

Magick and Hypnosis
(Annotated 1999 by the Author.)

by Carroll “Poke” Runyon, M.A.

Copyright 1977, 1999 by Carroll Runyon

(Note: This article first appeared in Llewellyn Publication’s
GNOSTICA, vol 5, no. 9, whole no. 45)

In this article the author takes the position that hypnosis is the operative technique of Ceremonial Magick. Visions of Spirits appearing in the Triangle of Art are actually archetypes evoked from the deep-mind via hypnotic induction. As a practicing magician specializing in these methods, he gives an insider’s perspective on how Magick really works.

I recently received a letter from a man who claimed to be an investigator of paranormal phenomena. After a few introductory remarks he came quickly to the point: “Can you demonstrate that the techniques you practice and teach are authentic and effective, not merely hypnotic and illusionary?”

My reply was somewhat blunt: “Ceremonial Magick is a valid art, not a pseudo-science,” I wrote. “Certainly its visions are hypnotic and they are no more illusionary than are Jungian Archetypes in the Collective Unconscious – which, in fact, is what they actually are. Their existence cannot be proved or disproved in a high-school physics lab.”

I posted my answer with a sense of satisfaction, but in the days that followed I began to realize there was a great deal more involved in this question than could be answered in one clever paragraph. The present occult revival has been underway for a decade, but there are still only a few people who actually practice ceremonial magick – and this situation persists in spite of hundreds of different books on the subject in constant circulation. Why? The reason is that many, if not most, of our modern occultists are just as naïve about the true nature of magick as was my correspondent. Ceremonial Magick is *ritual hypnosis*. As Dion Fortune put it: “Magick is the art of causing *changes in consciousness* to occur in accordance with the will” [emphasis mine]. The reason why so few people practice magick is not that there are so few students of the art -- there are thousands – but that only a few know the real secret. (1)

Granted, there are a number of magicians who will grudgingly concede this hypnotic definition, but in order to be a successful modern magus, I feel you should embrace the concept! By taking such a plunge you simultaneously improve your technique, confirm your results, confound your critics and make an honest person of yourself. Don’t worry about betraying some great tradition; magick was always hypnotic. Don’t worry about being “scientific”, scientists don’t know what hypnosis is, and most of them will admit that they don’t.

The Basic Business of the Magician:

If magick was always hypnotic and if the kabbalah always taught that the inner microcosmos was the key to personal transformation, then why, for the past hundred years, have we been skipping over, or completely ignoring, the fundamental principles of magick? Lost in a maze of quasi-masonic initiations, and quasi-Freudian sexual speculations, we have forgotten that the basic business of the magician is to command spirits (i.e. components of his personality). He summons them to visible appearance and then compels them to perform tasks for him – well, that’s what he used to do back in Renaissance times, but our more recent Victorian forbears of *The Golden Dawn* were not able to reconstruct the old method of magical evocation because they refused to accept its hypnotic basis. Certainly there is more to magick than evocation, but that is where it starts: in the magick mirror of *Yesod* with the ritual of the *Goetia* of the *Lemegeton*. (2.) This hypnotic system, if properly employed in the Jungian psychoanalytic process of individuation, can be a cornerstone of successful lodge work.

Before we discuss the characteristics of magical hypnosis, we need to look a little more deeply into the historical and philosophical reasons why this essential principle of the art has been overlooked and underrated.

The Victorian and Edwardian magicians were more reactionary and superstitious (relatively speaking) than their Renaissance counterparts. They bequeathed to us a legacy of quaint and whimsical ideas about magick. We still find ourselves grappling with their outdated conceptions of “secret chiefs” who come from an “astral world” that might as well be another planet. Hypnosis was a dirty word in this Victorian fairyland not because it was scientific, but because it was *subjective*. In this case the tendency to objectify magical phenomena is characteristic of philosophical dualism. It will be recalled that the dualist believes God to be separate from his creations, whereas the monist holds that God is present in all things. (For a more lengthy discussion of these ideas see my *Negative vs. Positive Gnosis* in *Gnostica*, No. 40) (3.)

The Kingdom of God is Within

At this point the romantic reader may be experiencing something of a let-down. Am I saying that angels, demons, Goddesses and Gods of old are only figments of the individual imagination? Certainly not! The Gods are real and their power is awesome. Hypnosis is the key to entering their kingdom, the *Olam Yetzirah*, or astral plane; but we must realize that this other dimension begins within ourselves, in our subconscious mind. If we go deep enough we venture beyond our own personal dreams into what Carl Jung called the “collective unconscious”, that vast realm where the archetypal Gods abide. (4.) Make no mistake about it, the *collective unconscious* is a reality that goes beyond anyone’s individual conception of it. It contains the entire history of the human race and probably the destiny of mankind as well. It is certainly linked to the *Anima Mundi*, the World-Soul-Earth-Goddess of the Renaissance magicians. I hold that its sensitivities extend throughout the solar system, and I suspect that it is intrinsically related to the DNA code. These ideas are philosophically monistic in

accordance with the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus and the doctrines of the kabbalah. (5.)

When the student fully grasps the significance of the collective unconscious in relation to the Hermetic kabbalah, he will not need to ask such questions as Carlos Casteneda put to Don Juan: “Did I really fly?” The objective vs. the subjective argument will no longer involve a value judgment, but only a matter of relative perception. This may be a difficult hurdle for some to leap, but the rewards are infinite. The dualist seeking objective phenomenon – e.g. photographable ghosts, apparitions formed from “ectoplasm” and the like – is constantly in danger of disillusionment. The more he tries to justify his beliefs, the more antirational he becomes. For him occultism is a long, down-hill slide away from the intellectual position – whereas, if properly pursued on monistic-subjective principles; the study and practice of magick should expand and extend the consciousness, thereby improving the intellect.

The reader might agree with most of what I have said, and yet still raise the question: ‘what about Aleister Crowley?’ Wasn’t he subjective in his approach to magick, and didn’t he practice the goetic thaumaturgy of the Lemegeton?

Yes, but even though Crowley wrote an excellent psychological introduction to Mathers’ translation of The Goetia, showing that he understood the subjective nature of the system, neither he or his mentor knew the operative technique. Crowley spent many weary hours trying to conjure a spirit to visible appearance in smoke over the Triangle of Art. Now smoke is probably the worst hypnotic focal point anyone could imagine, but a pretty good medium for an experiment in telekinesis; a totally objective process. (6.) If Crowley had realized that the system was hypnotic, he probably would have used a crystal or a dark mirror. With this proper equipment results would have been achieved within fifteen or twenty minutes of work. Why didn’t he realize this? Mathers’ ignorance of the hypnotic factor is easier to understand. He was a Quixotic medievalist who insisted on objectifying everything. He believed that the Key of Solomon was actually written by the Biblical monarch himself! However Crowley should have known better.. Even so, I think that three factors may have combined to keep Crowley from discovering the real secret of Renaissance ceremonial magick: first, the prevailing opinion of the time in the area of phenomenology ran to objective, pseudo-scientific causes such as the ectoplasm of the spiritualists; second, Crowley was a philosophical dualist which thrust him toward objectified conceptions even though he was less credulous than Mathers; and third, he was deeply into drugs. Such agents tend to activate their own unique effects, whereas ritual hypnosis is a more directed vehicle, through which the magician can produce a desired effect in accordance with his will.

What is Hypnosis?

What is hypnosis? Nobody really knows, but we do know several things about it. One thing we know: it isn’t *sleep*. In the physical (blood pressure, etc.) the hypnotic trance is more like the normal “awake” condition. Putting together several modern definitions of hypnosis, we can come up with something like this: *hypnosis is a state of heightened suggestibility in which the mind is totally centered on one idea to the*

exclusion of everything else, including sensory perceptions that are unwanted or distracting.

By this definition anyone who is really concentrating on something, like reading a book, or even watching television, may be said to be in a hypnotic trance. They certainly are. Gurdjieff went so far as to suggest that most people are hypnotized most of the time. To achieve their potential they had to become “de-hypnotized”. The point is that any routine task can become hypnotic. Here in southern California, for instance, we are all familiar with the freeway driving trance. There are also musical trances, dancing trances, etc. There may even be a general everyday living trance – as Gurdjieff intimated. These trances are different, and they have different levels of intensity, and sensory selection. If a person is deeply engrossed in a book he may not hear the phone ring, whereas if he is listening to the radio with “one ear”, he will hear the phone. Hypnosis is a normal and common condition. It is the unusual behavior associated with the deeper cataleptic and somnambulistic trances that seem strange and mysterious.

Hypnosis was known and used in ancient Egypt, where magician-priests officiated at “sleep temples” in which sufferers of various afflictions were cured by visitations of the Gods – most probably while the patients were in a somnambulistic trance. Egyptian magicians hypnotized animals such as lions and cobras. In India the occult hypnotist *first hypnotizes himself* before operating on his subject. This is a most magical approach and very effective. It seems unknown outside of esoteric circles.

From ancient times up into the 1840’s the phenomenon was thought to be the result of the manipulation and transmission of life force: a subtle substance called “spirit”, or in the East, “kundalini.” This concept is not as objective, or as simplistic, as it first appears. The great Renaissance magus Marsilio Ficino, theorized that the flow of spirit, by the rites of astrological magick, to improve the health and intellectual capabilities of the operator. (7.) Ficino did not extend his method to include the influencing of spirit in others – which would have been a dangerous in his time – but such a capability is implicit in his theory.

Many medieval and Renaissance magi solicited the intercession of angels and demons in what Daniel Walker calls “transitive operations” (for or against others), but before we assume that this practice was entirely dualistic and objectified, we should remember that these operators derived their philosophy from the Hermetic Holy Book known as *The Asclepius*, which plainly taught that angels, demons and gods of the earth sphere were originally creations of man himself! The magicians of the Renaissance knew very well that such entities were subjective. We might even call their magical pantheism a proto-Jungian archetype theory in its own right. They were also well aware of the powers of “fascination”, which they attributed to rays of “spirit directed from the eyes of the enchanter.” These magicians were monistic in their philosophy; subjective visions were as important as objective phenomenon. They can perhaps be criticized for not caring to differentiate between the two.

The crystal ball and the dark *speculum* (mirror) were their most important items of ritual equipment. Their use was linked to theories of celestial rays, planetary sympathies and the like, but the actual operations and the effects achieved were hypnotic. And yet, in

Victorian times, Arthur Edward Waite called such techniques “minor hypnotic processes.” How little he understood. (8.)

Mesmerism

This “spirit theory” in magick and hypnosis was revived in a different form 300 years after Ficino by the Viennese physician Franz Anton Mesmer. He called it “animal magnetism.” In “The Age of Reason” spirit could no longer be directed by the singing of Orphic hymns under the influence of appropriate planets. The 1780’s demanded a pseudo-scientific approach. Although Mesmer was a keen student of the Renaissance alchemist Paracelsus, and a believer in astrology – theorizing that the flow of magnetic fluid in the human body was effected by planetary positions – he succumbed to the 18th century’s passion for toot-whistle tinkering by having his subjects sit with their feet in tubs of water filled with iron filings and bundles of jointed iron rods. With a flair for the dramatic and, according to his critics, a penchant for hocus-pocus, Mesmer and his fellow magnetizers beguiled Europe for the next 50 years with their miracle cures and spectacular demonstrations of trance induction.

Mesmerism has been completely discredited by the medical profession and the scientific community – in my opinion undeservedly. Because of its importance in magick, we should pause in our brief chronology to take note of how it differs from modern concepts of hypnosis. The current popular notion, still hanging on from medical propaganda predating World War I, is that the hypnotist has no “power”. He guides a willing subject into a trance state and the “suggests” that the subject use his own powers to achieve whatever effect is wanted, *providing that effect is also desired by the subject himself.*

According to this conception, a snake hypnotizes a bird by first gaining the bird’s confidence. Next he asks the bird to relax completely. He then suggests to the bird that it actually wants to become the snake’s dinner. This ploy cannot possibly succeed because deep down inside the bird knows that it wants to fly away from the snake . . . And yet snakes have been hypnotizing and eating birds for a good many years. The rejoinder that “animals are different from humans” is not good enough. The point is that there is a big gray area where some of Mesmer’s ideas may still be valid. It is important to note that some psychologists who use hypnosis do not share such out-dated views on its limitations. Men like Dr. Milton Erickson will frankly admit that they don’t know what they do or how they do it. Many of Erickson’s colleagues refuse to shake hands with him out of a certain reluctance to experience his “hypnotic touch.”

I submit that there probably is a form of life energy that is capable of manipulation and even transmission. To totally discount the work of such sincere and qualified researchers as von Richenbach (odic force), Reich (orgone energy) and, more recently, Thelma Moss (Kirilian photography) and the bio-magneticists on this subtle form of energy would be frankly reactionary (an anathema in politics but a praiseworthy attitude in science).

The Mesmerists held that a magnetizer was a person of great energy with a talent for influencing others. He could accumulate and concentrate large quantities of energy in his body, projecting it from his eyes and his finger tips. His eyes could fascinate and his hands could

heal. The “passes” which the Mesmerist made over the subject with his hands were intended to manipulate the flow of energy within the patient’s body. We should note that Mesmer’s method involved what we would call *hysterical hypnosis*. He brought his patients to an emotional catharsis and sometimes into convulsions in order to clear away supposed blockages to the free circulation of “magnetic fluid” in their bodies. We are reminded of today’s “primal scream” therapy – a different rationale but a similar effect.

In modern magical Mesmerism such violent and imprecise methods of induction are no longer used. We have discovered that actual contact with the finger tips increases the effect and produces a trance state of tremendous potential. (9.)

The question still posed by Mesmerism is whether hypnosis is only suggestion operating on the *individual* nervous system, or if it also involves manipulation and transference of a form of energy. Science has not disproved this “fluid” theory in spite of all the rhetoric to the contrary. What it *did* prove is that hypnosis can be effectively induced by suggestion without any pretense of transferred power; but to conclude that this therefore proves hypnosis to be exclusively a product of suggestion within the closed system of the individual with no transitive factor involved is patently fallacious. You can prove that ducks fly, but you have no right to assume, as a consequence, that they don’t swim underwater.

To return to our chronology: there is no doubt that the Mesmerists were effective. They fascinated half of Europe but they infuriated the medical profession. Nothing bothers a doctor so much as a healer without a diploma. Even though Mesmer was an M.D., many of his successors were laymen. Although some were rank charlatans, others were operators of considerable ability. Today’s performing hypnotists are pale descendants of those wondrous magnetizers who could walk out on stage and knock people senseless with a mere glance or a wave of the hand.

In the early 1800’s Mesmerism had the scientific community between the proverbial rock and the hard spot. The Mesmerists were obviously doing *something* in accordance with some unknown natural law, but if their theory about the manipulation of life force were to be accepted, then the whole philosophical structure upon which science was based would have to be scrapped. The scientists had their own form of dualism, and the inevitable tendency toward objectification that accompanies it. In the 17th century the French rationalist philosopher Rene Descartes, had broken with the monistic conceptions of the Renaissance to propose that mind and body were totally separate. To carry it further, he postulated that the province of human intellect was separate from the realm of the physical universe. In higher philosophical circles this idea was never considered more than a conditional expedient (to facilitate the advancement of science and to counterbalance the obvious excesses of monism) but, on the engineering level, it became Holy Dogma. Today it is philosophically obsolete, but we still find many people in the physical sciences clinging to it. If you have ever wondered why certain spokesmen for American science sound very much like other spokesmen for American religion, you consider how much Cartesian dualism and Christian dualism have in common. In our field of hypnotism, this Cartesian myopia is responsible for the preposterous notion that hypnotic anesthesia is really *amnesia*; the patient feels the pain but forgets it !

The scientists and physicians of the early Victorian era, realizing that Mesmerism could not be ignored and could not be discredited as far as its actual effects were concerned, still found it impossible to accept on Cartesian terms. Somehow they had to have a compromise. In the 1840's a Scottish doctor, James Braid, provided it. He coined the modern term "hypnosis", and established the modern principles of hypnotic induction. Following the lead of the Abbe de Faria (1755-1819), who had been a critic of Mesmer's magnetic fluid theory, Braid declared that the motive agent in hypnosis was the imagination of the subject. No magnetic devices, hand passes or dynamic powers transmitted from the operator were necessary to achieve a hypnotic trance and its unique effects. Of course this was true, as Braid and others proved. We cannot say that they threw out the baby with the bath water when they cleaned up hypnosis, but we can say that Mesmerism is *a different form of hypnosis*, and that the two methods overlap each other. In this regard we should note that Estabrooks (1957) cites case of hypnotic subjects falling into hysterical convulsions similar to those Mesmer's magnetized patients experienced. I also think that there was an element of humbug in Mesmerism that needed chucking out: the water tubs, iron rods, etc.

Even though Braid and his followers went to opposite extremes, reducing the awesome secret of the ancients to the harmless status of a verbalized aspirin tablet, their new (?) form of therapy was, and still is, frowned upon by conservative doctors and scientists. No matter how harmless the hypnotist claims his method to be, he is initiating a *direct* influence of the mind over the body. This poses a threat to Cartesian dogma and elicits gut-level adverse reactions from a large segment of the scientific community even today.

Frankly, I am pleased that hypnosis is still not accepted as a "science". This is because it is *not* a science and trying to conceptualize it in journal-jargon terms is not going to make it one. Braid's "mono-ideism" and Van Pelt's (1957) more recent "units of mind power" are only labels for something no more understood in terms of physical science today than it was in 1840. **(10.)** However, there has been considerable progress in understanding hypnosis from a psychological standpoint.

Psychological Suggestibility or Circulation of "The Force"

Estabrooks points out that in Freudian terms hypnosis and auto-suggestion (self-hypnosis) tend to function like the early traumatic experiences in imprinting the subconscious mind. According to his theory, strong emotional experiences of a negative nature produce complexes and phobias in much the same way as post-hypnotic suggestion causes the subject to react to a forgotten (intentionally suppressed) stimulus in a manner he cannot explain. (E.g., "When I snap my fingers you will sing the National Anthem," vis-a-vis the person who goes into an hysterical fit at the sight of a harmless insect.) Estabrooks cites several analogies along this line. He likens the brain, in this instance, to a photographic plate on which emotional traumas and/or intense hypnotic suggestions make strong "over-exposed" impressions that do not fade out but continue to "flash" when activated by consciously perceived triggering stimuli. This ingenious theory helps to explain the apparent dichotomy between magick and

witchcraft: the ceremonialists stress measured hypnotic conjurations, whereas the witches favor the emotionally stimulating abandon of the circle dance – and yet both achieve similar results. This is because both methods imprint the subconscious mind with the desired impression, or release a specific suppressed component of the personality to be cathected or controlled.

If we accept Dr. Estabrooks' theory -- and I do, as far as it goes – then we must realize that magick and witchcraft are powerful psychodynamic systems, even in an exclusively subjective, phenomenologically conservative sense. The practice of 'the art' and 'the craft' is not as dangerous as our credulous Christian critics contend, but neither is it as frivolously dysfunctional as Cartesian pedants would suppose. We are the inheritors of a great ancient system of psychology perfected over thousands of years. It can bring much good and happiness to us and our associates or, like any of the major systems of knowledge, it can be misused with harmful effect. In magick and witchcraft, however, most malicious transitive operations tend to backfire because the would-be sorcerer does not understand the subjective nature of the art. **(11.)**

As valuable and important as the psychological aspects certainly are, let us not forget "the force". If you don't think it exists just remember the last time you were at a sporting event, or in any crowd of people where emotions ran high. You were caught up in the excitement as you never would have been sitting in front of a t.v. set. You were receiving an interchange of energy from the crowd; granted it may have been a secondary interchange via a synchronization of bio-rhythms, but it was a transitive link-up nonetheless. The negative side of this phenomenon is called "mob reaction", wherein otherwise peaceful citizens become violent in the midst of an angry crowd. The black magick nadir of this syndrome would be Hitler's Nuremberg rallies, with thousands of mindless stormtroopers shouting "Seig Heil!" Hitler first hypnotized his subjects, using the power of suggestion to open their subconscious minds and make them receptive; then he raised their emotions to an hysterical pitch, creating what can best be described as *mass-Mesmerism*.

Keeping the Nazis in mind, we would do well to consider the dangers of hypnosis and Mesmerism. People certainly can be hypnotized against their will, and not merely by deception as Estabrooks suggests. Hypnotized subjects have committed murders and other crimes. The use of hypnosis in intelligence operations is common, and such thrillers as *The Manchurian Candidate* are not as fanciful as they may seem. **(12.)**

In occultism we find the villain in the person of the unscrupulous hypnotist-guru who is always on the lookout for that one person in every dozen with the right combination of characteristics to make him or her the ideal victim: a natural capacity for somnambulism with a credulous attitude and a weak ego. **(13.)** One out of every five people can reach a somnambulistic trance state (the deepest level of hypnosis). This ability has nothing to do with intelligence or character, any more than having red hair does, but when combined with gullibility and an underdeveloped sense of identity, we have the psychological profile of the "true believer". These people are the natural prey of the occult Svengali. We can never fully protect them from such exploitation, any more than we can eliminate poverty or crime, but we can substantially reduce the prestige of the shady operators who prey on them by

establishing a genuine western mystical tradition with recognized standards.

Applying Hypnosis in Ritual Magick

Having established that magick is a hypnotic process and having examined the theories underlying that phenomenon, we are ready to consider practical application and technique. First you have to establish an understanding of the subjective-hypnotic nature of magick with your students and lodge members. I strongly advise against initiating anyone who refuses to accept this concept. In order to underline this point, I will admit to having made the mistake and finding out that there is no convincing such a person afterward to abandon his objective view. You will only succeed in convincing him that you are a poor magician because you are unable to make the floor burst open and spill forth the legions of Tartarus in cinemascope and stereophonic sound. In this case rely on a good preliminary screening test rather than informal questioning. In cocktail party chatter such a person may seem sophisticated, mentioning Jung and Crowley glibly, but then turn out to be a semi-literate barbarian in lodge. Be warned!

If you are fully honest about the hypnotic nature of magick, you cannot avoid ethical considerations. All conjurations, path-working scenarios, and invocations should be known and standardized. The more traditional they are the better. Everyone operates and everyone receives in turn. There must be a cadre of adepts, but their job is to teach others to be operators. As such they should operate only with members on their own level, or for instructive purposes. In ceremonial magick everyone should have their turn at taking every role in temple rites, seasonal ceremonies, and initiations; otherwise a magical lodge becomes a "cult" in the worst sense of the word. **(14.)**

There is as much self-hypnosis (auto-suggestion) involved in magick as that directly induced by an operator: in fact self-hypnosis may be considered the practical key to developing the magical trance state. The Order of the Temple of Astarte (O.T.A.) insists that neophytes master self-hypnosis as soon as possible. We recommend Leslie M. LeCron's *Self-Hypnotism: The Technique and Its Use in Daily Living* as a basic text. Frankly, no one has any business participating in a magical operation (with the exception of seasonal ceremonies) who is not capable of putting himself into a trance state and maintaining it. It is this ability, which can be acquired only through training and practice, that enables the magician to carry out the complex maneuvers required in a formal operation, and still be able to hold his trance. He can quickly deepen the state, or bring himself up to near normal consciousness when necessary. The reader may be thinking that yoga students and Zen sitters can also do this, but I would not agree. Their trance states are closely associated with sedentary *asana* positions, and induction of the trance is less controlled and direct. It is, in fact, a by-product of the meditation rather than the principle effect.

I do not mean to imply that yoga techniques are not important in magick, or that yoga and magical hypnosis are not interrelated. One of the first techniques the magical student has to learn is the practice of "tratakam", the "fixed gaze". This is a hypnotic facet of yoga meditation wherein the student develops the ability to stare at a fixed point, or symbol, for long periods of time without blinking or letting

the eyes change focus. This ability is absolutely essential to future Almadel and Goetia operations.

A noted anthropologist once wrote that shamans could be recognized by their agitated manner and shifty glance. If he applied this to magicians, he could not have been more wrong. A magician looks right through you and never blinks. No one can stare him down except another magician.

Before going any further we should dispel the idea that magical hypnosis implies a similarity to the post-hypnotic demonstrations of stage hypnotism. If that concept applied, an operator could hypnotize his subjects and then instruct them – as in the analogy of the fellow singing the National Anthem – to see a spirit in the Triangle when he says the “key word”, *Tetragrammaton!* Granted, such a procedure would probably work, and might have some value in an experimental sense, but it is not the way the Art is practiced. It would be a gimmicky approach at best, and at worst, it would raise serious ethical questions.

What I am saying is that ritual magick is a type of hypnosis in its own right. It has been my observation, having operated, received, and otherwise assisted in several hundred such ceremonies, that the magical trance state is unique. In clinical hypnosis it is supposed that a somnambulistic state is necessary for visions to be seen and voices to be heard by a hypnotized subject. In Goetia evocation, however, a trained ritualist-receiver can quickly drop from a light (hypnoidal) trance down into a receptive mood where he can appreciate the manifestation of an entity in a *speculum*, communicate with it, allow it to speak through him; and also answer an operator’s questions in his own persona. His own remarks will be interspersed with the entity’s comments (depending upon whom the operator addresses: the receiver or the entity) – and the ritualist can do all this while standing up as an active participant in a group ceremony. It is important to note that such rituals do not depend on the use of drugs or hysterical dancing preliminary to the experience.

Before any magical working is undertaken, there should be a period of “preliminary meditation”. This is also a hypnotic proceeding, usually led by the operator for the coming operation. It is best done outside the temple in an ante chamber with a suitable atmosphere and dim lighting. In the O.T.A. we like to sit in a circle around a candle set upon an appropriate mandala. We hold hands and establish a rhythmic breathing pattern in unison; then the magus leads us into a reverie wherein we absorb the imagined light of the kabbalistic *sephira* (sphere or psychic center) in which we will be working. **(15.)** When this experience reaches its peak, we rise and move into the temple, maintaining our “set”, or trance. This preliminary meditation serves several purposes: it acts as a vital transition stage between the mundane world and the sacred dimension of the inner sanctum within the temple, and, in a temporal sense, it leads smoothly from real time into dream time. It reestablishes what we think of as “the group mind” of the lodge. In this respect it may be said to be Mesmeric, in that an exchange of energy is initiated and power is raised.

Magical Operations

As most readers know, there are three basic types of magical operations: *evocation*, wherein the operator calls forth the spirit from

his, or his receiver's, subconscious; *invocation*, wherein a supernal power is called down to in-dwell in the subconscious; and inner-plane projection (path working, soul-travel, etc.) wherein a journey is made into the realms of the subconscious – in this case the *collective unconscious*. Healing, the building of telematic images, the charging of talismans, and even divination are variations on these basic themes. The grand operations may be said to be directly hypnotic, whereas the lesser workings tend to be post-hypnotic.

Of these “grand operations”, magical path working is the most overtly hypnotic in its induction technique. Here the operator induces a trance in much the same way as a doctor would hypnotize a patient in his office. The path-workers lie on the floor of the temple, with their heads on pillows, in the center of the magick circle. They look up at a symbolic focal point overhead while they are told to “relax” and make themselves “comfortable”. Once their heavy eyelids close in hypnotic “sleep”, the operator conducts them, via a descriptive narration, on a tour to the *sephira* of the kabbalistic *Tree of Life*, along one of the subjective paths leading from *Malkuth* upward. The traditional symbolism of these paths and spheres is set forth in Gareth Knight's *A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism* (1965), (16.) but remember, this is a reference book, not a manual on path-working. For an example of a path-working scenario you may consult the same author's *New Dimensions Red Book* (edited by Basil Wilby, 1968). The method is to create a consistent, realistic fantasy land which will include all the symbolism we wish to encounter ---something like visiting Alice's Wonderland. One of the most common mistakes made by would-be operators who have written their own scenarios is to take us all along the path, showing us everything, as; as if we were on a ride at Disneyland. This amounts to little more than an entertainment and really can't compete with a good movie.

The purpose of working a path is to learn more about it and yourself, that will bring something up from your subconscious that will help you along the road to individuation. The way we do this in the O.T.A.'s path-working system is to establish “attention points”. (17.) These attention points are situations, objects, or entities that we are instructed to question individually and privately, or otherwise comprehend. We are told to remember the special knowledge we have received. Later, in the critique which always follows any magical operation, we are asked to recount what we have experienced. Some of these revelations are remarkable and often confirm our contention that the collective unconscious is truly a transpersonal dimension.

As long as we stick to traditional symbolism in path working we are towing the mark in the ethics department, but if we venture off into realms of our own capricious devising, taking our hypnotized lodge members along with us as we explore the dark regions of our own subconscious, we are abusing their trust and exposing them to unpredictable dangers. Avoid the magus who has created his own revealed system for it will inevitably reflect the particular imbalances of his own personality. There is a more subtle danger which may be encountered even in traditional working. The operator himself is in a light state of trance (as he would be in any magical operation) and is subject to impromptu visionary experiences. He should not involve his group in such a phenomenon and should banish it, or extricate himself, as quickly and quietly as possible. If the scenario is properly written and rehearsed this should not be too much of a problem.

Always remember in magick that the general laws of hypnosis apply. Keep your narration simple and carefully sequenced so that you will not prematurely evoke a vision that you will contradict with a subsequent description. For example Denning and Phillips published a path working script which contained the following passage: “Some little distance ahead of us stands a solitary arch, built of flints by men in some past age. The keystone of this arch is of pale granite, sparkling with myriad points of transient white fire; and carved deeply into this keystone is an emblem, the curling horns of a ram.”

This is beautiful symbolism, written in a fine literary style, but as a hypnotic scenario, it is improperly sequenced and confusing. As soon as the operator says: “Some distance ahead of us stands a solitary arch. . .”, his subjects are quickly constructing arches – gothic arches, classic arches, megalithic arches – all of which will have to be torn down and rebuilt as the description continues. I don’t think we have to belabor this point. Romantic poetry and elegant prose are excellent mediums for evoking images in the light level of the reading trance, but when we go down into somnambulistic depths, we have to keep our instructions simple and direct.

Thus far we have discussed hypnotic techniques in relation to *tratakam*, evocation, preliminary meditation and path working. It remains for us to consider invocation. This type of work is usually done on the double-cube altar in the center of the great circle with a crystal orb as a focal point. In our *Lemegeton* system we derive invocational rituals from the book *Almadel*. In the interest of maximum participation, we favor a round-robin sequence of invocations. Each member of the circle recites his or her own rendition of the invocation. With trained magicians this group-working actually intensifies the result; even though there is a teeter-totter effect in the trance depth as each one rises from passive to active participation in turn. This should underline the necessity of hypnotic training. **(18.)**

In this article I have taken off my magician’s cloak and talked to you the reader in as straightforward a manner as I can about a subject very few people understand. Of those who are more than casually interested, some can never be enlightened because, quite frankly, they don’t want to be. I am not concerned with them, except to put them on notice that we are going to make our high art of magick into a cultural expression we can be proud of, and if they try to impede us in this process, we will not hesitate to discredit them – And yet there is a danger in too much disembling. We can become so intellectual and sophisticated that we lose our sense of wonder, dimming the light of intuition that leads us on. I hope that I have at least hinted at the philosophical key to avoiding such a trap: the grand Hermetic monism of the Renaissance magi. If we emulate them in audacity, vision and style, we shall surely delight children of all ages – especially the child that dwells within us: our subconscious.

We should establish canons of magick in terms of kabbalistic philosophy, Jungian psychology and hypnotic practice – for these are the three pillars upon which the art stands today. We need to develop magick as the bright, cutting edge of a new romantic movement to rejuvenate our culture. There is no place in such a sublime endeavor for the charlatan or the mystic demagogue. Magick should develop the ego and the willpower of each individual who practices it. Becoming devotees of a “guru” may be a valid Eastern practice, but it is the antithesis of the Great Work here in the West. If hypnosis is our operative method, then we must insist on the highest standards of

integrity in magical practice. The power is awesome and the reward is as infinite as man may conceive – for whatsoever he envisions usually come to pass.

--0--

End Notes: Magick and Hypnosis

- (1.) In the intervening 20 years since this article first appeared this situation has not improved as much as we had hoped. I am left to assume that those who make the marketing decisions at the occult publishing houses have determined that “hypnosis” is a negative selling point with an essentially credulous customer base. But we are slowly gaining ground. My colleague, Philip H. Faber has written a fascinating paper on the subject, *Hypnosis and Ritual Magick* for *Paradigm Magazine*. This can be accessed on Faber’s website: <http://members.aol.com/discord23/hypno.htm>
- (2.) This is correct in a kabbalistic sense, *Yesod* being the gateway to the *Yetzirah*, or formative, dimension. However, from a standpoint of actual practice, we require the student to invoke the four Archangels of the quarters, as protective and balancing psychic components, before undertaking *Goetic* evocation. (See *The Book of Solomon’s Magick* and our video, *The Magick of Solomon*.)
- (3.) A currently annotated version of *Negative vs. Positive Gnosis* will be posted on our web site at some future date. In the meantime a reprint of this paper is available from C.H.S. Publications for \$2.00 postpaid.
- (4.) In recent years a counter-reaction against Carl Jung’s ideas has become fashionable. A dirt-digging biography by Frank McLynn attempts to discredit Jung’s position in the history of Western Ideas based on his extramarital adventures (which pale to insignificance in comparison to Bill Clinton’s). A former Jungian admirer, and avid promoter of Jungian ideas, Richard Noll, experienced a sudden change of heart (not uncommon among cult devotees) and wrote two books scathing the life and work of his mentor with yellow-journalistic fervor. Both these authors have capitalized on the unfortunate fact that Carl Jung, like Pope Pious, did not lie down across the tracks of an on-rushing Nazi train before and during World War II. (For an extensive, and corrective, critique of these anti-Jungian works see Robin Robertson’s review in *Gnosis magazine*, Winter 1998. For a clearer perspective on Jung and his ideas see *The Undiscovered Self* and *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*.)
- (5.) The biologist Rupert Sheldrake (1981) has stirred the ant-hill of “mechanistic biological dogma” with his revolutionary “Morphic Resonance Theory”. At the risk of a vast over-simplification, let us say that Sheldrake purposes something similar to Eliphas Levi’s idea of “The Astral Light” in which all things, and life processes are recorded. This dovetails with Platonic, Neoplatonic and kabbalistic conceptions of pre-forms on a higher plane of emanation (the *Olam Yetzirah*). Sheldrake is sympathetic to Jung’s Collective Unconscious theory, but he disagrees with Jung that its components are necessarily inherited. This “Morphogenic Field” is not thought to be an energy-driven process, but rather an imprint, or template, which exerts its influence throughout the universe, and can be accessed via the deep-mind. (See *A New Science of Life*, by Rupert Sheldrake, 1981.)

- (6.) Fifty years previous to this, Eliphas Levi (whom Crowley claimed as a previous incarnation) attempted a similar experiment to summon the shade of Apolonius of Tyana. Quite properly he used a mirror as a conjuration device, but he mistakenly thought that smoke on the altar would provide a substance for the spirit to use in building a visible form. He was successful, at least in the visualization, but banished before attempting communication. Today we use smoke before the dark mirror as an olfactory correspondence, and a mood enhancer. Concentration stays on the mirror, not the smoke.
- (7.) A comparison to Taoist theories of “Qi” (Chi) come to mind. The manipulation of this life-force energy through the body via meditation and acupuncture techniques is now widely known, but such practices were not known to Europeans until the 20th Century.
- (8.) This statement needs some clarification. Actually Waite was aware of the hypnotic nature of magical visions and said as much. What he did not understand was the importance of dark mirrors and crystals as hypnotic conjuration devices (see *The Book of Black Magic & of Pacts*).
- (9.) In this case I am referring to the O.T.A.’s “Assumption of God/Goddess Form” method of conjuration in which the receiver lies under a dark mirror while being lightly massaged by the operator and his assistants. For a detailed description of this procedure see Chapter Ten of *The Book of Solomon’s Magick* by this writer.
- (10.) However, there has been considerable research on trance states (Alpha, Beta, Theta, etc.) and sleep-state REM (rapid eye movement) receptivity, etc. – along with the bio-feedback system developments and the new *Nuero-Linguistics* discipline – but all this work, as valuable as it may be, merely refines our ability to employ a phenomenon we still don’t understand.
- (11.) This is especially true if the operator uses our facial reflection/distortion dark mirror method of spirit evocation (see *The Book of Solomon’s Magick*). The reason is implicit in the microcosom/macrocosome Hermetic model of the human psyche. We are all differing reflections of the same primordial Adam (or Eve) and lightning will strike the nearest target. From a strictly psychological point of view we can surmise that ordering a reflected aspect of yourself, no matter how distorted, to reach out and hurt another person would result in related collateral damage closer to home.
- (12.) This statement needs to be carefully qualified. The idea, popular in the 1950’s, that “any one can be broken and re-programmed via *brainwashing*” – which derived from Pavlov’s stimulus-response experiments in Russia, and B. F. Skinner’s *Behaviorism* in the U.S. -- came in for a sound drubbing by structural linguist Noam Chomsky. Chomsky demolished Skinner’s theory that the brain was a blank slate at birth, and that all human knowledge acquisition was stimulus-response driven. He proved that there was an innate structure for grammar born in all of us. Brainwashing of the North Korean *Pak’s Palace* (Manchurian Candidate) variety will only work with *borderline personality* subjects, and it is no more reliable than the borderline personalities themselves (who, by the nature of their condition, are subject to sudden “snapping”, or reversal of affections, commitments, etc.) Although no longer considered practical for “black covert

operations”, brainwashing is still dangerous in the hands of cult leaders who seek out borderline personalities. Cult mass-suicides are a grim testimonial to the legacy of Pavlov and Skinner. However, Chomsky did not escape from spawning a new and more subtle form of mind-manipulation which is not limited to special personalities. Today Brainwashing has given way to the far more pervasive (or if you prefer: insidious) *Nuerolinguistics*.

- (13.) I am not aware of any studies suggesting a link between natural somnambulism and borderline personality syndrome, and I am not suggesting that such a connection exists.
- (14.) The most pointed example of this one-sided Svengalism, was a student of mine who absolutely refused to enter a trance state himself, but was most eager to use our dark mirror Goetia technique to beguile others (especially young women). In 1972 he left the O.T.A., and went on to establish a reputation as a sorcerer-at-large. Since that time several of his students have found their way back to the original fount of his knowledge.
- (15.) The O.T.A. was the first (1977) Western occult lodge to adopt its own fully functional kabbalistic ten-sphere vertical chakra system. This essential aspect of high magick, so important to Eastern practice, had been denied to European practitioners as a result of their obsession to objectify and concretize spiritual realities. How the Tibetans must have pitied us! They have a different chakra system for each tantric entity. For a brief description of the O.T.A. “Hermetic Caduceus”, see *The Book of Solomon’s Magick*, Chapter Nine.
- (16.) When we say “traditional” we mean “Golden Dawn” traditional. Although based on a Rabbinical structure, the 19th century G.D. system incorporates Tarot symbolism, and Pagan mythological archetypes. It has become standard for most students of Western magick.
- (17.) The O.T.A. system was inspired by the soul-travel methods of *Sikh-Sant* guru Kerpul Singh (also the mentor of Paul Twitchell who developed *Ekankar*.) We kabbalized the “attention point” path-working method. With a monist philosophy and a subjective approach, Eastern magical methods translate easily and effectively into Western practice in most cases.
- (18.) In angelic Almadel operations it is not necessary to actually “see” a personage or symbolic vision in the crystal. A radiant “glory” on the altar top and a “sense of spiritual presence” is followed by channeling (the entity speaking through the receiver), or subjective “knowings” that may be profoundly moving. See *The Book of Solomon’s Magick* for a more detailed description

Bibliography:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Braid, James | <i>Braid on Hypnotism</i> , edited by A. E. Waite, The Julian Press, New York, 1960. |
| Estabrooks, George H. | <i>Hypnotism</i> , E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1957. |
| Goleman, Daniel | <i>Hypnosis Comes of Age</i> and <i>Secrets of a Modern Master</i> from: <i>Psychology Today</i> , vol. 11, no. 2 |

July 1977.

- LeCron, Leslie M. *Self-Hypnotism: the Technique and Its Use in Daily Living*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1957
(Currently available from Signet Books in p.b.)
- Runyon, Carroll "Poke" *The Book of Solomon's Magick*, C.H.S. Publications, Silverado, CA 1996
- Negative vs. Positive Gnosis*, *Gnostica*, vol. 5no. 4, whole no. 40, Llewellyn, St. Paul, 1976
(C.H.S. reprint 1996)
- Sheldrake, Rupert *A New Science of Life*, Park Street Press, Rochester, Vermont, 1981
- Van Pelt, S. J. ,et al. *Medical Hypnosis Handbook*, Wilshire Book Co., Hollywood, CA 1957
- Waite, Arthur Edward *The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts* DeLaurence, Chicago, 1910.
- Walker, Daniel P. *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, Notre Dame Press, London University, 1975
- Wilby, Basil (Gareth Knight) *A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism*, 2 vols. Helios, London 1965
- New Dimensions Red Book*, Helios, London 1968