

# STIRRING THE CAULDRON OF CHAOS

by Phil Hine

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 discernible 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 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 hardline 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 hardline chaoist is likely to deplore his mystical writing. Of course, one might also consider the view

that Crowley was a piss-poor magician but a superb mystic. But enough of mysticism. For now, anyway.

## 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. 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?

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 al), 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?

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 waking up in the same bed together. What is marvellous about this experience, as I expect most C.I 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.

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.

Every 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 of altered perception (sometimes described by, yes, Mystics as Samadhi) 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 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 magician's 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 unquestionable. 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.

#### PLAYING WITH CHAOS

The Chaos approach to Magick has reversed the general view that magical abilities are merely the



byproducts 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 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 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 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.

## THE PARADIGMS OF CHAOS

by Fra. Enki .272.



In *Liber Kaos*, Pete Carroll uses the term 'paradigm' in the sense of a belief system, suggesting three major paradigms - magick, materialism and transcendentalism. He suggests that shifts between these paradigms can be observed in history, the most recent being the displacement of transcendentalism by materialism as dominant paradigm. The next paradigm shift will require the displacement of materialism by magick.

The term 'paradigm' has another context, that of science. Thomas Kuhn (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*), used it in a more limited sense, to describe the consensual framework within which a group of specialist scientists work: a mix of theories, observation, experiments and discussions. This pattern of normal science is broken, however, when a paradigm undergoes a crisis. The existing paradigm is no longer able to incorporate new information, its coherence decays.

This leads to a period of revolutionary science, during which a new paradigm emerges to replace the old. This occurred dramatically in September 1926, when physicists Bohr, Heisenberg and Schrödinger met in Copenhagen to discuss the proper interpretation of Quantum Theory. The debate raged for days, Schrödinger fell ill, Bohr and Heisenberg despaired.