magic" practiced by groups such as this tend to serve the agendas of their particular leaders. This can range from sheer self-aggrandizement to vague socio-political objectives such as world peace or promotion of ecological issues.

Most Wiccan covens, small Neo-pagan groups and even some ceremonial magic assemblages follow this style of organisation, as well as any number of "New Age" cult groups. Taken to the extreme, this type

of group is a classic example of the cult of personality, of the kind that worship their leader, wear matching Nikes and like cyanide on their applesauce.

A cult of personality such as this is not so hard to pull together, provided one's personal ethics (or lack thereof) allows one to get away with it. The typical form consists of a charismatic leader that induces followers to subordinate themselves into a group identity. This appeals strongly to those who have submissive personalities by nature or who have a psychological problem that cause them to seek someone to "help" them overcome it.

The leader indoctrinates the potential convert into the fold by use of various techniques of brainwashing and neuro-linguistic programming. The general form is to first praise and build up the confidence of the convert, then alternately devastate them with the kind of remarks and observations that even your worst enemy wouldn't normally say to your face. Next they are "allowed" to redeem themselves by some small act of obedience or contrition. Once this is accomplished, the door is open, and the demands for obedience become more complex and encompassing. In extreme cases they are ultimately induced into performing some act of obedience that will cause a break with their previous life (for example denouncing their families, breaking a sexual taboo, or committing some petty criminal act) which seals them into the cult community.

Not all coven-style groups are so extreme, but the general pattern holds, though to a lesser degree.

The second form, the "Order", follows closely the structure of Freemasonry, with its hierarchical degree system. There is a tendency toward rigidly prescribed rituals, and a series of initiations by which the individual advances in the social structure of the order. Although there may be some charismatic leaders, a magical order tends to be an oligarchy, where a small group or "inner circle" holds the power. Each level of initiation has certain "secret knowledge" imparted to the initiate, and this serves as a way to enforce the pecking order. It also provides an impetus to the members of the lower levels to remain loyal to the system so as to be eventually granted this knowledge. Furthermore, once an individual has been granted access to the upper echelons, they then have a personal stake in perpetuating the mythology that surrounds the order -- and the cycle continues.

Orders typically insist that the neophytes be indoctrinated into the order's particular world-view, which is generally religious in nature,

before any practical techniques are taught to them. The usual excuse is that the fledglings must be prevented from "hurting somebody" with their magic before they have gained the "wisdom" to handle it safely. For the most part, the only "somebody" that the neophytes might hurt is the entrenched leadership -- if the neophytes ever found out how little the higher-ups actually can teach them that they couldn't learn for themselves. In my experience, anytime I've obtained the "secrets" of various orders (which anyone can do -- without joining -- with some diligent searching) my reaction has been, "Is that IT?"

For the most part, the secrets of these orders (such as the Golden Dawn or the Ordo Templi Orientis) have long ago been published in book form, or can be obtained from computer networks. The philosophical insights to be gained from this "secret knowledge" is not anything that the dedicated seeker can't discover on their own, and there are far simpler and more effective magical techniques than what traditional orders generally impart to their followers.

This is not to say that the hierarchical gambit is totally without merit, as it tends to allocate the work of keeping the group going among the members, and the competitive atmosphere can serve as an impetus to those who need such encouragement. In its most benign form, the magical order resembles a college fraternity with a measure of respect afforded to the upperclassmen. But the potential for abuse of the system is so great that I question its ultimate value, at least for the kind of person who would be attracted to Chaos Magic.

"Chaos Orders"

Though the idea of a "Chaos Order" seems like a contradiction in terms, a few organizations have been founded with such a thing in mind. The most prominent is Peter Carroll's "Pact of the Illuminates of Thanateros" (AKA The IOT or The Pact), due to the wide distribution of Carroll's books Liber Null & Psychonaut and Liber Kaos (Weiser) in which the group figures prominently. The IOT makes no bones about playing the "secret occult order" game, though their experiments have blown up in a few faces over the years. Originally founded by Carroll and partner Ray Sherwin, The Pact has undergone some extreme schisms since its inception, resulting in spin-offs such as the "Revolutionary IOT" (RIOT) in Germany and The Autonomatrix (AX) in California. The AX is less of an "order" and more of an information network, which has shown to be more useful to someone exploring Chaos Magic than the more traditional forms. (See the appendix for contact information about these groups, should you have an interest in such things.)

It's not necessary to join an established organized group (and many Chaos get twitchy at the very idea) to work with other magicians. Probably the best alternative is to gather some like minded friends together and form your own "working group".

Such a group can be formed around any given concept, even that of the cult or order. The signifying difference is that whatever belief-set is used during the group's meetings, rituals, etc. is only in operation during that time. Like any other work of Chaos Magic, the belief-set is destroyed upon completion of the work -- until next time.

In my experience, the most effective and enjoyable magical working groups for Chaos Magic are modeled after the idea of a literary salon or a gourmet dinner party. Gourmet groups take turns hosting the dinner, sharing favorite dishes they've prepared with their fellows. Literary salons have each participant take a turn reading from their works.

Using this model, each member of a working group will take a turn preparing and directing a working assisted by the rest of the members. In one such group I participate in, the guidelines are simple:

- * "Leadership" rotates to each member in turn every meeting. (We fill in names on a calendar so everyone knows in advance whose turn it is.)
- * The leader is responsible for preparing what ritual work is to be done, including whatever materials will be needed and informing the others in advance. Generally this was done at the previous meeting -- handouts of texts, requests for supplies (i.e. "Next week, everyone needs to bring some modeling clay and a feather..."), etc.
- * Anyone who does not wish to participate in a particular ritual *for any reason* has simply to say so and excuse themselves from the temple space -- they can not be asked for, nor can they offer, any explanation whatsoever. They are appointed as "Acting Sergeant-At-Arms" and "stationed" outside the room. Upon completion of the actual work, they are immediately called back in.

The reasoning for this is as follows: there are many possible reasons for someone to be uncomfortable performing a particular working.

Sometimes it's a personal problem with the leader, sometimes it's a psychological hang-up about some element of the rite (like a dislike of nudity, or a fear of the sight of blood), or perhaps the person doesn't even know for sure what the problem is. In any case, a person's reluctance can be misinterpreted or even used as a "weapon" against them if details about it become generally known. On the other hand, a reluctant person's reasons can be taken as personally denigrating or

insulting by the leader of the rite if they are spelled out in detail. It's far better to "draw the veil" over the whole thing and keep private matters private.

Expect that a group working Chaos Magic together is going to undergo some extreme rearrangements, with people leaving, coming in, leaving again and so on. If you can get a core of four or more individuals that trust each other and show up consistently for gatherings, you're doing well.

It's probably wise to have some definite goals or a "theme" that your magical group wishes to realize. This is not to say that there must be only one such goal, or some overriding grand scheme to justify the groups existence. Such ideas are the kind of thing that "eco-conscious" Pagan groups like Mimi "Starhawk" Cimos' "Reclaiming Collective" engage in, and seem to be (without questioning the participant's sincerity), more useful as a marketing tool than a means by which any tangible change has been brought about.

The group's goal can simply be to experiment with various types of magical work, but whatever it is it should be made clear from the inception and agreed to by all who participate.

And above all, know when to quit. There is nothing more pathetic and unenjoyable than a magical group that has outlived its usefulness. Don't continue out of sheer inertia when it comes to pass that there is more time and energy being spent on negotiating personal squabbles and power trips between the participants than on the work itself. To all things come the time to dissolve back into the primal Chaos.

Coming Out

"I contradict myself? Very well, then: I contradict myself. I am large; I contain multitudes."

-- Walt Whitman

Chaos Magicians are, by their nature, possessed of a great amount of hubris. One cannot effectively use the techniques of magic ritual without a strong flair for the dramatic. So it isn't for the Chaote to hide his or her light under a bushel, or to deny (at least not when asked) who and what they are. Of course, in some cases, it's none of their damn business.

Although burnings at the stake are no longer *de riguer* for heretics, in certain cases discretion is the better part of valor if, for example, it may cost someone their livelihood. But these days there are quite a few people, especially around major population centers, who will openly profess an active interest in the occult. Of this group, however, the Chaos Magician is in the minority, at least as of this writing.

Many of those belonging to "neo-pagan" groups (who account for the great majority of "occultists") will not even be familiar with Chaos Magic. Or they will have heard the term, but will generally associate it with "satanism", "black magic" or some other idiotic prejudice. This of course imparts a certain type of glamour to the Chaos Magician, and it is up to the individual if they care to divest them of this notion or to use it to his or her advantage in a given situation.

An air of mystery has always been fashionable for ceremonial magicians, so usually there is nothing to be gained by dispelling it without good cause. As Mary Poppins said, "I never explain anything", and many magicians cultivate their mysterious auras to great advantage. However, parading around every day in a long black cape tends to lose it's impact rather quickly, and is the mark of the poseur rather than the adept.

There are, however, a great many Chaotes who would not be able to pass for a TV news anchor or bank president if their lives depended on it. The Chaos Current tends to incur some dramatic changes in one's lifestyle, bringing shall we say *fringe* elements of the personality to the forefront. So such trappings as black leather, arcane jewelry, tatoos, body piercings, even scarification and asymetrically shaved heads are often displayed. This being said, there are also many Chaotes who function in the mundane world quite easily, with casual acquaintences and co-workers hardly being aware of their "secret identity".

How the Chaos Mage purports his or herself in public is entirely up to the will of the individual. But to choose to live "out of the closet" means eventually bumping up against elements of mundane society. I am fortunate enough to make my living in the rock music business, so even though my appearance is somewhat less striking than some of my compatriots, I don't stand out particularly in my professional life.

There is an old occult legend about the "riddle of the Sphinx", which embodies the "four laws" of the magician: To Know, To Will, To Dare, and To Be Silent. But Chaotes tend to be rule benders. The following is an attempt to give some aid and comfort to those who choose to be blatant.

Confronting the Skeptic

Sooner or later, unless one retreats to the hermit's cave or the magical monastery, the Magician will confront "scientific" skeptic. To many of the "old schools" of magic this is rarely a problem, for they have withdrawn into a sort of seclusion, seeking to interact only with their peers and scrupulously avoiding any contact with the dreaded skeptic. Or when they do encounter such an individual, they retreat into the hoary old "it's secret occult knowledge" ploy, which is in effect the same thing. I prefer to think that Chaos Magicians are a more courageous sort, and prefer to be able to function in the exoteric world if and when they choose.

So at some point, in the cocktail party or the classroom or some other public forum, you may be called upon to expound on the subject of magic. The purpose of this chapter is to arm the magician with some means by which they can avoid being perceived as either a addle-brained religious freak or an gullible boob.

There is also a more practical consideration. Magic functions on the power of belief. Encounters with even the marginally competent skeptic can seriously degrade the magician's belief-structures, and thereby

degrade the effectiveness of his or her magic. Even meta-belief practices cannot wholly protect one from such doubts, if the conscious mind has no firm underpinning on which to base its everyday perceptions.

Most commonly, the less learned skeptics will simply pronounce, "I don't believe in that hocus-pocus stuff!", and you can politely inform them that if that is the case, then magic will never work for them anyway and they will never, ever see any evidence of its existence. This will usually shut them up. They may badger you further to "prove" to them that they are wrong by performing some "magical" act right then and there. At times I have carried around a trick deck of cards so I can pull them out and say, "Pick a card - any card!", or pulled a quarter out of their ear with a Groucho-like smile on my face. If they protest that isn't what they meant, tell them you are putting magic into terms that simple minds like theirs can understand. They will usually go away grumbling, but you have succeeded in making them look like the fool instead of the other way around. Debating with this type of skeptic is useless anyway, and they are best banished with laughter.

The Dilemma of Magic

But some skeptical types are actually sincere and intelligent and want to know more about what magic means to those who practice it, even if they go in prepared to pick it to pieces with logical argument. Often they are (like I once was myself) skeptical, but willing to be convinced. You may find it entertaining to spend some time discussing what you do with them, if it is your will to do so.

By far the most common ploy used by the intelligent skeptic is known in rhetorical philosophy as the *dilemma*, from the Greek word for "two premises". The Greek philosophers compared it to being faced with a charging bull, hence the phrase "impaled on the horns of a dilemma".

The "Dilemma of Magic" can be presented in many forms, and it's difficult to predict what form it will take. But it will always boil down to this: Does magic exist in the world of things we objectively observe? Or is it completely subjective, and exist only in the mind of the magician?

Of course, the first logical error here is the idea that the two concepts are mutually exclusive -- that it's either one or the other, but not a combination of the two (or neither of the two.) This is the "third" classic refutation of a dilemma -- that there are more than the two proffered choices. More on this later.

If it magic is assumed to be an objective phenomena, then the skeptic will point out that science has so far been unable to conclusively "prove" its existence by scientific methodology. If on the other hand it is assumed to be subjective phenomena, then it has no existence outside the mind -- it is no more than a hallucination and is therefore not "real". The skeptic will then sit back with a smug expression and wait for the occultist to impale him or herself on one or the other of the horns. For most occultists this proposition, framed by seemingly impeccable logic, is a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" kind of inquiry that sends most magicians scurrying back to the lodge or coven where nobody asks such embarrassing questions.

Aristotlian rhetoric actually gives us a few alternatives to choosing one horn or the other -- in fact there are three:

One may try to "sing the bull to sleep", which means to obfuscate, spew forth a stream of psycho-babble and occult gobbledy-gook until the eyes glaze over and logical response becomes impossible. This is really only evasion, and nothing is gained by either side.

One may choose to "throw sand in the bull's eyes", which is the essence of the answer referred to previously, when Fats Waller was asked what Jazz was about and he replied, "If I have to explain it to you, you'll never understand." But this can be easily dismissed by the skeptic as merely an expression on the subjective nature of magic, and the magician is therefore impaled.

Finally one may "refuse to enter the arena", which basically means that just because a particular person can't give a satisfactory answer IN WORDS doesn't mean that no such answer exists. Usually this takes the form of, "You of limited intelligence and insight cannot possibly understand this, so I can't explain it to you." This is in some way quite accurate, for the essence of magic is indeed non-verbal and non-logical. But this is also the "easy way out", to escape to mysticism -- and it's the way most magicians handle it. Mysticism cannot be scientifically examined, for it lies outside the realm of science. But many scientific concepts, such as relativity, seem quite illogical until they are examined properly -- and then they reveal a logical self-consistency.

Scientific formalism, or the assumption that there is in fact an absolutely objective universe out there that allows itself to be quantified, even in theory, is more popular among the layperson who dabbles in scientific thought than actual scientists. Quantum mechanics, chaos mathematics, general relativity and other cutting-edge scientific theories have dispelled the notion of pure objectivity in science. Relativity has

proven that no frame of reference is absolute. The Uncertainty Principle of Quantum Mechanics states that objectivity of scientific measurement is a functional impossibility. Bell's Theorem has provided an experimental framework that has proven that acausal effects exist. Chaos Mathematics has shown that in a great number of cases, repeatable results to an experiment cannot be obtained, that certain phenomena arise only occasionally and unpredictably, and statistical probability analysis is the closest one can come to verifiability.

Many of the effects observed and analyzed using the tools of Non-Linear Dynamics (the applied branch of Chaos Mathematics) can only exist in specific closed systems, such as the weather system of a planet. So it goes with magical effects; the "closed system" being that of the mind/body of the magician.

There's a fellow in the back saying, "Well, doesn't that mean that magic is therefore totally subjective?" No, it doesn't, any more than weather patterns are totally subjective because they only occur on planets with atmospheres. What elevates such things as magic and weather prediction from mumbo-jumbo to pragmatism is predictability, or at least probability. If one practices Tai Chi or Yoga, applying a specific "technology" to the closed system of the human mind/body, then certain effects have a high probability of occurring, and they are the same effects (allowing for some small variations.) These effects go beyond what can be subscribed to simple exercise and cannot be easily observed or quantified from the position of an "outside observer"; A doctor can't examine my physical body and determine that I have a vastly improved ability to concentrate or feel more rested when I wake up in the morning. Of course, this may not be the result of my Tai Chi practice, but merely "coincidence". But after millions of people have reported the same effects that occur when they practice Tai Chi, what are we to assume?

In the same manner, seeding clouds with silver iodide pellets increases the probability of the cloud precipitating into rainfall -- but it is not CERTAIN to occur, not can any exact prediction be made as to the amount and location of the resultant rainfall, if any. Is cloud seeding (or meteorology itself) therefore "magic", since the results are no more than probable and are not consistently predictable?

In the chapter "How Does Magic Work?" some ideas were put forth to explain possible mechanisms that allow for the existence of certain kinds of paranormal phenomena. These explanations can be offered during such a discussion with an interested but skeptical person. Either

they will find them worthy of consideration or not, but you will have made a case that cannot be dismissed out of hand -- which may be the best for which you can hope!

In any case, the most important concept you can put forth in a debate about magic and science is that **MAGIC IS NOT SCIENCE** and can't be approached from a purely scientific viewpoint. Some of the modes of thought common to science can be useful meta-belief devices for magical applications, but they are still **NOT** science. When science spawns a philosophy, it is absolutist in nature. Anything not explained by it's tenets is automatically excluded from it's description of reality.

But the Chaos Magician is unlikely to follow the tendency of the neo-pagan and retreat from science as being evil and "unnatural". Most recognise that science is itself a powerful magic, reinforced by the collective belief of 300 years of "scientific thought". Science may well be a stochastic ontology, actually **CREATING** the formal mathematics and theorems that it only thinks it's discovering.

Public Relations

One may even go so far as to actively persue public recognition (or noteriety) as a magician. One of the most common ways to go about this is to write books, give classes and hold workshops. (Hello!)

If you decide to hang your shingle out as a metaphysician, you should be aware that there are some disadvantages as well as advantages to having a public persona.

One disadvantage is that people begin to seek you out for your sagely advice, especially if you get a reputation as being competent in divination. It may seem very flattering at first, but soon it can become a real burden. In the same way that a doctor is invariably hit up for medical advice in purely social setings, the magician is often badgered for metaphysical advice in similar situations.

Also, a great number of people are going to think you're at least slightly insane for thinking there's anything to all of this hocus-pocus stuff. This may matter to you, or it may not.

The main advantage has been, for me at least, that I have come to know some of the most interesting, intelligent and thoughtful people on the planet. Yes, the world of "magic" is populated by a great perponderance of fluffy-brained new-age dingbats, but in the more rarified atmosphere of ceremonial magic, and in particular Chaos Magic, one can find some truly amazing minds.

The "occult community", even in a major urban center, is usually small and incestuous; everybody knows everybody else. As mentioned previously, the Chaos Mage is generally found in the role of "outcast"

Dangers

Do I look like someone who cares what God thinks?

- Clive Barker

Yes children, the practice of Chaos Magic can be dangerous. Any experience designed to deconstruct one's reality carries with it certain risks. I have personally known people who have had a head-on collision with disaster due to their use of magic. Magical practices involve controlled induction of "temporary insanity", and for some this becomes all too permanent.

However, in every case the unfortunate victim had only themselves to blame, for they disregarded certain safety precautions, as well as ignoring simple common sense. Driving a car or even crossing the street is also fraught with peril if one is unaware or unprepared. Or stupid. Especially stupid.

The danger zones are really easy to identify and prepare for with a little forethought. This chapter will discuss the most common traps and how to avoid them.

Fear

This is invariably the first danger encountered by the magician. The first time one gets results from a magical operation (especially one that involves profound psychological changes), a common reaction is one of fear -- even if the results are exactly as was expected. If the results are weird, surprising and/or totally unexpected, as magical results often are, the fear may be almost overwhelming. This reaction can be compared to that which often is experienced by the use of psychedelic drugs.

But the proper approach is not to try to eliminate all fear -- this is commonly known as stupidity. Rather, one must confront one's fears and learn to control them. Once this is accomplished, fear can be a powerful magical tool. The history of the occult is full of stories of the "cruel guru" (i.e. Castaneda's Don Juan), who exploits the students fears in order to enlighten or initiate them.

Religious types, in particular the Christians (at least in Western cultures) have exploited fear with great effect. As a practicing magician, one is of course doomed to eternal punishment in the fiery pits of Hell. For most people drawn to the occult, this is a minor consideration, and is dismissed as a just another religious boogey-man. But a lifetime of immersion in a particular religious system can have long-lasting effects. Often someone is attracted to magic as a rebellion against their upbringing, and there are unresolved subconscious issues that can cause great distress, especially if the magic seems to be working! Some teachers of magic advise a course of psychotherapy before embarking on magical practice. Chaos Magicians seem to be of the persuasion that regards magic AS psychotherapy and if a crack-up occurs, it was going to happen eventually anyway -- magic just accelerated the process. Often a crack-up is what a particular person needed to learn and evolve. Magic is a head-on confrontation with one's own reality.

But the main problem of fear as it relates to magic is it's propensity to evolve into it's more dangerous cousin, paranoia.

Paranoia and Megalomania

It has been said that even paranoids have real enemies -- something probably first said by a magician! As pointed out above, certain religious types are sworn enemies of magicians. But this is not the real problem. A certain amount of "paranoia" is a good thing, as it keeps one aware of danger. More importantly, it keeps one skeptical of the results of one's magical work. But the downside is a very enticing trap to fall into.

It begins when one is encouraged by some early magical success, and the world seems to be in magical attunement with one's needs and

desires. Luck seems to break one's way consistently, and this is taken as some kind of indication that they have found their "true calling" in life, and are some sort of important Magical Avatar of the New Aeon or somesuch silliness. And so we come to paranoia's bastard sibling, meglomania.

When one has decided that one has "enemies", and cannot attribute this situation to their own false perceptions, then one seeks justification for being the target of such negative attention. The usual reason arrived at is that one is a very powerful and important mage with a destiny of some great importance to the human race. Accordingly, those who would seek to thwart this great destiny are actively working to destroy this powerful and important mage.

Once this spiralling nose-dive has been entered, it can be very difficult to pull out. This is one of the great reasons why having a well-developed sense of humor is so damn important -- it helps keep one from taking oneself too seriously, which is the first step down this dangerous path to insanity or oblivion.

Obsession

One can easily become obsessed with magic, since it is such a damn fascinating subject. But not everyone might share this belief, and trying to relate every single human experience to one's personal interpretation of magic can be stupefyingly boring to your friends and acquaintances -- even those who might share your interest! Luckily, this is less dangerous than fear or paranoia/megalomania and more easily cured -- people will eventually start telling you to shut the hell up. The risk here is that one might take this highly proper advice to shut the hell up as evidence of the great occult conspiracy to deprive the world of its next great magical avatar, and off we go to the land of paranoia.

Basically, if you find yourself with no other interests in life than your magic, you should get out more often. The hypotrophy of the magical self is as much of a mistake as over-amplifying any other aspect of one's life.

The Game of Life

Distrust thy teacher, for 'divine truth' has prevented better men from wisdom. In such revelation there is no suggestion. Do thy utmost unto others; But be surely what thou wilt, and keep thy belief free of morality. Observe thyself by sensation, thus know the finer perturbations and vibrations.... Think not the words 'I wish,' say not the words 'I will.' Fear nothing, strike at the highest. Break thy commandments, be lawless unto all dogma.

- Austin Osman Spare

The Universe likes to play. Anyone who engages themselves in the study of magic comes to know the game-like quality of life, the universe and everything. The universe is a game and it invites us to play along, if we dare.

At various points along the way in this book I've drawn attention to the illusion of "duality" in the universe, and how the ability to break out of dualistic thinking is the hallmark of a Chaote. But perhaps it's not so much "breaking out" as it is *integration*. As the Tao master would tell us, both yin and yang are the inseparable Tao.

When one breaks through this restrictive way of thought, the first thing that becomes obvious is that what are called opposites are really only two sides of the same coin, as it were -- the coin of yin/yang.

This is closely related to our inherent biological restrictions. Unfortunately, our evolutionary survival has required that our species develop a psychic censor, or else be constantly overwhelmed by sensory input alone, much less our "extrasensory" perceptions. The cacophony of unfiltered sensation and thought would overwhelm the organism. Living in the magical reality is all well and good, but it makes it difficult to hear the saber-tooth tigers closing in for lunch.

So there must be a "black-white" rule imposed on our thinking process; that which we pay attention to, and that which is ignored.

The Taoists say that we are so obsessed with "consciousness", with what we pay attention to, with the continuous running verbal commentary in our thought processes, that we mistake this for "reality"; that this narrow beam of consciousness is the only "real" way to see the

world. How we as individuals learn to narrow this beam of consciousness determine the rules by which we play the Game of Life. But these are *arbitrary* rules.

In this great Game, humans often see themselves as in eternal conflict with the universe. Most of Western philosophy rests on this underpinning, of "black-versus-white -- regardless of whether the player sees themselves in the role of black or white. One side must not only predominate over the other, it must *destroy* the other! It's not enough that my side wins, but *your* side must also lose. What people fail to realize is that "winning" implies that the game is over. But the game is *never* really over.

Finite and Infinite

In games theory, there are two types of "game": finite and infinite. The purpose of a finite game is determine a winner. The purpose of an infinite game is to keep playing. To a chaos magician, life should be considered an infinite game.

What makes this whole study of Chaos Magic worthwhile and valuable? Is it no more than a form of entertainment? An interesting hobby? A way to make one feel important and powerful, regardless of what might actually be the case?

Personally, I've found my practice of Chaos Magic to be useful, enlightening, and to have enhanced the quality of my life. Of course, your mileage may vary. I've tried to present Magic as an artistic expression, one that yields practical benefits. Like any art form, if it isn't enjoyable to create, you've probably chosen the wrong kind of personal expression.

It may well be that all of the noemenal effects one can attribute to magic are equally explainable by other mechanisms. Perhaps this is so, and whatever experiences and benefits one attains are the result of psychological metaprogramming, self-hypnosis, and "the power of positive thinking". Fair enough. But those benefits, in my experience, are well worth the effort put into the practice regardless of the mechanism or "explanation".

However, it's very important if you expect magic to help you accomplish your will in the world, that you provide some pathways for that will to manifest. This is a *part* of the whole process of results magic, and one you ignore at your peril.

Occultism is packed full of "great magicians" who are possessed of no social graces at all, are unable to relate to mundane life in any way, and are completely devoid of any marketable skills whatsoever. I am not very impressed by "powerful mages" who can't afford to take care of themselves.