

On Traditions, Archetypes, Religion and Man

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Throughout the centuries that the grimoires have existed, the Magicians of centuries' past followed more-or-less the grimoires exactly[1]. But in today's world, a lot of many modern Magicians do not have access to such materials or space, time or dedication – of course, there are many true Magi that indeed have such luxuries, but I know that for many – including myself – money can be scarce, and although that we may not have access 'to the T' tools and equipment, the intent is still there – and there are many true Magi that have gained their wisdom and knowledge from the fact that they have had to do their improvisations and had their toils themselves, and that didn't have such fancy tools, robes, incenses, or whatever.

Throughout the centuries that these magical systems have been preserved by the various monks and scribes that kept them, and what we have today; but we find that there are many branches and occult orders that stem off many of the same ideas that many orders share. Although these can be healthy explorations – and advancements made in today's occult by serious Magicians – the motto held by many Neo-Pagans, Spiritualists, 'Occultists' that, "Whatever works for you!" can become disastrously blown out of proportion, creating watered down occult understanding that trickles into people who have a curious interest, but really have no depthful understanding of anything. There also comes the splitting and branching of occult orders, whether they be for petty disagreements or deaths[2] – or that motto – and today we find that everyone wants to make their 'very own Tradition.'

Of course, every order itself has its own group-personality, but there is something to be said when the ego overrides the true spiritual development[3], and the interest is dissolved or is clouded. Many good and true occultists today that do indeed make great advancements in today's occult fields are those that use unorthodox methods. I've met many good friends that know very much, and have learned more by going beyond the 'comfort zone' and expanding the boundaries of [healthy] experimentation and research, than sticking with 'by-the-book' methods and having each Magician come to the 'same end.'

Furthering the boundaries of the existing occult knowledge can be both an interesting and painfully tolling one, and one may be liable to drown[4], if one does not have hold of himself. The lines between personal intrusion into the to-be new 'system of magic' and the true goals and teachings that one is trying to convey can become very flimsy, and one can mix their 'astral inputs' into their genuine insights. However, if one had overcome the ego and had successfully brought about their newfound knowledge into the existing occult 'repository' of knowledge, then perhaps diverging from the existing systems that

have been long held can be rewarding – and not necessarily a bad thing.

It is said that a complete magical system must have a complete representation of the Universe inside of itself. Many new systems are based off of existing ones – the Tarot is a really good representation of the Universe through its Major and Minor Arcana, and all serious students of the Art should dedicate their time to studying them and their significance, for they will see the deeper message that connects them and ‘shines through it all.’

The Qabalah is another good system – and although the Tarot seemingly fits exactly alongside with it – it has no real relation to it. The two systems have been seen to correspond, and those are their ‘correspondences.’ One will find that many systems, although having similar deities – like Thor, Zeus and Taranis (and very many others) as Thunder Gods – it would be unfair to lump them together and evoke them as one combined force, because each deity represents a different and significant aspect of that force. Compare it to the many various Moon Goddesses – Diana, Selene, Artemis, Hecate – as each representing a different face on a cut diamond-gem – each one is a difference face of the ultimate same force – and although they each represent that (in some way) – ‘mushing’ them together seems rude to the deities at hand, and it would be proper to address them in some other manner.

When considering a new system of magical practice, it must include that complete representation of the Universe, and not necessarily correspond at all to any of the existing pantheons or schools of magical thought and teaching (although it’s certainly easier) – but there are very striking similarities between many different magical traditions and civilizations, so the underlining archetypal images there can be used for meditation and basis. If one is creating a ‘Pseudo-Pantheon[5]’, then one could consider looking at the existing deities – like the thunder gods – and be careful not to lump them together, but to ‘make another cut in the gem-face.’

The Ancients believed that each letter[6] was sacred, and in itself (although it had no meaning[7]) – each character stood for a certain idea, of which, when strung together, allowed the sharing of ideas, etc. through that language. That language was regarded as a very powerful one, used very often only in ritual or magical, religious contexts (and it would be wise to keep it as such). Similarly, it can be compared to Enochian, which was seen as the ‘language of the forces of nature’, which, when the letters were strung together, its own system of magical words[8] had a deeply powerful effect, which has been powerful enough to make a man loose his mind[9] if not correctly at the stage of development to work with that system. I myself have not dared to step foot in that pool yet.

So my purpose here is to, not create a new system in its entirety, but a system that is a representation of the Universe (modeled off of current understandings of various pantheons and teachings, like the Tarot and Qabalah) in a compiled manner that, does not lose its value or meaning, but, through incorporation, the teachings shed a ‘deeper light’ on the Chaos of our own understanding of the Universe, and the human’s placement and purpose within it.

If one is at all familiar with my personal blog, they at once can determine that I have some ‘golden-dawnish’ attitudes, and a lot of Wiccan upbringing; such will not be missed here, if anything, I am attempting to ‘set aside’ everything – all my preconceived notions, currently built-up knowledge, and hard work, to thoroughly study and complete a system that is coherent with all systems; because, ‘all paths lead to the same place’, and there is not one instance of not having a correspondence between two systems in at least some manner, therein lies the ‘hidden gem’ – the psychological, archetypal patterns of the human condition, his experience of the universe and it’s perils and triumphs as shared through all societies and communities, civilizations, represented in a concrete glyph.

The first archetypal events are described as birth, death, separation from parents, initiation, marriage, the union of opposites. Motifs are creation, the apocalypse, and deluge. Archetypal figures are the Mother, Father, Child, Devil, God, Wise old man/woman, the Trickster, and the Hero. Archetypal images that are notably more recurrent are the Shadow, the Wise Old Man, the Child, the Mother (also, her counterpart the Maiden), and lastly, the Anima and Animus.

These quite rather basic archetypes have been represented through various cultures in various pantheons for thousands of years. What is most interesting about these commonly shared archetypes, is that they all seem to appear in different forms, although ultimately retaining the same idea. Perhaps the most prevalent archetypes are the events. Birth and death are certainly very important to the cultures that created forms around them, they play a crucial part in everyone’s life, for everyone eventually succumbs to death, or encounters it himself; and we are born ourselves, and witness it.

These experiences, and similar ones (e.g. the other archetypes – initiation, marriage, etc.), have been personified and have become arguably the most of-interest to almost all civilizations. We have the many Gods that surround these themes, and perhaps the most mysterious aspect of them – the ‘in-between’ of these two archetypes, the dying-and-rising gods. We are familiar with Dionysus – Jesus – Ra, Osiris, Baal, and many others for their resurrection themes. Love is also a central theme within the mythos of many pantheons, Greek and Roman mythologies are notorious for having romantic ‘intrusions’ within their many stories and fables; Egyptian mythology is also not spared from this ‘category’.

Also of high reverence within almost all civilizations is the Mother and Father. We have the Mother representing in the pagan-sense, the natural, comforting, nurturing aspect of nature, the triple goddess, who is the Maiden – the springtime[10], the Mother – the bounty of the fruits and the wealth of the harvest[10], and the Crone[11] – the repose aspect of the yearly wheel.[10]. Hathor, Isis, Parvati (Shakti), Pachamama (Incan), Toci from Aztec mythology, one could never miss Gaia to this list, also Rhea, Cybele and Juno, Hera and Demeter – the list from all the various pantheons is exhaustive – but the common theme is the Mother, both of humans and of nature.

The Father is another archetype that (I personally believe has been over-emphasized within ‘mainstream’ religious doctrine. If anything, they are both equal in their dualistic manner) is very prominent within modern religious teachings. We have God, YHVH, Allah – all male representations of the divine force, but perhaps they are astrewn by their perceptions that it is indeed an actual spiritual ‘He’, for the nature of ‘God’ simply is. It is not human like us, and although it is said that we are ‘created in His image,[12]’ I would quickly quote Xenophanes[13] by saying, “If I was a horse, to me, God would be a Horse.” Although the image of a male force of nature is a reasonable concept as the Mother, the blown-up idea of the archetype I believe has made it into a delusional sense-of-the-word.

The ‘Devil’ is an archetype that generally is a term that is used as an accusative term from one religion towards another that they despise or attempt to oppress. This has infamously happened with the Christian religion and the Pagan religions, turning their Sun-Gods into the Devil; but moreso are the Christian religious archetypes bad copies of much older ones. The Devil can exist as an antagonistic force against the subjective observer, acting as a personification of their fears and [possibly] repressed emotions or experiences. It also could exist as a personification of the ‘evil in this world’, or the danger that comes from ‘beast to man’, and overall the human condition. Alongside the Devil archetype is Hell, which Jung said represents, among every culture, the disturbing aspect of the collective unconscious.

All of these archetypes that exist are ultimately expressions of man and his interactions outwardly with the world, and the condition of human survival and existence. From these interactions, and the progress of life and death throughout human existence, we accumulate a collective unconscious, and from this collective unconsciousness – and human instinct – arrives archaic patterns and images, the archetypes that all systems ‘grow out of’.

The ‘heavenly bodies’, the ‘celestial beings’ observed by ancient astronomers were the stars and constellations within the night sky in the sphere of the Firmament, that came to be associated with

creatures on the plane of human existence, the Zodiacal signs. The four elements are also real natural forces that can effect human survival, but they also have been ‘personified’ through their qualities. Fire is hot and can burn, so it has gained, in more contemporary culture, significance of ‘demons’ or evil, malignant forces. Water has emotional associations, and therefore we have the undines, the nymphs and water spirits.[14] Air has the Sylphs, and mental associations; and Earth has the Gnomes, and ‘earthy’ spirits. Almost all phenomenon that is observable – and unobservable – has attributions and personifications within the ‘realm of man’ – even the universe itself is symbolized with the Snake, in a circle and with its tail in its mouth.

These associations with the natural phenomenon around him, the archetypal images that exist within him, and the dangers of survival to the human condition created complexes that can influence the perception of these associations to their actuality. It is said that fear is the root of all misperception and ignorance. Fear can warp the ‘appearance of the small dog into a large one’, but fear is also the basis upon many of the cultures significant mythologies, which are based around the aspects of it, and religious personifications and labels. Humans have existed within a harsh and cruel natural environment at times, so the logic of it is understandable; winters were tough, children weren’t liable to live long, constant worry about larger animals such as bears – and the inherent human ‘mindset’ to ‘automatically assume the worst’ – the personifications from fear were completely based upon the human condition versus the external. But perhaps the recent ‘over-interest’ by many religious orders today has astrewn the ‘believability’ of those once-basic forms into much more dogmatic ones.

Another interesting point of most ‘modern’ religions is the separation of Man from God, and the gap between them, and how Man is pitiful for being how he is, always striving for the ‘God’ who even the religion who taught him of Him has little understanding of; Everything that has existed or will exist is existing right now. All the planes between Man and God exist within each other, not in ‘layers’, but all together in a ‘mush’ of awareness, in a succession of entry through the Spheres of the Sephiroth, the highest of which is the blinding light of ‘God’, energy in it’s vibrative light quality, potential but yet without form. The lowest of which is base materiality, all physical matter, the crystallization of that light in form. The distinction between the two arises from the ‘start’ to the ‘finish’.[15]

But I am not here to rant. What I am pointing out here, is that Man has observed his immediate surrounding environment and universe, and from it arose the systems of, quite everything. This seems very obvious, because Man is indeed a product of his environment, he comes from it, so of course he had to learn to survive and communicate within it; but the fact that he is aware of this, is the ‘magic’ of it. Much like the idea that “humans, made of atoms, observe atoms – so atoms are observing themselves?” –

the self awareness that arises from the combinations of these primal and organic sources **is** the mysteriousness – and basis, of many magical traditions and teachings, and many cultures (or plays a significant role therein). But ‘modern’ Man has become very materialistic with this observation, seeing the atom but nothing more – and although it is true that all are made of atoms, so therefore we are all ‘connected’ in that sense – he has come to lose that connection, and views the body as inherently material. The advent of Quantum Mechanics has robbed much of Magic’s very beloved and well-kept-hidden teachings into nothing more than textbook teachings of the universe. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but with it presented in such a way, it loses much of its deep, heart-felt meaning, and Man then becomes ‘shallow’, in the sense that he does not recognize the connection that he once (and still – always) has. The archetypes are also ‘symbolic’ of that relationship, and his relation to it.

I have a lot more added to this, but I’m still editing it so it may be a bit before I add the rest~

Footnotes

[1] I say that with a hesitation. I don't believe there is any way we can know this for sure.

[2] Of the Teacher or Guru, whose students seem less keen on maintaining the exact principals or teachings after the death thereof, and thereafter the Temple or practice falls apart, splits, or becomes diluted.

[3] When the person is enamored with the allure of magic – ‘but when a book is slapped down in front of them,’ they lose interest, or don't ‘get it’ and continue their ‘delusion.’

[4] As the saying goes, "One is just as liable to swim as to drown, if they jump off the deep end."

[5] SHADOW has an interesting article here about the creation of a Pseudo-Pantheon.

[6] And that language is Hebrew.

[7] The world in itself is meaningless. We create our own destinies (and realities). Chaos is everywhere. We create languages, where each character in itself is meaningless, but only has form when applied and compared with others.

[8] The Enochian Calls.

[9] I can recall it from memory only, from the book, “A Witches’ Bible Compleat” – they had mentioned that a rock performed had been dabbling with the Enochian Calls for a stage show, and he became disastrously out of depth, one of the ‘Virgin Babes’ on the show almost got cut by a falling sword, and the singer, if I can recall, in the end met a rather more grim demise.

[10] In a nutshell. This could be further elaborated, and indeed found elsewhere.

[11] The Crone shares an interesting but mysterious place alongside the dying-and-rising gods, for the Crone represents that the ‘Goddess’ is always there – that nature will always be in a state of flux, no matter if it is ‘good’ or ‘bad’.

[12] Genesis 1:27

[13] The quote goes:

“But if cattle and horses and lions had hands
or could paint with their hands and create works such as men do,
horses like horses and cattle like cattle
also would depict the gods' shapes and make their bodies
of such a sort as the form they themselves have.”

[14] Interesting to note here, that we also have associations with ‘Death and Initiation’, in the Western Quarter.

[15] Of course, there is not a start nor finish. From ‘God’ to Man, and the distance between them; The Crown of God rests in the Kingdom of Man – but in another manner.