



PERMUTATIONS



PHIL HINE

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FURTHER READING

Prime Chaos by Phil Hine (Chaos International 1993), available direct from the publisher at BM Sorcery, London WC1N 3XX at \$20 inclusive of postage (send cash, I.M.O or cheque drawn on U.K. bank made payable to “Chaos International”).

Condensed Chaos by Phil Hine (New Falcon Publications, 1995)

The Pseudonomicon by Phil Hine (2nd Edn) available from Dagon Productions, PO Box 17995, Irvine, CA 92713, USA.

ON-LINE

Condensed Chaos *version 1.2* - somewhat different from the full-length book version, can be found at **TOOLS OF CHAOS** in Adobe PDF format. <http://www.crl.com/~tzimon>

See also **CHAOS MATRIX** for a selection of essays on various aspects of magick. <http://www.sonic.net/fenwick/>

PERMUTATIONS

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remaps the neural pathways - Mutation. The deconstruction of Identity from the beleaguered To To rewind back to the question of an overall goal for Chaos Magick. I would suggest that the goal is present, yet hidden. Chaos Magick is a process of MUTATION. Cumulative Gnosis remaps the neural pathways - Mutation. The deconstruction of Identity from the beleaguered Ego into the legion Selves requiring only Self-Love - Mutation. The search for the most effective and adaptive WORK techniques so that reality becomes effectively, a playground - Mutation. The seeding of culture with novel ideas, styles, fashions; the replacement of Truth with the Permission to do (Do what Thou wilt?) - Mutation. Aah, but mutation into what?

Well, that's another story.

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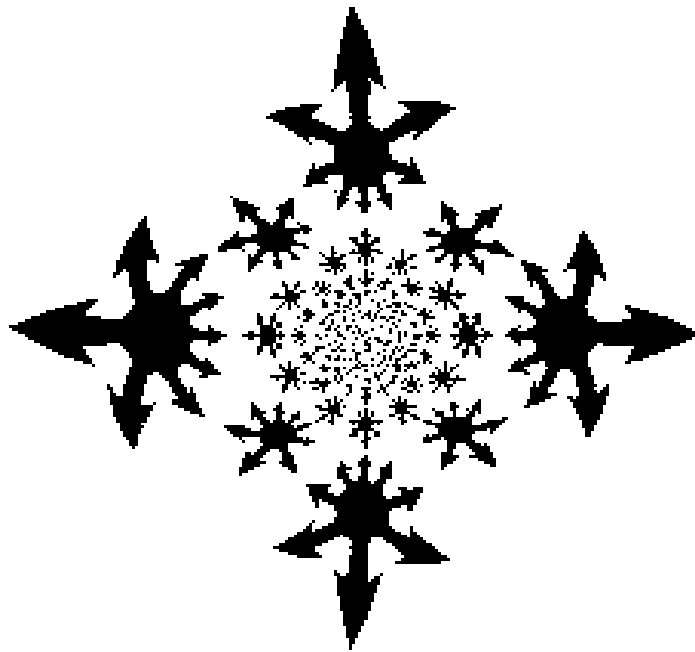
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of PLAY, success might well be easy, but ‘failure’ is certainly no harder.

I would posit further that the experience of PLAY leads us into new magical realms. That is, actually, they’re probably quite old ones, it’s just that one has yet painted them black and arranged them around a Chaosphere. Here we encounter the mysteries of our own internal cycles of change; cycles which have been buried away from the flames of perception; habits of thought and emotional response - demons, if you like, which have so far crept quietly along in the cellars of selves-dom. Here we might choose to focus attention on those ‘hidden gods’ which around much of our interpersonal experience is based - Love, Fidelity, Possession, Curiosity - the undefinable words are suddenly eased into sharp relief and looked at from new angles. Yes, the PLAY state may be used for enchantment and the like, but only fleetingly, as, in intense states of PLAY, the attachment to any particular desire is likely to be at best, fleeting. If such magick is done, it is done from a condition of DO EASY (vide Burroughs).

One of the best applications of the PLAY state I have found so far is the Creative connection and analysis of ideas. Anything from various WORK practices (magical or otherwise) to less definable areas of experience - Desire, Cognitive habits, language. The relationship is a simple one: enough WORK builds up momentum for PLAY. PLAY jumps us into a state where we can radically modify our experience of WORK. Yet the background WORK helps us to understand the dynamics of PLAY, and opens up new areas for exploration.

To rewind back to the question of an overall goal for Chaos Magick. I would suggest that the goal is present, yet hidden. Chaos Magick is a process of MUTATION. Cumulative Gnosis



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be perceived as some great, universal Truth. Also, it is necessary that the experiences one has are re-integrated and assimilated successfully when, as is inevitably the case, one returns to a more 'stable' sense of reality. Gravity hugs the free-flying psychonaut back into the well of Paramount Reality. At least, to a working approximation of such, as the magician progressively becomes something other than human. This is where previous WORK experience becomes important. The ideational contents of the Mystical flight are useless unless they relate to the magicians' extant mind-set. If the experience does not result in the ability to go beyond previously held beliefs and concepts, and produce something new, then its validity is questionable. So Gnostically-induced experiences of PLAY enable the magician to WORK more effectively. By the same token, we need to have done a certain amount of WORK to explore the possible value of PLAY. Further, a wider definition of Gnosis is that it is knowledge or insight which impells you to act from that point. A revelation perhaps, but one that significantly changes your world-view. The encounter with Pasupati discussed in the 'Gods' essay could be read as an instance of Gnosis - an event which caused a significant shift in my perspective, and also impelled me to act from that new baseline.

Playing With Chaos

The Chaos approach to Magick has reversed the general view that magical abilities are merely the by-products of the Mystical quest. The emphasis is placed instead on WORK, in manipulating MAYA. In some ways, the idea of Mysticism's end-goal, as one of overcoming or transcending MAYA is a western misperception of a process which upholds the statement "Nothing is True, Everything is Permitted." From the experience

FOREWORD

Permutations is a collection of four essays which I feel throws up different perspectives - a 'window' if you like - into the diverse forces & feelings which have shaped my approach to magical work and concepts. Readers will discern a strong autobiographical element within these pages. This is a deliberate style, as I have found that the act of unveiling how magic has affected me personally, is a key to communicating the often abstract ideas which relate to the 'hidden' faces of magic - which are often difficult to carry across in bite-sized chunks. Simply saying "this is how such-and-such should be done" and leaving it at that - is not an approach which works for me. The magical power of 'concealment' is well-known. The power of revealing oneself, warts 'n' all, is less well-attested.

These four essays reflect different areas of my magical work which I have found, for various reasons, to be at times, problematic. Writing is for me, both an earthing and an exorcism. This collection is not quite 'practical' in the same way that my other books are, but nonetheless, I feel that the reader may find some useful points herein, which cross all boundaries of magical activity.

Phil Hine, February, 1997.

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These are two distinct, but not dichotomous experiences of the world. You can either WORK to make things happen, or PLAY and let things happen. But alas, it's not that simple. In practising Magick as WORK, we prepare ourselves for PLAY. And the key factor which links both WORK and PLAY is Gnosis.



Each time you attempt to phenomenize desire, requires a burst of Gnosis-consciousness. Gnosis can last for a split second, or propel you into a state (sometimes described by, yes, Mystics as Samadhi) of altered perception which can go on for days, weeks, or even months. The effects of Gnosis are cumulative. Gain enough momentum and Gnosis begins to affect you in various ways: illuminations, waking dreams, hallucinations, voices, clairvoyant vision, the awakening of Siddhis which no one has taught you; which did not come from a book, yet are there at your fingertips. There is more; heightened perception of self, of connections between disparate experiences and concepts, new gestalts. The surface content of these altered states is not as significant perhaps, as what is going on in the Central Nervous System. Peaks of Gnosis rewrite the neural paths, taking the mind's software up to a new version, geared for high-speed processing. Whilst the magician remains, to a large extent, centred in WORK mode, then this process remains as a hidden agenda. Indeed, it seems that you have to put a great deal of WORK in before you can get to grips with the potential of PLAY.

So here, I am arguing that Magical WORK prepares you for Mystical PLAY. The difference can be understood in terms of manipulating MAYA to be one thing or another, as opposed to enjoying the dance in all its forms.

The problem with Mysticism is that the result of cognition whilst within a highly-accelerated state of consciousness can

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The first scene reflects the general approach to sex-magick in Western Culture. WORK: doing something to get something. The second scene is closer to a Tantric view of sex: relaxed, sensuous, pleasure-centred - PLAY.

We have to work at Magick. Doing training programmes, learning the symbols & languages, learning new skills, analyzing, refining, enchanting - it's all work. This is all very necessary, as we have to learn to WORK before we can learn to PLAY, at least, as far as this subject requires. Here, WORK and PLAY are experiences of the World, each complementing each other.

Again, another simple example. Again, sex. Chatting someone up, relating to a Significant Other, Copping Off - whatever you want to call it. One way to achieve this desire is through WORK - which in this case might be practising chat-up lines into a mirror, or perhaps, invoking Jontrav-Olta as the patron loa of smooth-talking sex-machines, in order to project the appropriate glamour in order to pull. This is WORK, and I hope that all readers are at least familiar (if only in theory) with this kind of situation. The PLAY mode here is on one level simple, yet on another, complex in the extreme. Here, you merely make brief eye contact with someone else, and suddenly you Know with absolute certainty, that somewhere in this unfolding event, two paths will converge and end up in the same bed together. What is marvellous about this experience, as I expect most readers will know, is that when that flood of certainty dashes itself through your mind, you are so confident about what is going to follow that initial moment, that you no longer have to WORK in order to make something happen. You can afford to PLAY. And a person who is playing is free of attachment to the fulfilment of desire, and may thus take more risks than a person who walks in terror of losing his cool and looking stupid.

1 THE MAGIC OF NEED

There is a difference, albeit a subtle one, between 'doing magic' as part of a development programme or to test an idea, a ritual, and the magic which arises out of need - that which wells forth from circumstance. Over the years, I have seen a vast difference in terms of both the event, and the effects. This is not to say that the one is somehow 'better' than the other. Constructed rites based on a raw idea can spin the celebrants off in surprising directions. However, for the moment, I want to concentrate on the magic of need.

Need may be your own inner drive, or it may arise from circumstances around you. What is important, I feel, is that the need 'fires you up' - it engages you both emotionally and intellectually, so that you 'have' to do something about it. Magic is often the final recourse to action when all other roads are closed off or have proved to be dead ends. When crisis beckons, one often doesn't have time to sit down and plan thoroughly a nice, neat ritual. Acting quickly, while the moment is hot, is more important.

The Sausage Curse

Some years ago, I learnt a powerful lesson in the sorcery of *need* by watching an adept of the art at work. I was visiting the

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High Priestess of a local witch coven. Whilst idly glancing through the evening paper, she came across a report of a rapist prowling in the district. She shot up out of the chair, shut up everyone else in the room with an icy glance, and, on reaching the dining table, cleared a space on it by simply sweeping everything onto the floor with a mighty crash. She placed an indenti-kit picture of the rapist from the paper in the centre of the table, grabbed a sausage from the fridge, and, after furiously rummaging in her sewing box, proceeded to methodically drive needles into the sausage, muttering furiously under her breath. The atmosphere in the room was electric. After some minutes, she stalked out of the room and took the sausage into the back garden. On her return, she smiled brightly at the cowering men in the room, and announced "I think a cup of tea would be nice, don't you?" She offered no explanation or justification for her actions, and never alluded to it afterwards. A week later, the rapist was caught, sentenced and incarcerated.

It was only years later that I began to appreciate the power of this woman. She didn't dither around, nor did she worry about the ethics, morality, or whether or not she had the 'right' to act in this way. Nor did she bother with any of the elaborate procedures of ritual magic. By her glance, and her violent clearing of the table, she created a charged atmosphere that rivalled anything I had experienced in more formal magical surroundings.

This is the sort of thing that I am attempting to discuss. It's difficult, I find, to do this in the abstract, so this discourse will, of necessity, be punctuated by anecdotes.

Not only is the magic which arises from need practically useful (in terms of resolution) it is a highly valuable experience for many other reasons. Firstly, *doing* the magic of need shows you just what you are capable of when necessity looms before

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Gnosis can also be read as 'Knowledge of the Heart' - knowledge that is difficult to express immediately in words; a gestalt projection which might take years to filter down through layers of connectivity before it surfaces into words on a screen. The magical universe is, of necessity, a finite space. Gnosis may well propel us, momentarily, beyond its confines. And as William Burroughs has it, you cannot take words into space.

Gnosis, as the term is generally applied in Chaos Magick, is merely the visible tip of a vast range of numinous experiences which have, apart from a few intrepid researchers in Pyschonautics (Seigel, Grof et a), been viewed as the domain of mystics. While it is arguable that Mystical practices can lead to all kinds of word-viruses (such as religion), it is also worth considering that merely regarding Gnosis as that which is entered briefly, in order to phenomenize a desire, is an underestimation of the wider potentialities of this experience.

Work And Play

I will offer a simple distinction between Magick and Mysticism. Magick is about WORK, whilst Mysticism is PLAY. These are not 'opposite' states, but complementary experiences. How so? Let us take an example of two acts of Sexual Magick. In the first case, we see a couple fiercely shagging, minds ablaze with a sigil, sweaty bodies humping towards that almighty release - orgasm - where sigilized desire is hurled into the void. Second case, a couple spend hours rolling around each other, lazily tasting, stroking, joking even, with no particular urgency to orgasm, the question of whether or not orgasms will happen at all, being not particularly important. Which do you think is the more *magical* of the two scenes?

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might choose to uphold.

It could be argued that, having dumped the concept of an overall future, we are free to dream and design any number of possible futures? Hence the Pandemonaeon, a Chaos future, which to a large extent, has already happened; the problem being of course, that we lack the required cognitive systems to make the best adaptation to it. This idea in itself, throws the whole issue of a 'direction' for Chaos Magick into sharper relief; the ways in which we can cast forth future projections are couched in terms of present knowledge, present viewpoints, and the patterns through we structure information.

In attempting to disentangle contemporary magick from the trappings of religiosity or transcendentalism, advocates of the Chaos Current have taken up a pretty hard-line stand on the subject of Mysticism. They're having none of it, basically. So, while it is permissible to applaud Crowley's practical magick, a hard-line 'Carrollian' chaoist is likely to deplore his mystical writing.

Gnosis

That peculiar experience of consciousness known as Gnosis is the key to all practical sorceries and magicks. A good deal of magical practice revolves around developing the ability to enter Gnosis, and perhaps, in some cases, to recognise Gnosis. Gnosis is generally understood to be the 'peak' moment of any trance-inducing exercise whereon desire may be successfully phenomenized (i.e. 'no-mind') But, I ask, is Gnosis merely that which is attained after half an hour's whirling, chanting, or wanking over a sigil? All that dancing around just for that one brief, momentary lapse into else-where?

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you. Necessity is also very useful in forcing back your personal boundaries - both in terms of what you think you know, what you can do, and, perhaps equally important - what magic can do.

A Night Visitation

My early years of magical practice were much influenced by a psychological understanding of what magic was all about. Studying for a psychology degree and exploring the symbolism of the qabalah in a very intellectual way was my starting point. One of my first 'real' magical experiences did a lot to blow away - in one instant - some of the boundaries I had built up in my head concerning magical work. I had been meditating on the Tattvic square of Earth. One night I awoke to a sense of overwhelming oppression. The room was filled with a red mist. It felt like someone had dumped a suitcase full of rocks on the bed. I couldn't move. I was terrified. Didn't know what was happening or what to do. Nothing 'ordinary' seemed to work. Eventually, I visualized the banishing pentagram of earth, pushing it forcefully into the space above me. It wasn't hard to visualize with eyes closed, 'cos I certainly didn't want to open my eyes! But the banishing pentagram worked. All the sensations - pressure, oppression, etc., lifted, and I sank into a grateful sleep.

This experience left me in a state of shock for a couple of days. What I feel is important here, is not so much that it happened, but it showed me all too clearly that magic has a habit of surprising you, just when you think you've got it 'sorted'. I'd been thinking about magic only in terms of psychology. Suddenly I had an experience which I couldn't fit into my categories of 'explanation' - it 'moved the goalposts' of what I thought magic was about.

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In consequence, this and other experiences have led me to consider how the workings of magic are put across in books. Unless one is fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of other magicians (it took me five years to meet other 'experienced' magicians) at an early stage in one's development, most of us have to learn from books. Therein hangs the problem. There is only so much you can put across in a book. Many of the magical 'beginner's' books are little more than 'cookbooks' of spells, or texts heavily influenced by modern psychology. Some authors seem to be keen to give the impression that magic is easy, and that if you follow their prescriptions 'correctly' you shouldn't have any untoward experiences. I have found, however, that 'untoward experiences' are an essential feature of magical development. I have certainly learnt more about magic (& life in general) during those periods when things have become seriously weird!

This is surely no news to the experienced magician - what I am trying to do here is get at that 'hidden face' of magic, some of the weird shit that goes down, which doesn't tend to get written up for books and articles.

Another point about the magic of need is that it forces you to think on your feet. In such moments, I find, you really get to grips between what you think you know, and what you actually do know. Again, this is something that the 'how to' books can't really prepare you for. Also, a great many magical books are 'dated' when it comes to the needs of this latter end of the twentieth century. In the Lesser Key of Solomon, for instance, there are demons who specialize in divining the fate of kings, which is all very well, but you won't find any demons whose provenance relates to debugging a COBOL program or finding lost contact lenses. The myriad books on healing through crystals are unlikely to be of much help when your partner

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STIRRING THE CAULDRON OF CHAOS

Chaos Culture lacks an overall vision of progression into a shared future. Civilised progress is running out of steam, whilst pluralism & divergence twist the contemporary landscape into a fractal surface seething with new possibilities. Fragments of pasts & present rearranged by the blind hands of the new gods - fashion, style, entertainment; plundering the past to support an immediate now. This is the dizzying dance of MAYA. Everything is Permitted because Nothing is True. Think about that for a moment.

No Direction Home

Critics of Chaos Magick have pointed out that Chaos Magick does not have any stated goal to strive for. Unlike other magical philosophies, which are spun around 'New Aeons', future dreams, or still cling to crypto-transcendentalist structures, Chaos does not have, at least on the surface, any overall goal. Other magical philosophies have a discernable goal; be it 'spiritual' progression or a more humanistic ideal to which to spur the individual on. There remains just the constant sharpening of technique & ability, the recreation and recuperation of new paradigms, the 'empirical' testing of new ideas, and whatever hidden agenda each practitioner of Chaos

celebration of pleasure rather than the denial of the body. Giving my prick to another man is pleasurable too of course, but of a different order, and my reflections on this will have to wait for another time.

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starts to recover buried memories of sexual abuse by a relative.

It's all too easy to get into a mindset where one (unconsciously perhaps) makes a division between one's magical activity, and one's day-to-day life. We might think nothing of invoking a god for 'magical inspiration', but might never consider invoking a god for help in sorting out the bank overdraft. Equally, it's all too common for people to turn to their tarot cards or runes to help sort out a dilemma, when the 'real world answers' are staring them in the face. Related to this latter is the issue of how seriously we are prepared to take the results of divinations. It's very common for people to ignore a divination message that they don't want to hear, in the same way that we might ignore 'good advice' from a well-meaning friend.

One of the problems of working from necessity is that it can become addictive - particularly if you take a great deal of interest in the problems of those around you. Some alternative healers I have met seem to be 'addicted' to healing in a similar fashion. Placing too much emphasis on working on behalf of other people can leave you ignoring your own problems. Moreover, the ego-identification of 'being able to sort other people out' can result in a blindness to the subtleties of a situation. As I remarked in *Condensed Chaos* (New Falcon Publications, 1995), over-confidence in a situation can be as problematic as lack of confidence. A case in point is that of a person I knew slightly once approached me to help him with a 'magical battle' against a 'black magician' who had lured his girlfriend away from him using 'dark forces'. Oh how some occultists do love the melodramatic! Now, had I taken him at his word, I would have simply fired up a search-and-destroy servitor and sent it off. Being somewhat more prudent by this time, I looked into the matter for myself and discovered another angle on the story

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- that the lady in question had grown sick of this 'White Magician's' pompous posturing, and quit him for another, who was more charming, & less concerned with saving the universe and crossing the abyss before breakfast. Naturally though, the White Magician's ego couldn't accept anything so 'normal' and commonplace, so the whole thing became a magical battle between Good and Evil.

If you are going to intervene in someone else's situation, I cannot stress too highly the prudent approach and the importance of (a) gathering information - through tarot, familiars to the social grapevine, and (b), checking out your own motivation for getting involved in the first place. What's important here - is it helping out a close friend, boosting your image as the local mage (nothing wrong with this, providing you're aware of it), testing out a new magical technique, or what? Situational analysis techniques (again discussed in the New Falcon edn of *Condensed Chaos*) can be helpful here.

One of the most subtle issues relating to interventions on the behalf of others is that of ethics. In the early days of Chaos magic's arrival on the UK magical scene, there was much worrying done in print by magicians of other persuasions about the perceived 'lack of ethics' implied in the statement "Nothing is true, Everything is permitted." The implied criticism was that 'chaos magicians' would become immoral monsters capable of just about *anything*, without some stated code of magical ethics to follow. For me, a cornerstone of magical work is that one's sense of ethics *grows from within*. Questions of ethics are always going to be more complex than the often trite 'codes of practice' that the various pagan and magical denominations trot out from time to time. Especially insidious is the way that magicians can 'bend their ethics' to cover behaviour which otherwise, would not be acceptable. A rather ludicrous example

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are just as possible in a homosexual partnership as a heterosexual one. Anal intercourse is a very effective way of stimulating the muladhara chakra, despite what some sex-magic manuals might say. Personally, I would say that my sexual experiences with other men that have given rise to the experiences described in Tantric Magick have been all the more powerful due to the obvious element of catharsis - being able to actualise desires which have long been repressed is generally a powerful source of energy, which can be magically directed, of course.

Modern (post-Crowley) works on sexual magick seem to treat homosexuality in one of two ways. There is either the admonition that it is wrong - it blocks your chakras, 'reverses' the kundalini or 'creates a dark astral vortex', or the more positive view that the gender of partners doesn't matter, and that the 'energy' is the same. Obviously I prefer the latter position, though I feel that things are just not that simple. The writers that cleave to this latter view tend to stress that sexual magick only works properly within an established relationship, which is true to a point, but neatly excludes all the facets of Gay sexual culture which straight society finds so disturbing - anonymous sex; S&M, and group sex particularly. In the UK at least, there seem to be few individuals or groups who are attempting to write intelligently (or more importantly, feelingly) about the possibilities of Gay-positive Tantra, and the only group which provides support and magical approaches specifically tailored for gay men is the international Voodoo Network. Hopefully, as the issue of spirituality raises its profile within the wider gay community, and more gay occultists declare themselves, this situation will change.

To conclude then, I dare to assert that being fucked is, for me, an intensely sacred experience; that spirituality lies in the

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idea of God and Goddess within the self. The problem of 'polarity' is when divinity is confused with conditioning and what is supposed to be 'masculine' and 'feminine' qualities. Thus we are told over and over again that fire is masculine and water is feminine; that the capacity to display emotions and be intuitive are feminine and that intellectual analysis is masculine. Says who? Feminist critiques of conditioning make the point that we only know what masculinity and femininity are because they have been defined in specific ways. Working beyond these limitations is surely a primary task in the developmental process. So much of what passes for 'occult laws' is just a 'spiritualised' justification of social conditioning and prejudice. For Gay men, polarity needn't be as simplistic as one partner assuming a feminine role - you can acknowledge the feminine and still give your penis to another man. You can celebrate the masculine elements of psyche and still receive another man's cock into yourself. Goddesses and Gods are not subject to the same restrictions as humans - after all, what would be the point if they were? Imposing our own narrow limits upon them is to miss the point of the whole exercise of invoking them. I invoke upon myself to go beyond my present limitations - to join momentarily with something greater, or outside my ego. Sometimes my lover becomes to me a God, or a Goddess - or is that too freaky for you?

An early conditioning-block that I had to deal with was the mistaken assertion that from a Tantric point of view, sex between men had no value. However, as I became more comfortable with my feelings and longings for sex with men, I soon disabused myself of this notion. From experience, I can say that I have had equally strong Tantric experiences with men as I have had previously with women. Sensations such as the 'Bliss-wave'; seeing my lover bathed in gold light; the total-body orgasm and increased sensitivity to kundalini activity can

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is a qabalist of my acquaintance who has apparently convinced his wife that due to his 'religion', he cannot refuse any woman who makes a pass at him. Thus he cannot avoid sleeping with any woman who shows more than a passing interest in him. On a 'darker' note, cursing is pretty definitely seen as 'Black Magick', except of course when you can justify your reasons for doing it - like the Wiccans who once attempted to magically attack me because I was plugging 'the Left-Hand Way' in *Pagan News* magazine. I'm not being melodramatic here. I (or rather my partner) detected the attack as it was occurring and we countered it successfully (itself a good example of doing magic out of necessity - responding to a 'live' situation), and some weeks later, I heard through the grapevine that a Wiccan in Bradford (I was in Leeds at the time) had been bragging about 'sending a Manitou' to deal with me. Yeah, right.

Repelling a magical attack is in itself a very good example of the kind of magic I am discussing. Now people saying they've been 'cursed' is common on the magical scene. In some circles it's almost a qualification of 'status' that, at one time or another, that one has been magically attacked (usually by anonymous 'black magicians'). It's much rarer to meet people who can say, "Well someone tried to have a go at me, but I caught them at it and stopped them". Most techniques of magical defence are simply 'passive' in that they help you feel better, but they don't actually do much to help you 'confirm' the reality of the situation. I once made the mistake of lending a friend Dion Fortune's classic *Psychic Self-Defence*, with the result that he began to interpret every event possible (flickering lights, a poster falling off his wall) as evidence of 'attack'. The next anecdote I'm going to trot out is not only a good example of 'hands-on' response to 'magical intrusion' but is also an example of serious weirdness!

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In 1984 I moved to York, in order to train as an Occupational Therapist. I thought of this as a time to have a 'rest' from magic and get into serious study. Famous last words! It didn't take me long to meet a woman on the same course who professed to have an interest in 'witchcraft'. At this time, I was in a Wiccan coven based in the North-West of England. One morning, I woke up to find myself really depressed - that "nothing's-worth-bothering-with-anymore" sort of depression. The thing was, I couldn't work out *why* - i.e. I didn't really have anything to be depressed about - but I felt literally 'drained' of energy. That evening, I was lying down generally ignoring everything, when the phone rang. It was the High Priestess of the coven. "I've been tryin to reach you all day," she said "don't you know you're under magical attack?" When I admitted that no, I didn't know, she said "Well you are, and here's what you will do about it." She advised me to cast a circle around the bed, and, instead of going to sleep, to 'hover' in a light trance on the edge of sleep, and to look out for any 'things' appearing. So, somewhat bemused, I followed this advice. Lo and behold, I saw this 'thing' like a cross between a bat and a cat, materialize on the edge of my bed. Following the priestesses' advice, I attempted to focus on the creature, and get a sense of 'who' was behind it. What I got from this was a hazy picture of the 'witchcraft' woman on my course. Now Kathy (the HPs) had pretty much drummed into me the sage advice that you have to take any psychic experience which involves other people with a pinch of salt - unless, that is, you can get a confirmation from them that they were doing something that can account for your own experience. So the next day, I took the bull by the horns and confronted the witch-woman about my experience. "I spotted your familiar last night. If you send it again, I'll 'kill' it, which'll hurt you, so I'd advise you not to do it again."

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(pardon the pun) to homosexual sex-magick. Yet the importance of his sex-magick with partners such as Victor Neuburg has tended to be overlooked by those who have inherited his magical philosophy. Any ideas why?

The intensity of these feelings - of abandonment to pleasure and possessing another, and at the same instance, of being possessed, I have encountered in another setting; that of the shades of trance ranging from overshadowing of a spirit upon my consciousness, to the full possession by a spirit during ritual and dance. The possession-trance is dubiously regarded in western occulture, just as allowing another man's cock inside them is anathema to many men. In many ways, allowing my psyche to be entered by a spirit (Goddess, God, or whatever) stirs the same feelings as being physically fucked. The key seems to be the conscious or willed displacement of the ego to another - of offering up my body as a vehicle for the transmission of energy. Crowley hinted of this in his essay on devotional magick (Bhakti Yoga), Liber Astarte (Magick, p460 - 471). The ultimate in Bhakti is being entered by the spirit one is working with. One Beltain, I drew the Goddess Eris down from above me and Pan from below me - they met somewhere in the middle and I lost consciousness in their climax.

Jean Genet suggests that a homosexual relationship "obliges" men to discover the 'feminine' elements within the psyche, but that it is not necessarily "the weaker or the younger, or the more gentle of the two, who succeeds the better; but the more experienced, who may be the stronger or the older man." (Querelle of Brest). There is an element of truth in this, but it is equally true that both partners may delight in allowing free rein to the feminine aspects of psyche, at the same, or at different times. Here I might as well discuss the magical concept of 'polarity', which in it's most simplistic form is the much-quoted

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which threaten, it seems, to tear my body apart when a lover is inside me. A lover's orgasm within me brings about a feeling of deep peace and satisfaction. I feel as though I have been revitalised, and can go forth into the world with an inner glow. I regret deeply, in these AIDS-conscious times, that I cannot receive into myself a lover's semen. Yet it is as though in abandoning myself to another, I reaffirm my sense of selfdom.

At the same moment that I abandon myself, I am also in a state of possession. This is more difficult to write about, but it is linked, I feel, to a common misperception about intercourse - the concept of 'active' and 'passive'. For myself, I prefer the words 'giver' and 'receiver'. Our miserable, patriarchal conditioning has given rise to the conception that 'active' = 'masculine' and 'passive' = 'feminine'. I have increasingly come to reject this sort of thinking. Just because one person (male or female) takes a lover's penis into their body, doesn't necessarily mean that they are automatically 'passive'. This is clearly illustrated into the Tantric icons of Shiva mounted by Kali. Societal conditioning is strong enough to make some Gay men feel that anyone who takes it up the arse is somehow less than 'male' because abandoning oneself to pleasure is not appropriate 'male' behaviour. Why not? Personally, I feel that being fucked is a celebration of my maleness. I hardly ever feel that I have relinquished my personal power to the other (unless of course there is role-play of 'surrender' as a sexual game).

I often feel a sense of power 'over' the lover who fucks me. His pleasure and ejaculation reaffirms my own inner power. Somewhere in his magical diaries, Aleister Crowley said something to the effect that he liked to think that "when a man fucks me, it is because I am beautiful". The exhaustive records of Crowley's sexual opera (such as *The Paris Working*) show that he much preferred to be the receiving partner when it came

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"Oh," said witch-woman, smiling, "I didn't think you were advanced enough to spot it." Now all that was weird enough, but what I really found freaky was that Kathy somehow knew what was going on, even at a distance of well over a hundred miles!

The final aspect of 'the magic of need' that I want to deal with is the personal crisis. A couple of years ago (1995) I had reached a 'turning point' in my magical direction, as it were. I didn't know quite what was happening, but I knew I wasn't happy in my current situation. The stress of trying to resolve the issue was winding me up something rotten. The situation was complicated by feelings of both personal, organizational and business-related loyalties which I felt would make it difficult to make 'a clean break.' This all peaked up one evening at a Seminar. Feeling sick and twisted up inside, I walked across the venue's grounds and found a tree well away from the main building, where a riotous party was going on. Sitting down, I began an impromptu puja and invoked 'Pasupati', the tantric deity who is the herdsman, one of whose functions is to remove 'that which binds'. I'd never worked with this god before, but emotional intensity (born out of overwhelming need) enabled me to achieve the appropriate state of bhakti, and I was stunned by a vision of Pasupati, blazing with white light, staring back at me. In retrospect, it was the white-hot intensity of this moment which allowed me to 'let go' of the bindings that I felt entangled in. The effect wasn't immediate of course, but that, for me marked the change-point.

This sort of experience is akin to the initiatory cycle - the 'zero point' where you cannot sink any lower, and so achieve a measure of calm resolve. A comment made by Lionel Snell comes to mind, that the darkest moments of depression often presage the heights of future magical flight. We tend to learn

the wisdom of this through hard experience, but again, it's something which tends to be omitted from magical textbooks.

You cannot set prescriptions for how to deal with this sort of thing. After, it's going to be different for each person, but I do find that reassurance from another magician is highly valuable - the ever-present spectre of madness dogs most of us from time to time, so a measure of understanding from a colleague is often very helpful. This sort of situation is one of the strongest arguments for having some kind of social contact with other magicians, if only to talk through feelings & situations which one finds difficult. There is magic enough in reaching out to another person, and feeling their warmth and support for you flowing back.

3

SODOMY AS SPIRITUAL FULFILMENT

I remember very well the first time I got fucked. Exhausted and relaxed after all-afternoon sex, I lay sprawled on my boyfriend's bed and uttered those fateful words "do anything you want with me". From the corner of my eye, I saw him pick up a glass bottle in the shape of a unicorn, filled with a yellowish liquid (sweet almond oil), and I knew what was about to happen. I had no fear, only a deep sense of relaxation. It didn't hurt, but at the moment of penetration, one self died and another was reborn. An 'initiation', certainly, and one that gave me insights which I will now attempt to collect into a coherent article.

What feelings does being fucked stir within me? Two words perhaps, describe them best - abandonment and possession. In being fucked, I am abandoning my ego-defences, opening myself at a deep level to another person, and able to cast aside the socially-crafted 'masks' I put on to deal with the world. I abandon myself to total pleasure, and to the pleasure of my lover. I cross back and forth between the borders of ecstasy and agony, until I am moaning and crying uncontrollably; soft liquid fire in my belly and a fierce tingling that seems most discernable at my fingertips. To date, I haven't had an orgasm from being fucked alone, but then, ejaculation and orgasm are two different experiences for me much of the time, and penile ejaculation seems unimportant, compared to the sensations



2 GODS

“As private parts we are to the gods, they play with us for their pleasure”.

Black Adder II

Basically, I have two ways of ‘working’ with goddesses & gods. I go to them, or they come to me. That sounds pretentious, doesn’t it? The first ‘way’ is easy to deal with. There’s something you require, and so you open a book of mythology, find the entity who seems to fit the bill, and construct your invocation or magical retirement around them. Alternatively, one might feel ‘drawn’ to a particular god or goddess, for no very specific reason. This is very much the standard western-magical approach to working with deities. You might for example, decide to work on invoking the God Mars in order to gain confidence, or increase your ‘martial’ prowess. Or, you might invoke Othinn in order that some of his guile might rub off on you, or Freyja, that she might fiddle with the multiverse to help you in getting your leg over. This sort of approach is easy to cut up into bite-size chunks. What it boils down to is that we ask gods to do things for us. And this in itself can be dodgy at times. For a start, it raises the issue of whether we believe that gods and goddesses might have their own agenda - their own views on what we’re asking them to do for us, or do we simply

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think of them as exaggerated ‘servants’ of our mighty magical wills? Do we simply ‘use’ the gods, or do we form ‘relationships’ with them?

The way in which one frames these issues might well depend on one’s ‘style’ of magick. New Agers and ‘hard-core’ Chaos Magicians might find some common ground in the view that Gods are just ‘masks’ of our multiple selves, momentarily elevated. A Wiccan might say that of course the gods are ‘real’, and find the very question of their ‘real-ness’ somewhat peculiar.

It’s easy to keep such questions simple whilst we only meet the gods in the ‘formalized’ setting or ritual, be it sabbat or ceremony. But what about when the gods intrude, unbidden and unexpected into our lives?

Usually, in this sort of situation, there is much invocation of Jung’s archetypes and the collective unconsciousness in order to ‘explain’ how someone suddenly makes a contact with a deity that they have no prior knowledge of, or interest in. In some circles, such an event is seen as ‘evidence’ of a calling. To some extent, this can be the case. I’ve known people who, after an unlooked-for ‘meeting’ with a particular deity, have declared themselves High Priests of Isis or Dagon and set off down the path of promulgating the mysteries and revelations that have been revealed to them. Which is all well and good, although there is often a tendency for such individuals to claim and expect ‘high status’ from all us lesser mortals who have not been so fortunate.

My own experiences of Goddesses & Gods just ‘turning up’ (usually in dreams) have been infrequent, and often confusing, particularly if my ‘conscious’ magical work is in an entirely different direction. I remember telling friends, somewhat bemusedly, about an intense and scary visitation from the Morrigan, who turned up during an acid-trip (I was watching

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about Kali or Isis, but it was a valuable experience nonetheless. Gods are full of surprises.

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Over the years I've come round to the view that if you are going to get involved with gods, then it's a good idea to give them your best in terms of performance. Why should a god turn up when you call when you haven't bothered to clean the carpet, make yourself look presentable, or even learn a suitable invocation? And should they deign to put in an appearance, how are they going to feel if half the people present react, as a colleague once put it, as "though they were being approached by a looney, whilst waiting for a bus" - nervously shuffling away from the 'horse'. Possession rituals are a performance - give your best and the gods will not only turn up again, but tell all their friends about you. This doesn't necessarily mean following a script, but that what you do, is done genuinely, from the heart. Such things, I find, go a long way with Gods.

In both *Prime Chaos & Condensed Chaos*, I have given some space to the issue of how we cleave towards particular gods & goddesses, as they tend to reflect and reinforce some aspects of our personality. Equally, its interesting to see how prejudices form around particular gods. Jehovah and Satan are probably good examples of two gods that many people would never consider entering into a 'relationship' with, yet I've learnt a lot from both of them. My own prejudices about which gods I was 'attracted to' was brought into focus sharply in '95. We did a group exercise where everyone discussed how we perceive each other and then the group selected a god or goddess for each person to work with over a period of months. I was given Thor. Now I was somewhat dismayed by this, having more-or-less gained the impression that Thor was a kind of lager-lout god of drinking, & fighting - not my cup of tea at all. Much to my surprise, I learnt a lot about Thor over the next six months or so, and found there was much more to him than I had thought, and that I was gaining from Thor in ways I hadn't considered before. Okay, I'll never feel the same way about Thor that I do

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"The Blues Brothers" at the time), and whose parting shot was "next time I'll have yer balls off." The consensus was more or less, "this is a sign to stop messing about with things with tentacles" and further, that I should get into the Celtic 'Mysteries'. Now nothing could have been further from my mind. Apart from liking some Celtic stories, and a vague wish that the current fad for all things Celtic might possibly extend to the gay scene and become a style fashion (muscular 'warriors' with limed hair, makeup, torcs and bulging loincloths - 'ahem'), I had no particular interest in Celtic magick. And the Morrigan's brief visit hadn't changed that. In fact, I had a strong feeling that 'setting me on the right path' wasn't the purpose of her visitation. No. She just popped up, did her thing, and buggered off again. This, and other experiences with deities from traditions I have no particular interest in, has led me to take the view that the gods are 'real' (more 'real' to me than some people) and, by trying to explain their doings in relation to us in terms of psychology or something similar actually devalues that experience. Consequently, I try and treat gods with respect.

Respect is something we need to be careful about. There is an inherent tendency for modern pagans to be terribly 'respectful' of their gods, in a way that is somewhat reminiscent of Christianity. After all, it's difficult to imagine Christians joking about Jehovah in the same way that the Nordic peoples told amusing stories about Loki getting one over on Thor. The idea that a God or Goddess is 'sacred', yet at the same time we can laugh about their doings is almost taboo in some modern pagan circles. Personally, I have always warmed to gods that like a good laugh - even if at times it is at our expense. Yet the myths of the gods resounds with the laughter of their ancient worshippers. It's difficult not to smile at the thought of Thor sitting in a dress, seething whilst Loki extolled the virtues of the 'bride' to the Giant groom.

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As I said, gods like a good laugh. I've been present at Wiccan Sabbats where the invoked goddess has not 'played by the rules' and entered the offered vessel of the High Priestess. No. She's bursting forth from the new novice in the corner, and it's going to be interesting to see how many of those present cotton on to this. Equally, I've seen chaos invocations where the limitations of the 'fake it 'til you make it' dictum have become painfully obvious to all present. Then again there have been rituals where the sense of 'presence' is so powerful, so overwhelming, that I'm left shaking, trembling, tears streaming down my face in awe. Gods are awe-ful.

Perhaps the 'hidden' face of working with Gods is that we allow them, nay, invite them to shake our souls. In reaching out to a god or goddess, no matter how much mythology we've ingested, we never know quite what *we're* going to get. Should we even expect gods to conform to our expectation? Some years ago, I did a ritual to Eris with my magical partner. We'd planned to close the ritual with 'the great rite' as it were. The invocations complete, I reached out to take 'my' priestess' hand to lead her to the bed, but Eris skewered me with such an icy gaze that my 'resolve' immediately shrivelled and the rite drew to a close somewhat differently. My overwhelming impression of what constitutes, for me, an 'effective' possession rite is when I start worrying about whether the deity we have brought in among us will actually depart when we ask them to. Like big dogs, swarms of bees and gorillas, gods require us to tread gingerly around them.

The issue of 'Divine Liaisons' is also somewhat thorny. The idea of mortals having sexual flings with gods is both present in the mythology and acknowledged, to varying degrees in contemporary magick & paganism. But again, it's hedged around with what are, sometimes unconscious, boundaries. The

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thought of man and woman becoming god and goddess and having a sacred bonk is more or less accepted by all. But the suggestion that men can 'take on' goddesses, and women become gods, is still a heresy in some circles, and even more so the idea that two gods, or two goddesses might want to get it on. The impious question of whether "Othinn ever took it up the arse" at a talk on the Northern Tradition (it wasn't me asking!) was met with great horror from some members of the audience. There is a tendency for us mortals to project our own taboos (and also our desires of course) onto Goddesses & Gods. I once heard a talk on 'active' and 'passive' gods, which basically went along the lines that it's permissible for Pan to be a 'top', but he should never be invoked if you're 'playing bottom'. A view which speaks volumes about attitudes to sexual expression. I find it interesting that in modern Bengal, the image of Kali sticking her tongue out is taken as a sign of her expressing her 'shame' about her 'unseemly behaviour' towards Shiva (i.e. insisting on climbing on top). Now I think I am right in stating that very few western devotees of Kali would accept this de-eroticised view of her. No matter how we try and re-create the 'ancient' rites of worship and invocation, we still relate to gods from a twentieth-century western perspective. (I certainly wouldn't attempt to devalue Kali - she'd come and kick my head in, for a start!) Yet there's a curious dichotomy in action. On the one hand, we can ignore the contemporary worship of a goddess, yet feel slightly uncomfortable with the idea that Hyacinth and Apollo could swop places or that Astarte might fancy a bit of rough occasionally. Do we allow Gods to move with the times? Do we ever consider that Pan might not feel like a fuck just because we do? (There's always a first time...).