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by Margaret Bruce

There are a million ways of using the Mind. Civilized man knows only one. This is the narrow and extremely limited system of Logic which reached its zenith in the lifetime of Plato and which now permeates every educational scheme of the present day. For this reason, Magick, apart from its intuitional and spasmodic use amongst a very few individuals - not many of whom are associated with any of the accepted forms of occultism - is a lost art.

To explain. Magick depends for practical results, not upon a knowledge of ritual, qabalistic jargon, spells, charms or mantram, but upon the ability to break through the barriers of logical thinking. In other words you can make practical use of Magick without the slightest knowledge of occult theory. On the other hand the most erudite professor of arcane philosophy is merely indulging in a monumental exercise in self-delusion unless he has first mastered the art of Magickal thinking.

This does not mean that Magickal thinking is in any way opposed to the intellectual approach. The two kinds of thought are complementary. Magickal thought alone can degenerate into the kind of meditation and contemplation that one associates with the purely escapist type of pseudo-occultism so popular today. Intellectual thinking on its own is excellent for coping with the purely mechanical problems of life. Its disadvantages are that it discourages the use of creative imagination and tends to retard progress that is not along plainly foreseeable lines.

Much easier to follow than explanations are examples of Magickal thinking. One of the best known examples is the case of the Gordian Knot. Everyone who attempted to unfasten it failed because they approached the problem with the intellectual attitude that the opposite of "tying a knot" is "untying a knot". Of course we all know that Alexander the Great solved the problem in a trice by cutting the knot with a blow of his sword! "Cheat!" cry the intellectuals. But of course all Magickal thinking appears like cheating to the logical thinker who is emotionally and mentally caged in by the imaginary rules of the game. This reaction is itself proof of the validity of Magickal thought which is so alien to ordinary men that it always appears to be breaking the rules. The other reaction to examples of this kind is "Well it is so obvious and simple that anyone could do it!" The answer is that it took Alexander the Great to think of it while all the people to whom it later seemed so obvious and simple had failed completely.

This element of cheating and breaking the rules is the hall-mark of a certain type of Magickal thinking and it is the basis of many of the old folk-songs and rhymes which set a riddle. These riddles were a test of the ability to think in Magickal terms and were often used in the training of neophytes in systems of practical Magick. The journey of the soul through the Underworld as described in the various recensions of the "Book of the Dead" consists of a whole series of riddles which the deceased must answer before he is able to continue his journey. The Mediaeval song so recently revived sets the riddle of the "cherry without a stone" (when it is a blossom) "A chicken without a bone" (when it is an egg), and is fairly typical of the rhyming riddles used to test the

suitability of young people for initiation into the truly arcane mysteries. Zen Buddhism makes use of riddles which have alternative answers as varied as the personalities of the neophytes who try to solve them. All the traditional riddles have one thing in common. They can only be answered by disregarding the imaginary barriers of logic and reason.

Although magickal thinking can, in this form, be regarded as a childrens' game, it is when it is combined with logical thought that it becomes a potent instrument for good or evil. To see how this works we must also take a look at intellectual thinking. This is the type of thinking responsible for breaking up human experience into classifications and divides complex ideas into small familiar patterns. A typically intellectual statement might go something like this :- "The Bee consists of Head, Thorax & Abdomen." or "Green is a colour." The intellectual accepts these sentences as statements of fact and fails to see that they are merely words which express totally false ideas. You may remember that, in a previous article, I mentioned how the intellectual assumes that, because a word exists, there must be a reality which the word describes. The magician knows that The Bee does not consist of Head, Thorax and Abdomen although the intellectual finds it convenient to imagine it being thus made up. Head, Thorax and Abdomen are just the names given to units which exist only in the mind of the observer. It is just as reasonable to describe a piece of string as "a middle bit and two ends." Likewise, the magickal thinker knows that green is not a colour but is a stage in the dynamic process of yellow changing to blue or vice versa. The intellectual cuts life up into tiny familiar static pieces and pins them on to a piece of white cardboard. Because he cannot follow the idea of a reality which is constantly changing he prefers to cling to delusions which give an impression of permanency.

It is this anxiety to cling to a fixed pattern that makes the intellectual thinker a victim of his environment and of a few unscrupulous people who have picked up the knack of dabbling along the shores of Magickal thinking. The intellectual lives and thinks to an established pattern. Even when he thinks he is being original and makes a conscious effort to break the pattern, his movements and reactions are as predictable as ever. It is this obvious predictability that provides confidence tricksters with a plentiful supply of victims. Advertising experts know precisely how to obtain a positive reaction from the majority of people because every individual who has succumbed to the conditioning techniques of educationalists, propagandists and the moulders of environment will react in the same way to the same basic stimulus. The exceptions are the few who have either escaped the conditioning influences of our society or who have mastered the art of Magickal thinking. Even the "drop-outs" and eccentrics have a better defence against exploitation than the average intellectual because they do not run true to form and create problems for the statisticians, market researchers and bureaucrats. Nothing frustrates and angers the professional exploiter of humanity more than the man or woman who does not react according to the book. Turning the other cheek and loving thy enemy can be regarded as sound practical advice for anyone who believes in Magickal thinking.

Because the Magickal thinker does not work to a pre-determined pattern it protects him, not only from the designs of brainwashers and

propagandists but also from the dishonesty of his fellow citizens. Magickal thinkers, because they are always first in the field with any really striking ideas, are followed by a bevy of third rate plagiarists who, although they are capable of recognising worthwhile ideas, have neither the wit nor the simple honesty to devise their own. Following the track of Magick however is like hunting the Jack O'Lantern of the marshlands. The hunter is left, in the words of the poet "stealing and cheating, a year and a half behind".

Now I have explained in previous articles how one can develop the art of Magickal thinking by taking up a wide variety of practical studies in simple arts and crafts. This enables one to become familiar with the feel and behaviour of basic materials and gives one a new perspective. The simplicity of this first essential step is what protects Magickal thinking from abuse. It looks and sounds so ridiculously simple that no reasonable person would even bother to try it. Magicians are not "reasonable" and, like Alexander the Great, have a great respect for the simple solution. Creative and aimless play for its own sake is one of the most valuable forms of Magickal education. Mud pies, soap bubbles, basketwork and pottery are all gateways to Magick. The point is that one must have either no aim at all or else an impossible aim. Alchemists brought this empirical art to near perfection when they sent seekers in search of the Elixir Vitae or the secret of transmutation. The alchemical techniques resulted in a host of discoveries which were of more immediate importance than the twin delusions of The Water of Life and the Philosopher's Stone. It has taken modern scientists to salvage the gold from the dross and to prove the reality of the Akasa as manifested in the Genetic Code. In other words, the last people to discover Magick, will be the self-styled "adepts" who surround themselves with the dead symbols of obsolete superstitions. The real Magick which enables man to walk with the Gods is being wielded by hard-headed and utterly practical people who have the intelligence to recognise the occult significance of apparently ordinary things. This is why I continue to stress the importance of becoming familiar with the mundane world before venturing into the doubtful realm of "Spiritual Exercises". I am constantly encountering people who claim to have developed a sixth sense when it is pathetically obvious that they are not even capable of using the first five. Nobody - but nobody, who has not first explored his material environment to the full and learned to use the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste intelligently can hope to make full use of the art of Magick Thinking.

As I have said before, a feature of Magickal thinking is that it does not pursue the obvious course. Our Educational system conditions young people into becoming utterly dependent upon outside authority. The first step in Magickal Thinking is to cease depending upon anything but your own intelligence. For some people this will be impossible. For most it will be difficult. For a magician it is essential. The first piece of Magickal awareness therefore is that your only teacher is, in the words of the best grimoires, your Holy Guardian Angel. So you commence by breaking the barrier of logical thinking. The logical thinker will of course look for a Grand Master, a guru, an "adept" or a school of occultism. Some of them even pay uninvited calls on myself in the hope of learning something. These

are all ways of passing the time but none of these paths lead to Magick. I repeat, your only teacher is within yourself. It is when you have accepted this idea that you will learn to recognise the real outside sources of Magickal knowledge. Surprisingly few will have anything at all to do with the accepted ideas of occultism.

This breaking of the logic barrier applies to a lot of minor activities and you can put it into practice even without having a serious interest in the system itself. Take any small problem that seems to have no obvious solution. The logical approach is to think around the problem and never to stray far from the idea itself. The magickal thinker moves right away from the problem in search of the solution. For example. You are short of money for some special purpose. The logical thing is to brood over the matter whilst economising, saving and putting in extra working hours. The Magickal solution is to forget the idea and then to either perform some small free service or else to give something away. Events will start moving in a direction that either brings in the required money or else produces the thing that you wanted to spend the money on. The whole secret is never to visualise a particular manner of fulfilment because this limits Magick to the obvious and logical outcome which, in this instance, would be failure. The accent is always upon looking away from the problem instead of plugging away at the most promising line of action. Occasionally one comes up with a bonus in the way of solutions to other long-forgotten problems and a great part of the knack is in learning to recognise when a solution has been reached. Ordinary logical thinking is then brought into play to test the validity of a magickal conclusion.

Most of the really useful discoveries in the world of science have been the result of quite unconscious Magickal Thinking. The development of Penicillin was the useful result of an unpromising series of experiments. The art of distillation was a magickal by-product of the deluded search for Alchemists' Gold. Fire-proof oven ware is one of the few practical results of space research. These discoveries are not "coincidence" nor yet mere by-products but the real underlying Magickal purpose of the apparently obvious aim. The scientists themselves did not realise the real purpose of their work and are therefore unable to accept any explanation for such discoveries other than the label "coincidence".

The Magician must know the real reason for any of his ventures into the field of Magickal thinking. If he has made use of the "Talismans of Knowledge" (knowledge of his own inner motives) he will have no difficulty here. On the other hand, there are those who have rationalised away their true reasons for dabbling in occultism and for them there is no hope of discovering anything but delusions of their own creating. The reasons which people give for their interest in Magick are rarely if ever the true ones. Bohemian unconventionality, eccentricity, sexual license, emotional expression and escape from personal inadequacy are just a few of the things that many people, if they are being honest with themselves, hope to gain from the "occult world". In fact the same reasons for which lots of people join Clubs, become elected to local councils, or run away to sea. The reasons don't matter. Being honest about them to oneself does matter. This knowledge of one's inner motives enables one to use Magickal thinking with the spot-on accuracy of a sniper's rifle.

Where does Ritual come into this? Well it doesn't have to at all. Most rituals are expressions in gesture and symbol of what one desires. They are also useful as an expression of emotion and there is no doubt that they are the ideal matrix for formulating a Magickal Idea but they are by no means an essential pre-requisite to the successful application of Magickal Thinking. All that is required is the courage to defy logic.

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## READERS' LETTERS

The Editor,  
Insight.

9th February, 69

Dear Sir,

How right Arnold Crowther is in his article "Would Be Witches" see Insight, Winter issue 1969, when he states that witchcraft has always been a womans cult, and then goes on to deride the present day crop of self-appointed and self-styled male "Kings or Chiefs".

Mr. Crowther puts the percentage of women to men in the Middle Ages as over five to one. Here I think that he is being generous to the men. Quite a lot is known about the Witchcraft establishment and organisation from 1300 to 1800 and so I would double Mr. Crowther's figures for the percentage of women to men actively engaged in witchcraft.

However I must correct one of Mr. Crowther's statements, namely when he states that Gerald B. Gardner opened his Museum in the Isle-of-Man. The true facts are that Mr. Gardner purchased the Museum as a going concern from myself. I have all the records of this transaction, and anyone who cares to can easily check the facts not only of the sale, but also that it was myself who originally purchased the property and obtained the planning permission to open same as a Museum of Witchcraft. Furthermore, before Mr. Gardner took over there were several attempts by local bodies to have the museum closed down, all of which were reported upon at length in the Manx newspapers.

I knew Gerald Gardner well for not only did he lend me a number of his own coven's Ritual tools for the Museum, but he came and lived with me in the Isle-of-Man till such time as when I found him a house in Mahew Street Castletown, close to my Museum.

But to return to Mr. Crowther's point about Witchcraft being a womans cult.

How well do I recall the numerous occasions when Gerald Gardner came to me complaining of the fact that whereas many males wanted to join his covens, hardly any females came forward. To his question of why should this be? I gave him the simple answer, that what he had to offer was not attractive to the average intelligent woman.

Gerald Gardner's witchcraft was White Witchcraft, nothing nasty to it, an amalgamate of early Pagan Religions - Moon Goddess - Fertility and Dr. Margaret Murray. Unfortunately for Gerald Gardner no matter how sincerely one stirred this stew, and let me say that he did put in some worthwhile ingredients, sex and nudity always rose to the imagination of the casual observer, and the ladies were in no doubt of what was expected of them. So no one need have been surprised when they stayed away. On the other hand, seen through the eyes of the male, the fare offered presented something to whet the appetite.

Now women are intelligent creatures and when they do anything they expect to derive from it some benefit. Little wonder then that when one makes a close study of witchcraft during the period 1300 to

1800, one at once finds that the female Witch got a worthwhile reward for her activities.

I advised Gerald Gardner that the solution to his problem of lack of female interest, could be found by adopting the Walshingham system of organised Witchcraft as in operation in the days of Queen Elizabeth I. The two main principles of which were a ninety percent female membership and a reward system for services.

Gerald Gardner was not interested in the Walshingham system for it amounts to a form of Secret Service for the male members. Also it calls for rigid discipline, and punishment for anyone who steps out of line, orders have to be obeyed to the letter. Quite understandably Gerald Gardner could not comply with such dictation, for he was a flamboyant and likable extrovert. Always the centre of attraction with his beard, Bangles, and beguiling smile. So it was that he went on his way propounding his Mother Goddess form of a Witchcraft of freedom and love and kindness to all beings. Many have found comfort in all this and that is to Gardner's credit.

I am glad that Gerald Gardner purchased the Witchcraft Museum in Castletown Isle of Man from me for had he not done so there would be no museum there today. I would have closed it down and moved on.

Since those days much has happened in the Witchcraft world. Gerald Gardner is dead, but his system of witchcraft lives on, giving much comfort to those who maintain and are expanding the system. At the same time the Walshingham system has been rebuilt from its derelict post war state, and now has its network covering the whole of the British Isles. This organisation certainly bears out Mr. Crowther's claim that Witchcraft is a womans cult. But in case anyone has mistaken ideas, sex and nudity are of little importance in this system of collaboration and coercion of the elemental or supernatural forces of this planet.

In conclusion may I say that whereas it is the present day fashion of Witchcraft groups to claim that they are the direct descendants of "The Old Religion" the, for want of a better name, Walshingham type of Witchcraft is simply pure occult magic, it is the craft of conjuring or calling up of spirit forces. The art of psychic control, combined with earthly know-how, in short, the craft of the witch.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Cecil H. Williamson

The Smugglers Rest,  
Polperro, Cornwall.

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27th February, 1969

Dear Sir,

Arthur Shuttlewood's "Vibrations"

Were Arthur Shuttlewood gifted with as much technical knowledge as he is with journalistic imagination we might have been spared some of the wild thoughts emerging in his article!

For there to have been an orderly time sequence to the alleged radio interference signals during the mock Army battle, must require that a recording of same must have been made; and I can only think that someone has been pulling Mr. Shuttlewood's leg - and the Army's as well - by re-transmitting the "Navy lark" at the appropriate moment. Mr. Shuttlewood might have been better engaged looking for a story involving pacifists.

That is not to say that a recording may not have been made by a U. F. O. crew just for a whirl. After all, they too are supposed to be pacifists, and such a performance to 'confuse the enemy' might appeal. The mind boggles at the lovely confusion which could be produced by such a situation in time of real armed conflict. But we don't see this happening in trouble spots, do we?

As to the thought that all this carefully programmed 'interference' complete with time sequence, had been buzzing around in the aether just waiting for the Army to start something so that it could arrive at the right moment - well, signal strength diminishes with distance travelled, and in six weeks at the speed of light (or thereabouts), a deal of 'ground' can be covered; at the end of that time it could only be a faint murmur at most, which it wasn't.

Lying dormant in a "low pressure pocket" is a lovely thought, but this would not give a time sequence, and the signal, if any would be a jumble of radio impulses manifesting as blurb in the ears.

Perhaps the Army should learn that the Navy never makes a mistake?

The psychometrical function will do all the 'capturing of the dead past' without introducing dubious speculations on the part which tele-communications might play in helping or confusing, as the case may be!

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) John B. Score.

70, Church Street,  
Louth, Lincs.

28th February, 1969

Dear Sir,

May I take this opportunity of telling you how much I enjoy reading "Insight". It really is a most illuminating, thought-provoking, and inspiring magazine.

The articles are well written, and cover a very wide range of