

The Golden Chain and the Lonely Road:

a typological study of Initiatory Transmissions within the Sabbatic Tradition

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Initiation, the passing-on of power, the step of the mortal foot across the threshold of the gods, the hearing of the watchword, the reception of the book, the dreaming-draught sipp'd at midnight, the lonely stand in the heart of the Wild....many are the ways of induction into the Circle of the Sabbat, many the waymarks - the moments of realisation - that lead the Spirit through the winding ways of all ecstasy!

In its essence, initiation is the entrance of an individual into a Mystery and the ingress of that Mystery into the individual; it is a simultaneous rarefaction and reification; a nuptial union of Self and Other in the mirror'd circle of Gnosis. Whilst the essence of the matter may be 'pointed to' by such a description, the truth of initiation is of necessity a secret that cannot be divulged; it is the Grand Arcanum, the Mysterium that forever dwells beyond... in Silence profound and deep. And yet, by considering the outward appearances of initiation, the forms which it assumes in terms of perceptible manifestation, we may enter into discussion and endeavour to arrive at a comprehension of its diverse arcana.

If justice would be done to its subtleties the manifold complex of initiatory 'forms', as extant within contemporary Cunning Craft praxis, deserves a broad and detailed study. In the following pages an attempt will be made to accomplish this, to distinguish between the 'types' of initiation which may occur for a Seeker upon the Path of the Elder Craft, and furthermore to define the various strands of magical transmission which may be considered as 'lineages' or 'chains of gnosis' in and of themselves. In attempting to do this I shall admittedly be drawing directly from my own experience, specifically from that which I have gained as the present Magister of the Cultus Sabbati. Consequently, a subjective delimitation of the topic is inevitable. Indeed, because the 'Tradition' of the Elder Craft is of so many guises and localised variations, no definitive account of initiatory processes may even be tenable. Undoubtedly omissions and generalisations will occur and for these I offer an apology in advance.

Nonetheless, it is hoped that the broad schemata as given below will serve to clarify and to deepen an awareness of the matter in ways hitherto unexplored. With this intent the following article is offered as a stepping-stone to the wiser future of the Way and its children.

Passing the Fire-brand of Tubalo-Lucifer: Ritual Initiation

The customary method of entrance into the Sabbatic Tradition is via formal ritual induction. This can take various forms, ranging from the simplest act of ritual 'authorisation' to the so-called 'Grand Array' of the full Sabbatic ceremony. Within the Cultus Sabbati there are various concurrent lineal streams, and it is from their example that I shall draw in the discussion below.

The founding lineage of the Cultus is that of 'The Red Snake', descended from a Buckinghamshire stream of Cunning-craft practice and folk magic. In terms of its outward expression through ritual practice it has changed with each successive generation, but at its core a body of sorcerous principles is maintained and it is upon this 'Alphabet of Arcana' that each generation 'fleshes out' its own particular mode of practice. In terms specific to ritual initiation, the principles informing the general process are observation, dedication, formal tuition, and ritual focus. In manifestation these principles combine in a process lasting a minimum of twenty-one months, culminating in the focal apotheosis of a final initiatory ceremony.

From the previous Magister of this lineage I was taught that a candidate is chosen by signs and omens, and that it was forbidden for any outsider to ask directly for initiation. The omen-chosen candidate is firstly 'watched' for a period of time, no less than nine lunar months. During this time, called 'The Gestation', the candidate is observed for clear indications of the requisite skills and characteristics which the Path will demand. If deemed suitable, the candidate is then asked to undergo a ceremony called 'The Rite of Dedication'. This formally acknowledges their aspiration and magically 'places the step' onto the Path.

After the Dedication Rite a period of formal instruction begins, lasting one year and one day. During this time the novitiate and initiator embark on a pilgrimage which leads both full-circle around the horizon of the Sabbatic Mysteries. For the candidate, the deed of walking the circle becomes a journey around the perimeter of the soul, a microcosmic quest to ensorcel the All-Possible of his or her own Self-existence. Having successfully passed through the period of tuition and the various ordeals and austerities which it demands, the novitiate is 'summoned' - formally entreated to undergo the Rite of Initiation.

The Initiation Rite is 'the Seal of the Mysteries' and serves as the focusing context for all that has passed between the aspirant and the Initiating Power (the Initiator in all its forms: the physical teacher, the spiritual guide, the familiars and guardian-spirits of the path, the diverse lessons of praxis, the dreams, visions, and solitary realisations, et alia).

All that constitutes the 'Initiator' confronts the Seeker and guides him into the True Circle of the Arte Magical. In the singular magical act called 'The Passing-On of Power' all is drawn within the One; the Initiate, Initiator, and the Mystery of the Rite itself are aligned to open the way for the 'new-born child of Witchblood'. The act of the 'Passing-On' confers the 'power' of all the Tradition, its knowledge, customs, and craft. Once this 'Power' has been received, it is the task of the newborn initiate to realise the arcana for himself - to realise his own autonomy and to go forth anew according to the signs and omens of the way.

In summary, this is the way in which initiation occurs within our own circle of practise. The exact details of its process will doubtless vary from one instance to the next, but the core principles are maintained; for they are the very manner in which 'the firebrand' is passed from one generation to the next. In the fulfilment of his

'Making' the initiand is ritually 'authorised' to act as an autonomous participant and representative of the Tradition. His or her name is entered into the Book of Lineages and the names of fellow brethren are communicated.

Within the ambit of the lineage in which the above process is actuated there are no grades or degrees beyond the principal initiation ritual, although it must be stated that some traditional lineages, such as The Black Boar and The Serpent-Cross, do utilise graded structures. In the case of the Black Boar lineage, for example, a Three Degree system is operated, broadly based upon the Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master grades of Freemasonry and medieval Craftsmans' Guilds. In this system the First Degree corresponds to the Dedication Rite; the Second Degree marks a mid-way stage - suitable if someone does not possess the requisite ability to receive the full empowerment; and the Third Degree corresponds to the final Rite of Initiation.

Although it may be affirmed that in the Cultus Sabbati there are no additional grades of attainment that apply to all individuals, it must paradoxically be stated that a strict hierarchical division of roles is traditionally operated. The offices of Elder, Magister, Maid, Priest, Priestess, Summoner, Seeress, Verdet, Chronicler and Ward, are based wholly upon the skills that individuals possess and demonstrate; the 'raising' of an individual to any such position is furthermore subject to the consent of both Brethren and Spiritual Patrons.

As aforesaid, within the Cultus different 'lineages' of Craft observance operate concurrently, sometimes crossing, sometimes remaining categorically distinct. What is it that distinguishes one lineage from another? It is primarily the particular knowledge and characteristic customs of a particular Master-Pupil chain of transmission which marks one from another. Because of this, a single practitioner may study under different teachers to receive different bodies of knowledge and to receive to 'power' of distinct lineal paths of the Sabbatic Gnosis. So long as each lineage is appreciated for its own autonomous integrity, an individual can possess authority in a number of different streams without compromise. A broad experiential basis is commendable, but it is the unique transmission (see below) which validates the path of such a wayfaring Journeyman.

Of all the diverse aspects involved in the process of formal ritual initiation it is the focal role of the final apothecic Rite and the ability of its central deed, the Passing-On, to act as the 'Seal of Power' for all initiatory relations which is of paramount importance. For those of the Path, the reception of the 'Power' activates the spiritual bloodline: the legacy of the Fire-brand from the Elder Gods, from Old Tubalo the Light-bringer, through the Race of the Watchers and the Companie of Faerie, down through the golden chain of hand-to-hand-to-hand...to now. Midnight's Lightning: the Lineage of Unique Transmission Vision An Omen-bearing Bolt of Light held in the hands of the Daemonic Gods: an intercession trespassing fates, a revelation that brings forth to flesh the link between the visible heart of Man and the Invisible Heart of the Mysteries. Such is the Way of Midnight's Lightning!

The Spirit-bestowed Vision that reveals itself to the Mind of the Seeker incepts and passes the Power for the Lineage which we may call: 'The Unique Transmission'. Whether within the conclaves of a formal ritual catena of initiates or in the subtil 'cavern' of solitary practice, whether called forth by intent or made manifest by a sudden epiphany of the Gods, the Power of Revelation is bestowed solely to its chosen vehicle, the divinely-elected individual, and there-in it 'incarnates' - as a faculty, an opening of the inner eye that directly apprehends the Mysteries.

For certain individuals there is an innate capacity to comprehend the Mysteries of the Witanic Path, to understand without learning. Such may be an indication of rebirth within the transcarnational lineage of Witchblood, or a sign of new dispensation: a Master of the Lonely Road. For there are some to whom all outward rites are but a blessing, a confirmation of that which has been attained by interior disposition. Such individuals enjoy a rapport with the Gods and possess a clarity of Vision that cannot be learned or taught, such souls are born into the House of Cain and bear His Mark within.

Moment by moment, the Way of Midnight's Lightning is a tortuous path for its adherent. One is dependent upon divine favour and openness of heart to maintain the continuity of inspiration, and yet its blessings far outweigh its bane. For there is a Solitude in this Path, 'a Marriage that divorceth all Other', in which Perfect All-oneliness may be realised.

Within the ambit of 'Unique Transmission' one may consider that an appointed individual may receive entire bodies of lore, whole Rites and Mysteries. In such instances, the ritual authority to teach others and to incept a lineage for a specific corpus of knowledge is divinely sanctioned. Whilst any man or woman may claim to have received a 'vision', the motives of such claims are made apparent by certain external signs; as the Gospel teaches: 'one must test all things and hold fast to that which is good'. If your path leads you to meet with a true beholder of the Mysteries, an initiate without mortal intercessor, then consider yourself blessed indeed. To learn from such a person could reveal more of the Craft than any store of knowledge accumulated through the passage of years. From experience I would counsel caution and prudence, but if truth be found then I believe we should respect those who have gained the favour of the Divine.

To speak boldly, I consider that the Lineage of Unique Transmission, as incepted by the self-recognition of one's innate 'seed of light', is a prerequisite for all who practise the Arte Magical. Perchance all Beings may possess that spark within themselves, but the rubicon between initiate and uninitiate is the self-recognition of that spiritual seed. For unless that inchoate germ of the magical life awakens to itself there can be no growth, no quickening of the soul-fire. The Unique Transmission is Old Fate's blessing: the secret rapport between the Gods and the Soul; no other may tell of it. Its outward signs are inspiration and knowing, married in an indefinable state whereby a man becomes Mage.

Within the Cultus Sabbati 'the Way of the Flaming Torch' and 'the Way of the Lightning-bolt' are known as 'The Dragon's Horns'. It is considered a worthy aspiration for a Wayfarer to realise the union of the twain: the non-dual path of the Double-way. Because of this dual emphasis, it is considered that only those with the capacity for receiving teachings and who bear the marks of 'unique transmission' - whatever the degree of manifestation - should be invited into the formal sodality. A witch born to the Path may still spend many years struggling to make manifest that which lies within and yet by vertu of the Traditional Rites an uncommon fate may be swiftly seized; unto such individuals the process of tuition is in truth a Path of Remembrance: a reclamation of ancient birthright.

Mystery Rites: the Lineages of Magistracy

A customary demonstration of 'Attaining the Dragon's Horns' (the Union of Unique Transmission and Lineal Empowerment) is for an initiate to compose a Grand Mysterium or Mystery-rite. Such rites are comprised of diverse 'oracular' utterances, magical ordeals, and highly specialised modes of initiation into specific 'states' of magical rapport with powers and entities. The composer of a Mystery-rite is known as its Master or Mistress, and it is at their behest that the rite is performed or its textual form is transmitted to others. In and of themselves Mysteria of this kind are Grand Initiations serving to convey the lineages of certain spiritual entities or magical techniques.

Within the higher body of our magical lore, known as 'The Gnosis of the Crooked Path', there are numerous examples of such advanced workings. For example, 'The Rite of the Turnskin'. This is an initiatory procedure intending the entrance of the aspirant into the circle of therionic atavisms: the Zodiak of Living Forms. By passing through its ordeals the Skin-leaper's Arte is impressed upon the flesh; the bestial ancestry of an individual is 'raised', made self-conscious in his sentient physicality; the animal-headed god is realised!

Another notable example is 'The Devil's Masquerade': the initiation rite of Draku-Ezhu, the 'Grand Famulus' of the Crooked Path Teachings. This particular Mystery-rite obtains the meeting, soul to soul, between the Aspirant and the Deity.

In the stream of Sabbatic Wisdom descended from Yelda Paterson through Zos vel Thanatos (Austin Osman Spare), there is a line of transmission facilitated by the 'passing-on' of a spirit-familiar. In its contemporary manifestation this arcanum has itself 'fleshed out' via the medium of a Mystery-rite, 'The Black Eagle Rite', simply named after the spirit itself. This instance in itself serves to illustrate that a certain type of magical lineage is principally conveyed via the inheritance of spirit-familiars. One might consider that the animal-totem, be it Eagle, Snake, Fox or Boar, functions as a 'mask' for the informing sentience of such traditions.

Mystery-rites, in and of themselves, communicate the Lineages of Magistracy and serve to transmit the states of magical attainment needful for the on-going realisation of their diverse and specific currents. The absorption of thought, word

and deed in the all-consuming process of such rituals (many being of great duration and procedural complexity) facilitates the saturation of the mundane self with the magical ambience of a state or entity. Herein the impress of the Unseen Initiator upon the matrix of sentience or 'Mind' is most powerful and efficacious. In practice, Mystery-rites comport additional 'degrees', adjunctive zones of empowerment, to which an aspirant has access and in which he or she may gain authority. Self-initiation

If by predilection one is led to the Craft and the only means of entrance there-to is by an initiation self-performed, then let that gate be freely and rightly chosen. If the individual is led there-to by dreams and portents, and is told how to perform such a rite then a Way of Unique Transmission is revealed. If a person accomplishes such a task, then I do not consider anyone else - high or low - has the right to doubt that which essentially does not concern them. In fact, it is wiser for us to respect those who enter the Path by such means, for Witchblood's heart is reached by many veins. Distinction should be made between those with Vision and those without. If a person is without signs or inner guidance, and merely engages in a prescribed formula of self-induction according to the dictates of some other mortal authority, then from whence does their apparent empowerment derive?

If a prescribed formula or text is used, then one must truly engage with its spiritual essence and seek to establish an interior connection. Fulfilling an outward process of ritual is not initiation; unless the interior link between Self and Other (whether that Other be Man, Deity, or Spirit) is attained then no initiation exists. If a prescribed formula is used and signs ensue, then a link is assured, but it is best if a rite of self-initiation is principally constructed according to divinely-received lore.

Can a Self-initiate initiate others? If the basis of their Self-initiation is by a lineage of direct and unique revelation and if a corpus of teachings derives from such an epiphany, then we must be confident and affirm the ability of one to teach another, to pass on that which the Gods have revealed, if only to assist a student to gain self-initiation for themselves. If the Gods reveal themselves then it is with a courage that equals their blessing that we must claim our own spiritual authority and legitimisation. The truth of our vision is aptly tested by this need for bravery; to stand alone, a Masterless One among Men, is a fate most rare. Remember, a tree is known by its fruit; communicable inspiration is the proof of spiritual empowerment.

Imaginal Transmission

It is sometimes found that self-initiates suddenly 'invent' a history for their own legitimisation; curious tales of hereditary teaching or of meetings with nameless strangers may occur. Instead of dismissing such claims out-of-hand, we might be wiser to encourage such people to work with their imaginations and discover what it is that is trying to manifest through them. The 'falsehoods' may in some instances be adumbrations of something more interior, but first such individuals must be made aware of the inner process whereby phantasy assumes the guise of historical reality. A refinement of method is required in order for us to recognise the imaginal

fore-shadowing of spiritual presence. As aforesaid, communicable inspiration is the simplest sign of veracity. Where a genuine interior activity is augured and imaged-forth in phantastical invention, let us consider that the Divine Imagination contains its own denizens - the 'messengers' of godhood, and that the shadows thereof may impress themselves in 'types' conducive to the perceiver's apprehension. The open mind thus behold the whispering daimon as an ancestor - an elderly forbear, or as a stranger, a 'black man' bearing a curious gift of book, beast, or secret salve. The Sabbat is an astral conclave, a state of gnosis in ecstasy, its impress upon Mind is beyond all simple reckoning. If we can guide well in instances where its activity is fore-shadowed in the play of imagination, an individual may gain insight and succeed in establishing an interior link with the current, above and beyond the mere outward show of an apparent 'history'. Imaginal Transmission may therefore serve as a means of attaining a lineage of direct revelation.

For the sake of caution, it is perhaps wise for us to speak plainly: where genuine inspiration is absent and tall stories abound, we must beware. Whilst counselling a degree of closer analysis, I consider that those who make a deliberate pretence of initiatic provenance in any way or form are a danger to themselves, to naive seekers, and, in the broader sense, to the historical comprehension of the Craft as a whole. To such people the curse shall be of their own calling.

The Rites of One: Solitary Initiations

When talking of self-initiation, we are in a way guilty of using a misnomer. Initiation is always a matter of relation, whether between Master and Apprentice or between an Individual and the Deities and Powers of the Mysteries. This being so, a ritual performed by oneself is in truth never really so, for the gods and powers that one calls upon are, in union, the Other to our self: the Gods are the 'body of the Initiator'. There is always a relation between ourselves and that which masks the Mysteries. And yet we may say that we are alone in the flesh and in this sense call the processes of self-induction the 'Rites of One' or Solitary Initiations.

Aside from solitary rites which manifest by way of Unique Transmission, there are certain Craft rites which have strict prescribed formulae and which must, of necessity, be performed alone. The Toadman's Rite called 'The Waters of the Moon' is a well-known example. This requires a man to find himself a toad, to impale it upon a blackthorn and thereafter to let its body be flensed by ants. Then, taking its bones to a stream on a clear full moon night, the would-be toadman should cast the bones into the water. All the world will howl and clamour, a-seeking to distract the attention from the one bone that will move against the current; this is the Charming Bone, said to have power over animals. Thereafter the man should take this bone and keep it upon his person. The next three nights he should sojourn alone in a graveyard, seeking for the power of magic. On the third night it is said that the 'Devil' will come and try to tempt the bone away from its possessor. If the Devil succeeds, the rite has failed. If you can keep the bone no matter what reward is offered, you are then an initiate of the Toadman Rite.

As can be seen, this is not a simple procedure and will inevitably place its operant in a position requiring independence and courage. Using the same principle is a solitary Mystery-rite of the Crooked Path called 'The Wreath of Seven Laughing Skulls'. This requires the practitioner to deliberately seek out lonely and frightening places, and there to call forth the 'demons' which produce the sensations of terror and danger. These demons are then ritually confronted, the task of the practice being to transform the apparent 'poisons' or mis-aligned sentiences into 'nectars' or benefic states of potent magical gnosis: to realise the Union of Purity and Perfidy. Oneiric Initiation and Transmission: the Silver Thread and Road of Green A principal way in which knowledge is transmitted within the Cultus is via dreams. Many of our rites are derived through the medium of lucid or clear-eyed dreaming; their messages being 'fleshed out' using the bases of traditional ritual structures, but enhanced and developed as the dream so dictates. It is indeed considered a talent and a blessing from the Gods if someone has the power to dream viridically - that is to dream true, with a mind made green, 'fertile as Old Eden'.

As in the matter of Unique Transmission, if someone receives a dream of initiation into the Sabbatic Mysteries, then that dream is considered to impart its own lineal transmission: the Lineage of the Silver Thread. It does not comport the same empowerment as that of formal ritual induction, but then neither does a formal rite carry the same power as a dream wherein one meets with the Gods face-to-face. Often these matters overlap and provide insights into the other. However it must be stated that dream-initiation is considered to be a valid mode of induction and as aforesaid constitutes its own path of empowerment. Where dream-teachings are ongoing, there the pilgrim may be said to 'walk the Green Road' - the way of Elphame. It is considered a sign of magical veracity if one's magical name was dreamed, by oneself or one's teacher. Furthermore, an oneiric origin for a Mystery-rite is held in great esteem and is considered a guarantor of its spiritual provenance as a boon from the Faithful Gods, the Witch-Fathers and Wise-blooded Mothers.

Entheogenic Initiation: The Witches' Supper

Another form of initiation is that which is bestowed through the sacramental use of entheogenic or psychotropic agents. Within Traditional Craft observance this is a method of psychic transformation used principally by experienced adepts as part of their on-going solitary initiation into the Mysteries. Here it must be stated that the use of such substances is the responsibility of the individual and that such practices must be undertaken with due respect and caution. Furthermore, the use of such substances is confined to reverential and sacramental consumption.

The range of the Wort-cunner's pharmacopoeia is as broad as the world-field itself. In practice, different practitioners develop a rapport with different plant-spirits and these become their especial advisors and dream-empowering allies. Amongst the most frequently used plant-familiars are those inhabiting Belladonna berries, Hemp, Syrian Rue, Black Hellebore, as well as the entheogenic forms of mycotrope such as Liberty Cap and Fly Agaric, collectively known as 'Crow's bread'. Also known is the

Unguentum Sabbati or Devil's Salve. This is an ointment used by some practitioners to 'leave the flesh behind' and travel in the Wild Hunt.

In communal rites wine and bread is commonly used as the 'Sacrament of the First Murder'. These are consumed as the flesh and blood of Abel, the body of profanity which must be resurrected or re-integrated into the body of Cain or the Initiatic self. The incorporation of more potent elements into the Witches' Supper depends wholly upon the rite and its assembly. In solitary rites, it is known that in some forms of Old Craft an entheogenic elixir has sometimes been used to assist in the creation of the initiatory apotheosis: 'The aspirant, after being mentally prepared by his or her sponsor, and drinking of the potion, is left alone to spend the night by three stones that stand overgrown in the centre of the wood' (Taliesin, 'A Wood in the West Country', published in Pentagram, August, 1965). This is somewhat reminiscent of the medieval Alpine initiatory potion which provoked its drinker to have 'all of a sudden the sensation of receiving and preserving within himself the image of our art, and the principal rituals of the sect' (Ginzburg. C., Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath, 1989). It is believed that unto those possessing the needful magical capacity a plant-familiar will reveal itself - that it contains within its 'bestowed' state of consciousness the memory of all previous practitioners' experiences: the leaf retains the tales of the pilgrims once passed by. This is of great use where a specific body of knowledge has become fragmentary and must be restored using magical techniques.

Sexual Means of Lineal Succession: the Agapae of the Wise In some traditions of the Old Craft it is said that initiation into the 'familial group' or Clan was firstly by sexual intercourse between the aspirant and the seniormost initiate of the opposite gender. We may conjecture as to the veracity of this. It may have been used to 'bind' an individual into the kinship group, to make them of the One Blood. Needless to say, we must exhibit great caution in matters so easily abused.

Regardless of historical provenance, if sexual union is employed as a general means for induction after the formal year and a day tuition, then absolute trust must be a prerequisite and all parties must see through their commitment, without question or faltering. However, to my mind, initiation via sexual action is generally best confined to higher rites as operated between individuals of suitable adeptship. To write from experience, I was taught that a Magister can pass on his power via sexual means only once in his life. This might be to his chosen successor, if female, or to his own Consort in the Craft.

We must also consider that sexual initiation can occur in the dream-state and that the 'consent' of the aspirant may be an irrelevant consideration. It is rather a case of personal sacrifice to the deity. From my knowledge of both male and female adepts in the Elder Craft, the gods can and will take lovers and by their 'elixirs' convey strange knowledges, far beyond the grasp of mortal aspirations.

Furthermore, we should also give thought to the transmission of gnosis between adepts via their own sexual fluids. A fully empowered consort is a vehicle for the

magical current, his or her blood and bodily fluids are media for the powers of the Arte and its patron deities. In rites performed by higher adepts of the Sabbatic Mysteries the Witches' Supper is literally of 'flesh and blood' - of semen and vaginal elixirs. For it is known that the seasons of the Moon are refracted through the vessel of the Priestess and that the issue of her sexual mouth contains the secrets (secretions) of the gnosis in a fluidic hypostasis. Likewise the seed of a Priest is the numinous medium for the powers of the Godhead and for the concealed radiances of the Sun. In rites employing a Seeress as the so-called 'Ophidian Oracle', a trance-state is actuated by cunnilingus and the lucid post-orgasmic dream of the priestess is guided by external manuductive passes and verbal conjurations. As can be seen, if one considers it deeply, such matters cannot be operated effectively between inexperienced aspirants. As such I conclude that it is best for such matters to be remain the preserve of those capable of deploying their arcana with knowledge and love.

Textual Transmission: The Way of the Book

Although we may exchange money for text, money alone will never purchase initiation, neither will text alone permit us to enter the Sabbat. And yet, if one is possessed of the suitable capacity, lineage may be given by means of formal textual transmission. In such an instance, the pages of a rite are formally given by a Master or Mistress to an aspirant and the spiritual wardens of the Book are bestowed as familiars or guides to the Book's new owner. In cases where face-to-face tuition cannot be accomplished, a one-to-one mode of textual transmission is sometimes utilised, most often accompanied by a psychic linking between Bestower and Recipient. The Lineage of the Serpent-Cross is one such example of a Sabbatic lineage externally supported by textual transmissions and internally augmented via psychic connectivity. In its case, the original motivation of the lineage is oneirically derived and its method of implementation is in accord with dream-tuition.

Where the Lonely Road guides us, where the Black Book - the Grimoire Unknown - is revealed as a tome of some Mage's labours and from his own hand is passed on to another, there let the spirit pass all power by the leaves of the Book.

Omen and Element: the transmission of Spirit-Knowledge by Chance and Circumstance

In addition to the above contexts, initiatory transmissions of another kind may be gained through sudden 'chance' events. Perhaps only those who have experienced such matters directly will possess an inkling of what I am attempting to convey, but sometimes the most subtle of events - the fall of a feather - the turn of a card - the opening of a book, can forth-show the presence of one's spiritual guides and bring to light an imminent turn in the path. The meetings between Man and Spirit cannot be confined to the formal circumstances of rite and ceremony; interaction will occur where the paths of fate cross and the aspirant is receptive, whether he or she knows it or not.

In addition to omens, magical initiations of an especial kind can be granted by the subjection or experiential immersion of the self in elemental power. To pass over fire is to learn the forge's secret. To fall amid the rushing waters and be spared is a blessing from the undines. To walk at night through storm-wind and gale, to ascend a great peak of barren rocks; each possesses its own arcana. We can submit ourselves to such vital trials and seek them out with an intrepid heart. To the Master of the Lonely Road such ordeals are allies, companions and advisors upon a path with but few mortal compatriots.

Conclusion: Initiation is a Bridge with One End

Whilst it is evident that there is a broad range in the typology of Sabbatic initiations as operative in the contemporary observance of the Cunning-craft, such differentiation does not adhere to artificial borders; type is not strictly separated from type. In the reality of practice, one form overlaps with another and numerous combinations arise according to circumstantial requirements. Nonetheless, an awareness of different types permits us to gain a more refined comprehension - a subtle discrimination between the myriad forces acting through a situation, thus enabling us to state with greater clarity the spiritual provenance of our own individual work.

Although initiation obtains greatest intensity when focused through a single pivotal event, whether that be a ritual or a vision, the process of initiation is an on-going event, a tortuous road or 'crooked path' linking moment to moment, ecstasy to ecstasy in a continuity of being. Within the overall complex of this continuum we may define specific strands which combine to facilitate the transmission of gnosis to the individual;

I. The Lineal Transmission of Thought:- every nuance of the mental continuum which bears the fruit of realisation fulfils the lineage of Thought between the Primordial Mind - the Skull-palace of Cain - and the Present Mind, the Skull-vessel of the Initiand. The thoughts which lead a man onto the path, the thoughts which guide and serve in his choice-making, the thoughts which transform the mundane into the substance for the Praeternatural Gold of Noetic Alchemy, the thoughts which recognise the State that is ours in eternity, the thoughts which flash forth in sudden ardour and goad a man to heights of inspiration; these and an infinity of others are the gateways of Liliya's Wisdom.

II. The Lineal Transmission of Word:- the breath which carries the Password in the formal rite of induction is literally considered to be the same breath carried down through the bodies of each successive Master or Mistress; it is the 'Pneuma', the vital air of illuminative life; it is the 'One Breath', the Hyperborean insufflation from Cain to his kin. In attenuation, this Mystery is conveyed through every word - every act of speech, whether in waking, vision, imagination or dreaming - which conveys the gnosis of the Arte Magical to the individual aspirant.

III. The Lineal Transmission of Deed:- every action is an interaction between Self and Other, and is therefore a potential transaction between the aspirant and the Initiator. The opening of the eyes, the placing of the step, the turning to-and-fro between directions, the on-lay of the hand, the sojourn, the flight, the labour, the rest....all may show forth the Work of Mahazhael's Hand.

0/IV. The Great Lineage: the Path of True Witchblood:- Whether it is by kinship, rite, vision or divine election, that one is made a 'knowing witch', it is by birth and by birth alone that one is chosen and branded with the Sign of Liberty: 'The Mark of Cain'. Solely Those whose aethyr bears this seal of power partake in the One True Lineage of 'Witchblood'. Though its design is cast though countless ways, it is ever the Path of One.

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The force of the Initiator, the Spirit of Perfect Gnostic Realisation, is perpetually acting upon the field of consciousness. Upon that great vista we call 'Mind' the impress of the Initiating Power is perceived in instants of direct revelation; the Spirit of Cain reifies at the 'cross-roads' of fateful possibilities, in axial moments which transect the borderlands of spirit and flesh. When each and every moment, in and of itself, is linked in a continuum of gnostic rapport with the ingressing force of the magical current, then we have attained Mastery upon the Path, but until that time we must seize each chance and turn each opportunity into a tryst between the soul of Man and the Spirit of Initiation. In the Name of the Nameless, so must it be!

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