

PARADIGM SHIFTS AND AEONICS

By Pete Carroll

All the philosophies, creeds, dogmas and beliefs that humanity has evolved are variants of three great paradigms, the Transcendental, the Materialist and the Magical. In no human culture has any one of these paradigms been completely distinct from the others. For example in our own culture at the time of writing the Transcendental and Magical paradigms are frequently confused together.

Transcendental philosophies are basically religious and manifest in a spectrum stretching from the fringes of primitive spiritism through pagan polytheism to the monotheism of the Judaeo-Christian-Islamic traditions and the theoretical non-theistic systems of Buddhism and Taoism. In each case it is believed that some form of consciousness or spirit created and maintains the universe and that humans, other living organisms, contain some fragment of this consciousness or spirit which underlies the veil or illusion of matter. The essence of Transcendentalism is belief in spiritual beings greater than oneself or states of spiritual being superior to that which currently one enjoys. Earthly life is frequently seen merely as a form of dialogue between oneself and one's deity or deities, or perhaps some impersonal form of higher force. The material world is a theatre for the spirit or soul or consciousness that created it. Spirit is the ultimate reality to the transcendentalist.

In the Materialist paradigm the universe is believed to consist fundamentally and entirely of matter. Energy is but a form of matter and together they subtend space and time within which all change occurs strictly on the basis of cause and effect. Human behaviour is reducible to biology, biology is reducible to chemistry, chemistry is reducible to physics and physics is reducible to mathematics. Mind and consciousness are thus merely electrochemical events in the brain and spirit is a word without objective content. The causes of some events are likely to remain obscure perhaps indefinitely, but there is an underlying faith that sufficient material cause must exist for any event. All human acts can be categorized as serving some biological need or as expressions of previously applied conditioning or merely as malfunction. The goal of materialist who eschews suicide is the pursuit of personal satisfaction including altruistic satisfactions if desired.

The main difficulty in recognizing and describing the pure Magical Paradigm is that of insufficient vocabulary. Magical philosophy is only recently recovering from a heavy adulteration with transcendental theory. The word aether will be used to describe the

fundamental reality of the magical paradigm. It is more or less equivalent to the idea of Mana used in oceanic shamanism. Aether in materialistic descriptions is information which structures matter and which all matter is capable of emitting and receiving. In transcendental terms aether is a sort of "life force" present in some degree in all things. It carries both knowledge about events and the ability to influence similar or sympathetic events. Events either arise spontaneously out of themselves or are encouraged to follow certain paths by influence of patterns in the aether. As all things have an aetheric part they can be considered to be alive in some sense. Thus all things happen by magic, the large scale features of the universe have a very strong aetheric pattern which makes them fairly predictable but difficult to influence by the aetheric patterns created by thought. Magicians see themselves as participating in nature. Transcendentalists like to think they are somehow above it. Materialists like to try and manipulate it.

Now this universe has the peculiarly accommodating property of tending to provide evidence for, and confirmation of, whatever paradigm one chooses to believe in. Presumably at some deep level there is a hidden symmetry between those things we call Matter, Aether and Spirit. Indeed, it is rare to find an individual or culture operating exclusively on a single one of these paradigms and none is ever entirely absent. Non dominant paradigms are always present as superstitions and fears. A subsequent section on Aeonics will attempt to untangle the influences of each of these great world views throughout history, to see how they have interacted with each other and to predict future trends. In the meantime an analysis of the radically differing concepts of time and self in each paradigm is offered to more fully distinguish the basic ideas.

Transcendentalists conceive of time in millennial and apocalyptic terms. Time is regarded as having a definite beginning and ending, both initiated by the activities of spiritual beings or forces. The end of time on the personal and cosmic scale is regarded not so much as a cessation of being but as a change to a state of non material being. The beginning of personal and cosmic time is similarly regarded as a creative act by spiritual agencies. Thus reproductive activity usually becomes heavily controlled and hedged about with taboo and restriction in religious cultures, as it implies an usurpation of the powers of deities. Reproduction also implies that death has in some measure been overcome. How awesome the power of creation and how final must earthly death subconsciously loom to a celibate and sterile priesthood.

All transcendentalisms embody elements of apocalypticism. Typically these are used to provoke revivals when business is slack or attention is drifting elsewhere. Thus it is suddenly revealed that the final days are at hand or that some earthly dispute is in fact a titanic battle against evil spiritual agencies.

Materialist time is linear but unbounded. Ideally it can be extended arbitrarily far in either direction from the present. To the strict materialist it is self-evidently futile to speculate about a beginning or an end to time. Similarly the materialist is contemptuous of any speculations about any forms of personal existence before birth or after death. The materialist may well fear painful or premature death but can have no fears about being dead.

The magical view is that time is cyclic and that all processes recur. Even cycles which appear to begin or end are actually parts of larger cycles. Thus all endings are beginnings and the end of time is synonymous with the beginning of time in another universe. The magical view that everything is recycled is reflected in the doctrine of reincarnation. The attractive idea of reincarnation has often persisted into the religious paradigm and many pagan and even some monotheist traditions have retained it. However religious theories invariably contaminate the original idea with beliefs about a personal soul. From a strictly magical viewpoint we are an accretion rather than an unfolded unity. The psyche has no particular centre, we are colonial beings, a rich collage of many selves. Thus as our bodies contain fragments from countless former beings, so does our psyche. However certain magical traditions retain techniques which allow the adept to transfer quite large amounts of his psyche in one piece should he consider this more useful than dispersing himself into humanity at large.

Each of the paradigms take a different view of the self. Transcendentalists view self as spirit inserted into matter. As a fragment or figment of deity the self regards itself as somehow placed in the world in a non arbitrary manner and endowed with free will. The transcendental view of self is relatively stable and non-problematic if shared as a consensus with all significant others. However, transcendental theories about the placement and purpose of self and its relationship to deities are mutually exclusive. Conflicting transcendentalisms can rarely co-exist for they threaten to disconfirm the images of self. Encounters which are not decisive tend to be mutually negatory in the long run.

Of the three views of self the purely materialistic one is the most problematical. If mind is an extension of matter it must obey

material laws and the resulting deterministic view conflicts with the subjective experience of free will. On the other hand if mind and consciousness are assumed to be qualitatively different from matter then the self is incomprehensible to itself in material terms. Worse still perhaps, the materialist self must regard itself as a phenomenon of only temporary duration in contradiction of the subjective expectation of continuity of consciousness. Because a purely materialist view of self is so austere few are prepared to confront such naked existentialism. Consequently materialist cultures exhibit a frantic appetite for sensation, identification and more or less disposable irrational beliefs. Anything that will make the self seem less insubstantial.

The magical view of self is that it is based on the same random capricious chaos which makes the universe exist and do what it does. The magical self has no centre, it is not a unity but an assemblage of parts, any number of which may temporarily club together and call themselves "I". This accords with the observation that our subjective experience consists of our various selves experiencing each other. Free will arises either as an outcome of a dispute between our various selves or as a sudden random creation of a new idea or option. In the magical view of self there is no spirit/matter or mind/body split and the paradoxes of free will and determinism disappear. Some of our acts arise from random choices between conditioned options and some from conditional choices between randomly created options. In practice most of our acts are based on rather complex hierarchical sequences of all four of these mechanisms. As soon as we have acted one of our selves proclaims "I did that!" so loudly that most of the other selves think they did it too.

Each of the three views of self has something derogatory to say about the other two. From the standpoint of the transcendental self the materialist self has become prey to pride of intellect, the demon hubris, whilst the magical view of self is considered to be entirely demonic. The material self views the transcendentalist as obsessed with assumptions having no basis in fact, and the magical self as being childlike and incoherent. From the standpoint of the magical view, the assorted selves of the transcendentalist have ascribed a grossly exaggerated importance to one or a few of the selves which they call God or gods, whilst the materialist has attempted to make all his selves subordinate to the self that does the rational thinking. Ultimately it's a matter of faith and taste. The transcendentalist has faith in his god self, the materialist has faith in his reasoning self and the selves of the magician have faith in each other. Naturally, all these forms of faith are subject

to periods of doubt.

* Origin: ChaosBox: Nothing is true -> all is permitted... (2:243/2)

Blackout And Sigils

The blackout or as it is commonly referred to, the death posture, is the technique that the late Austin Osman Spare refined for his own magical use and which has been adopted by chaoists, solo and group, world wide as its popularity has been increased by the works of the IOT over the last decade or so.

The normal procedure, as many will undoubtedly be familiar with, (and this is only one of its uses) is that a sigil/glyph of desire is held in the mind's eye whilst in what we all refer to as the death posture e.g., stood on tiptoe, arms locked behind the head, body stretched to its limit, deep spasmodic breathing, until total exhaustion and inevitably one blacks out, the sigil is then lost to the mind of the inner and the banished of laughter is evoked to prevent the resurfacing of the said sigil.

Anyone who has used this technique for the above said purpose, will have at sometime or another experienced, even if just slightly, difficulty in holding the posture long enough for the desired gnosis to take effect sufficiently for blackout. And due to this difficulty, a well planned ritual can be a well planned waste of time as the desired result is not implanted properly.

A technique that has been repeatedly employed by myself on such occasions is based upon the same principles as the death posture but as I have found, a little easier and without pitfalls that one can experience with A.O. Spare's technique.

This technique is a strange mixture of inhibitory and excitatory gnosis, forced overbreathing, dancing or spinning, and of course exhaustion. The end result is of necessity for this process the blackout, which is as we know, of the inhibitory gnosis. I will now explain how this technique is employed by one for the insertion of sigils for whatever purpose one feels the need.

First one has to sigilise the desire in any form that one may wish, but in all cases and especially this one, it must be very easy to visualise. Once that has been achieved, one may then begin to design the ritual for

that particular purpose in mind. Banishings and invocations may be employed, if so wished, this is, however, not a necessity for the successful outcome of this process. At the culmination of the rite the individual starts the overbreathing, panting deeply and spasmodically and at the same time visualising the sigil as vividly as you possible can, bright, intense and very clear as the overbreathing continues. Then when you feel that the time is right, start your spinning round and round, still overbreathing and still holding your visualised sigil in your mind's eye. Music can be played for a background to the dancing, tom toms or any other drum is rather excellent background sound for this purpose. When the individual has reached a state of sheer exhaustion, very dizzy, sweating and ready to drop, he or she then, still spinning and overbreathing and of course holding the visualised sigil in mind, works their way to the centre of the circle or working area.

There a partner, either active or passive to the rite, (in other words, if a solo worker, try to get someone to help you with this part) stops you spinning and grabs you in a bear hug lifting you off the ground and squeezing you about the solar plexus, where a large network of nerves lie. At this precise moment the music, if any has been employed, is stopped, and death-like silence is kept. The practitioner holds his or her breath whilst being squeezed and the sigil is visualised as if burning with bright, white heat as its image is burnt into your mind. Within seconds the blackout will occur and the sigil is lost to the mind. At this point it is important that your partner lets you drop to the floor, unless that is you wish to return to primal chaos!

On coming round, in most cases, you should evoke laughter to banish the sigil and all thoughts thereof, your laughter breaks that silence and the rite is finished in whatever manner wished.