



*PLAYFUL OCCULTISM: THE
LUDIC AND THE LUSORY
ATTITUDE IN MAGICAL
PRACTICE*

A SEMINAR BY DR. JEFF
HOWARD

MALMÖ UNIVERSITY
FEBRUARY 13

DR. JEFF HOWARD

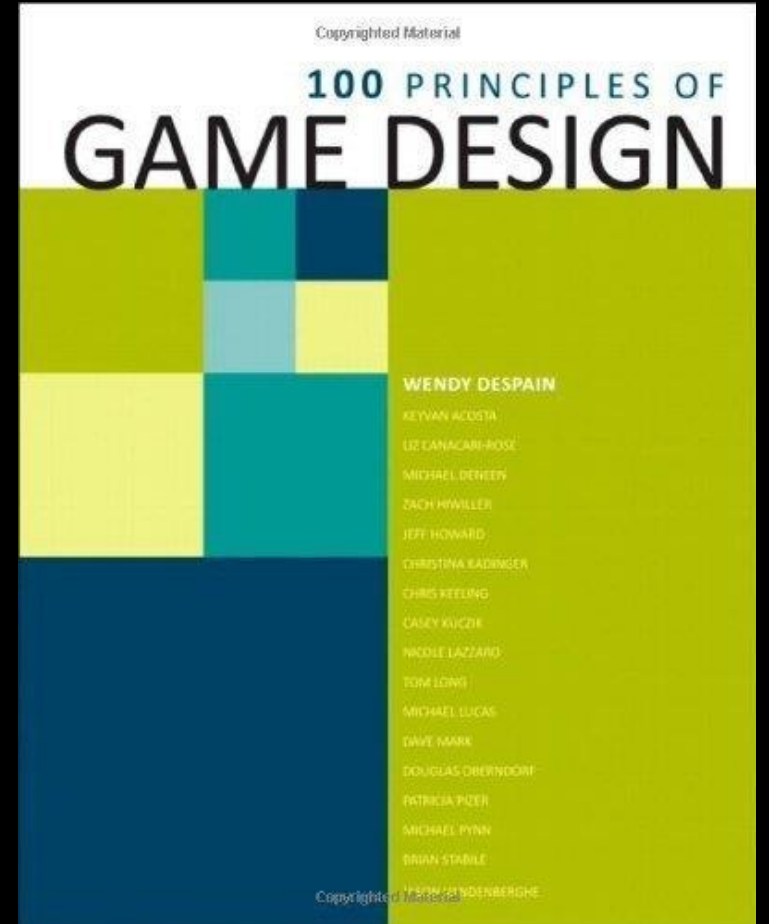
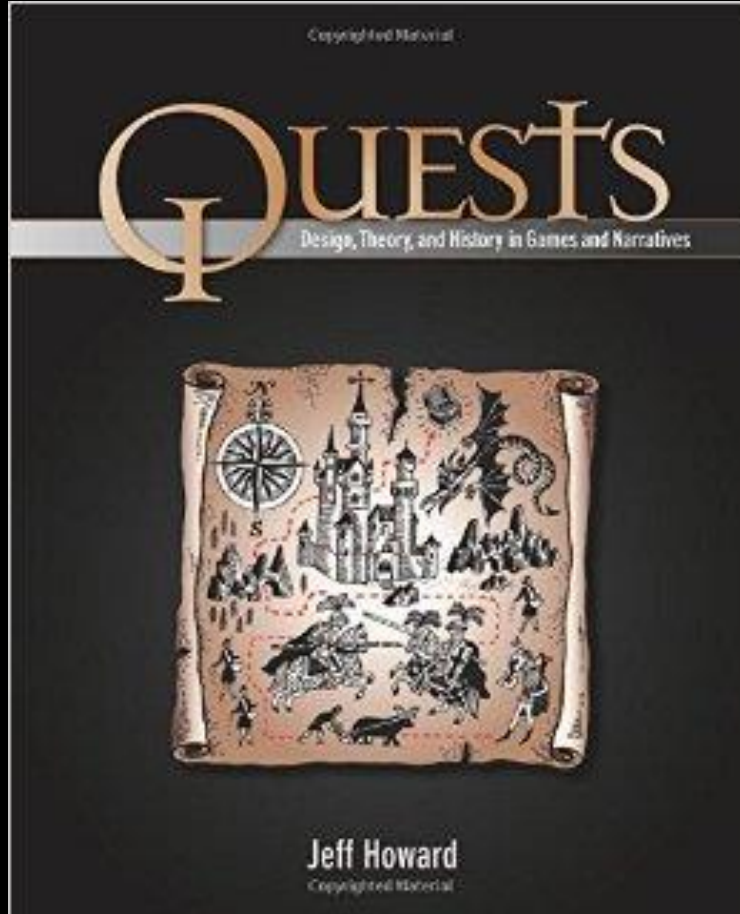
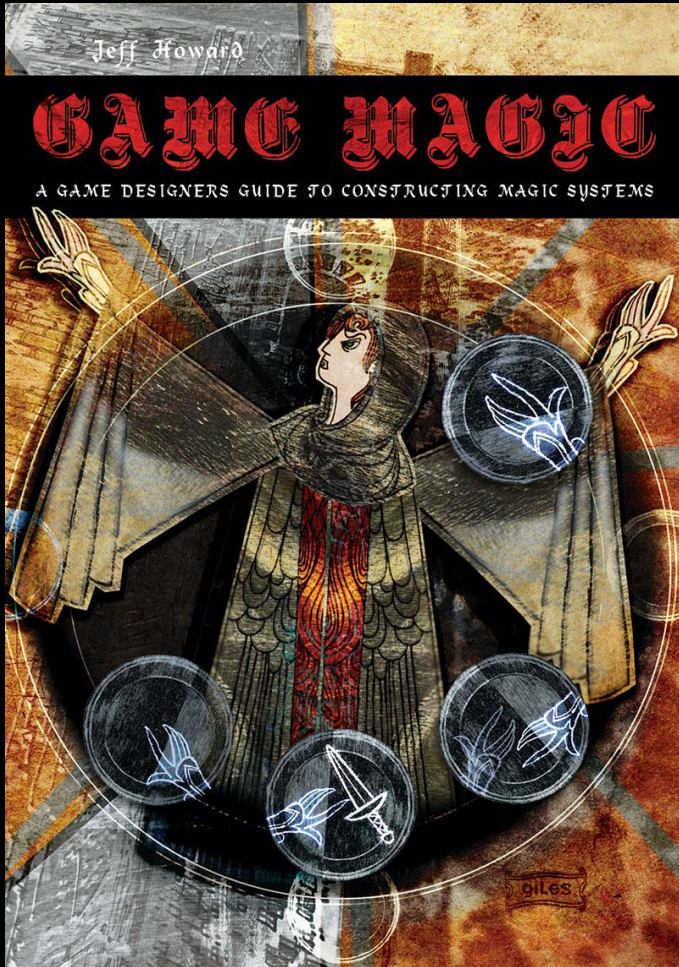
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ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GAMES AND OCCULTURE

Howard has presented on games and the occult at a variety of international conferences, including Berlin Occulture, Trans-States, and ESSWE9. Howard studies Sabbatic Craft at the intersection of the Left Hand Path and the Typhonian current. Through his scholarship and creative practice, Howard is an ambassador for the power of play as a transformative and transcendent practice.



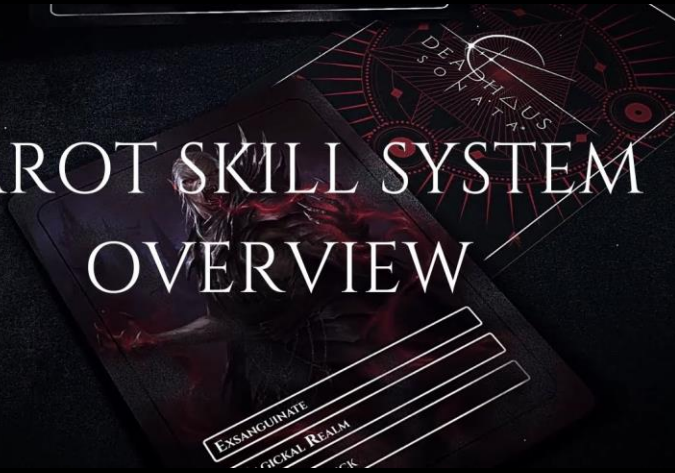
jeff.howard@falmouth.ac.uk





CORE TEAM
MEMBER:
APOCALYPSE
STUDIOS

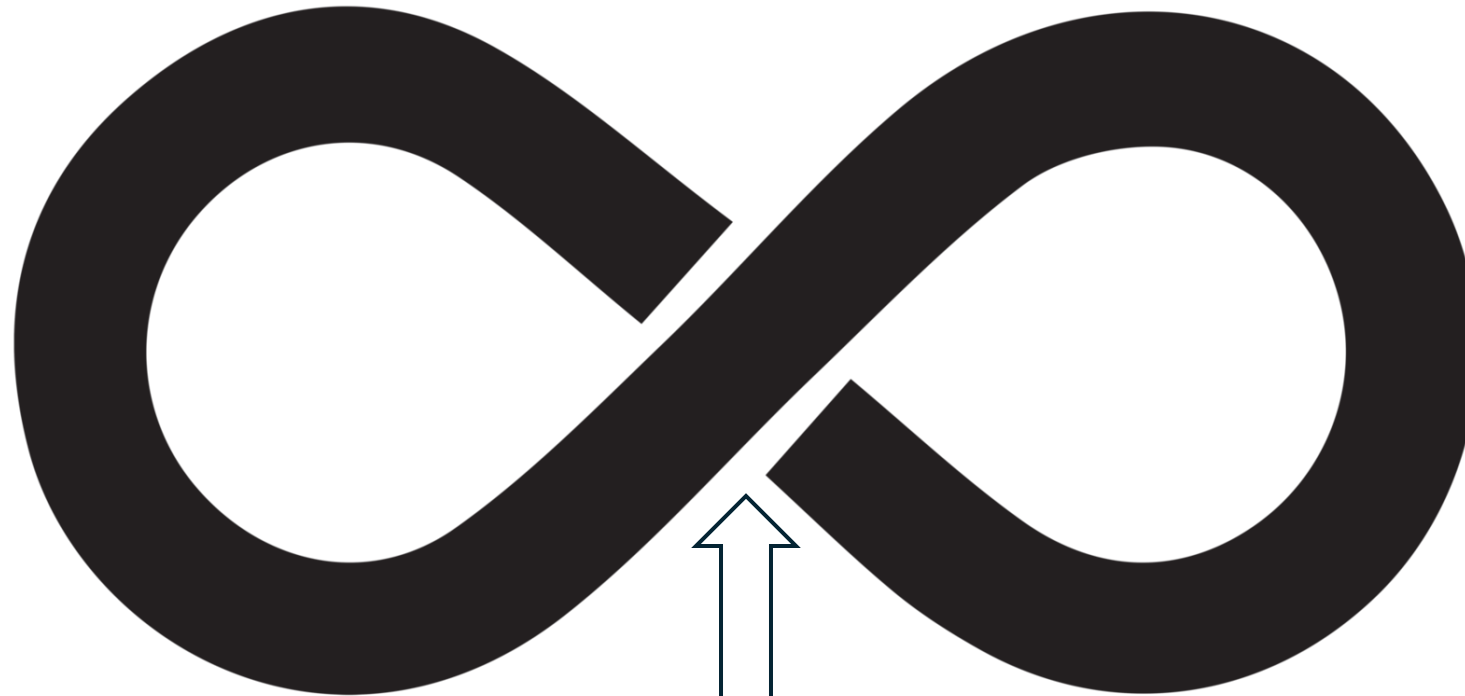
TAROT SKILL SYSTEM
OVERVIEW



- I. Occultism/Occulture
- II. Games and Occulture: the Magic Circle
- II. Howard's Law of Occult Game Design to Doris Rusch Deep Games.
- IV. Playful systems of magical practice
- A) Meta-play: Lionell Snells' Games Layer & the Lusory Attitude
- A) Crowley & chess
- B) Typhonian tradition
- 1) Bleed/Breaking the Magic Circle
- 2) Tangential tantra
- C) Ilinx & the Cultus Sabbati
- V. Lila & the Play of Being & Non-Being
- Play as a means of contact with the negatively existent ones.

OCCULT INFLUENCE ON
GAMES

OCCULT PRACTICE AS
PLAYFUL




PLAYFUL OCCULTURE

OCCULT = HIDDEN

- OCCULTARE, OCCULTUS (OED)
- <“CLASSICAL LATIN OCCULTUS SECRET, HIDDEN FROM THE UNDERSTANDING, HIDDEN, CONCEALED, PAST PARTICIPLE OF OCCULERE TO COVER UP, HIDE, CONCEAL>” OED
- “OF OR RELATING TO MAGIC, ALCHEMY, ASTROLOGY, THEOSOPHY, OR OTHER PRACTICAL ARTS HELD TO INVOLVE AGENCIES OF A SECRET OR MYSTERIOUS NATURE; OF THE NATURE OF SUCH AN ART; DEALING WITH OR VERSED IN SUCH MATTERS; MAGICAL.” (OED)

HEINRICH CORNELIUS
AGRIPPA



Three Books of
Occult
Philosophy



The Natural World



The Celestial World



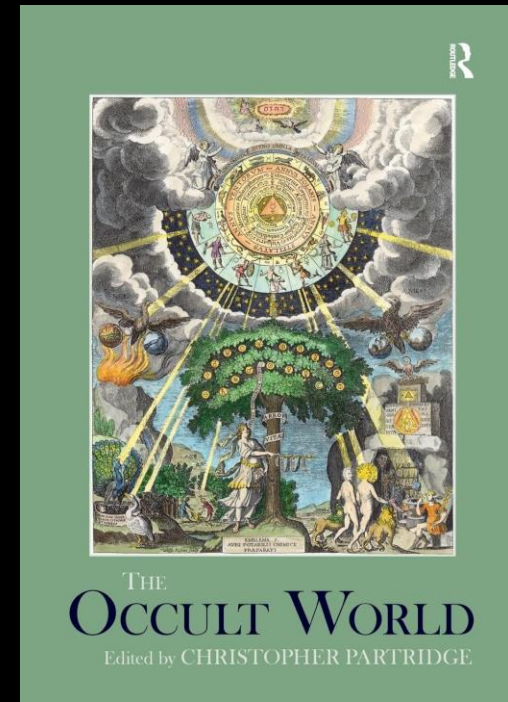
The Divine World

Translated from the Original Latin Edition of 1533

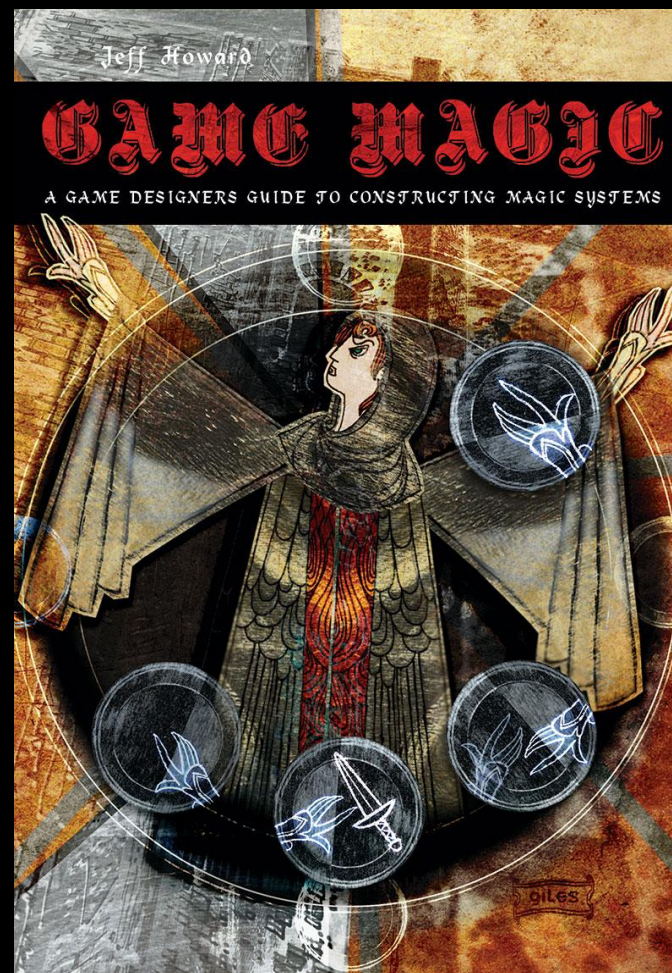
BY ERIC PURDUE

WHAT IS OCCULTURE?

- OCCULT + CULTURE
- COINED BY GENESIS P-ORRIDGE
- POPULARIZED BY CARL ABRAHAMSSON
- BROUGHT INTO SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE BY CHRISTOPHER PARTRIDGE & EGIL ASPREM

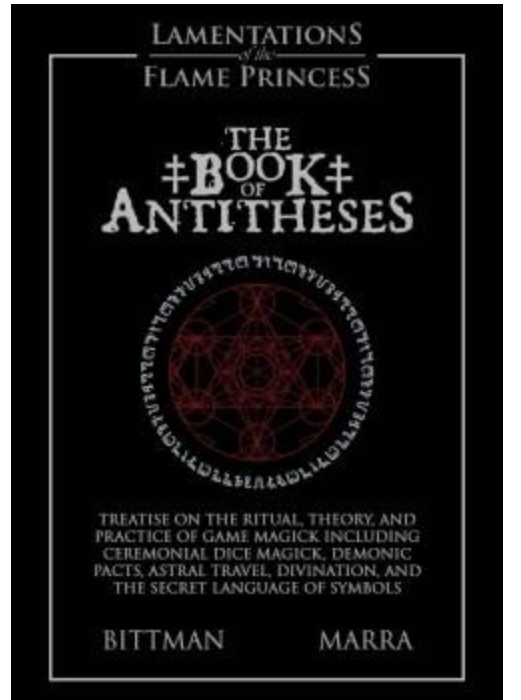
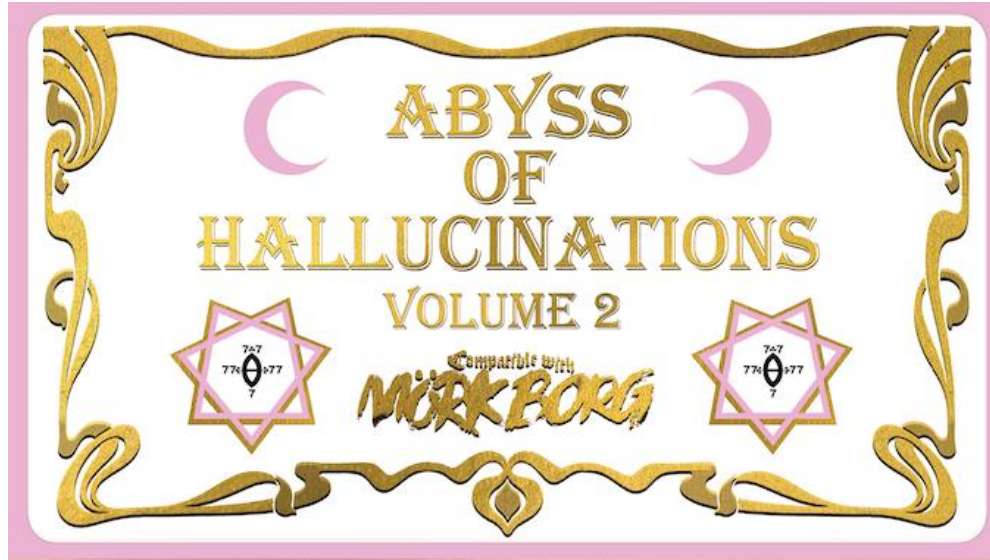
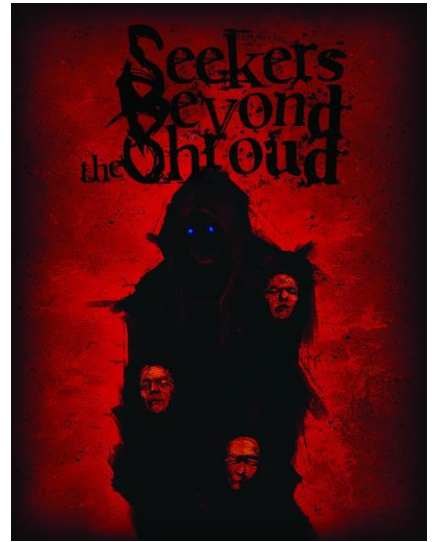


- MANY GAMES INFLUENCED BY THE OCCULT
- MY FIRST BOOK, *GAME MAGIC*, EXPLORED MANY EXAMPLES OF THIS
- GAMES CAN FUNCTION AS A FORM OF OCCULT PRACTICE (MY CLAIM FROM TRANS-STATES TALK)
- THERE IS AN UPCOMING CONFERENCE AT UNIVERSITY OF DENMARK ON GAMES AND OCCULTURE, THE CFP OF WHICH CITES CHRISTOPHER PARTRIDGE'S "OCCULTURE IS ORDINARY" AS ITS RAISON D'ÊTRE



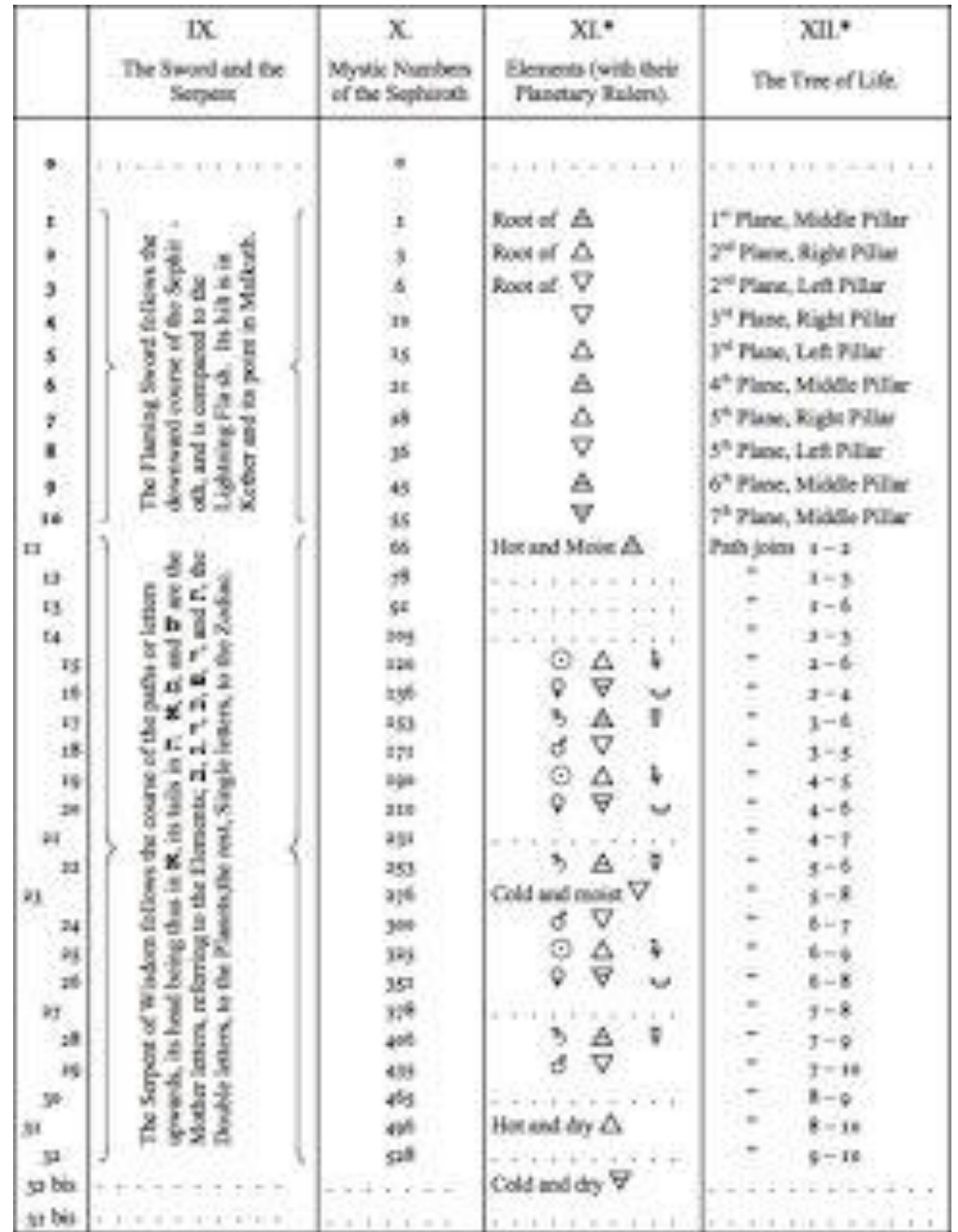


INVISIBLE SUN



ASSOCIATIONS

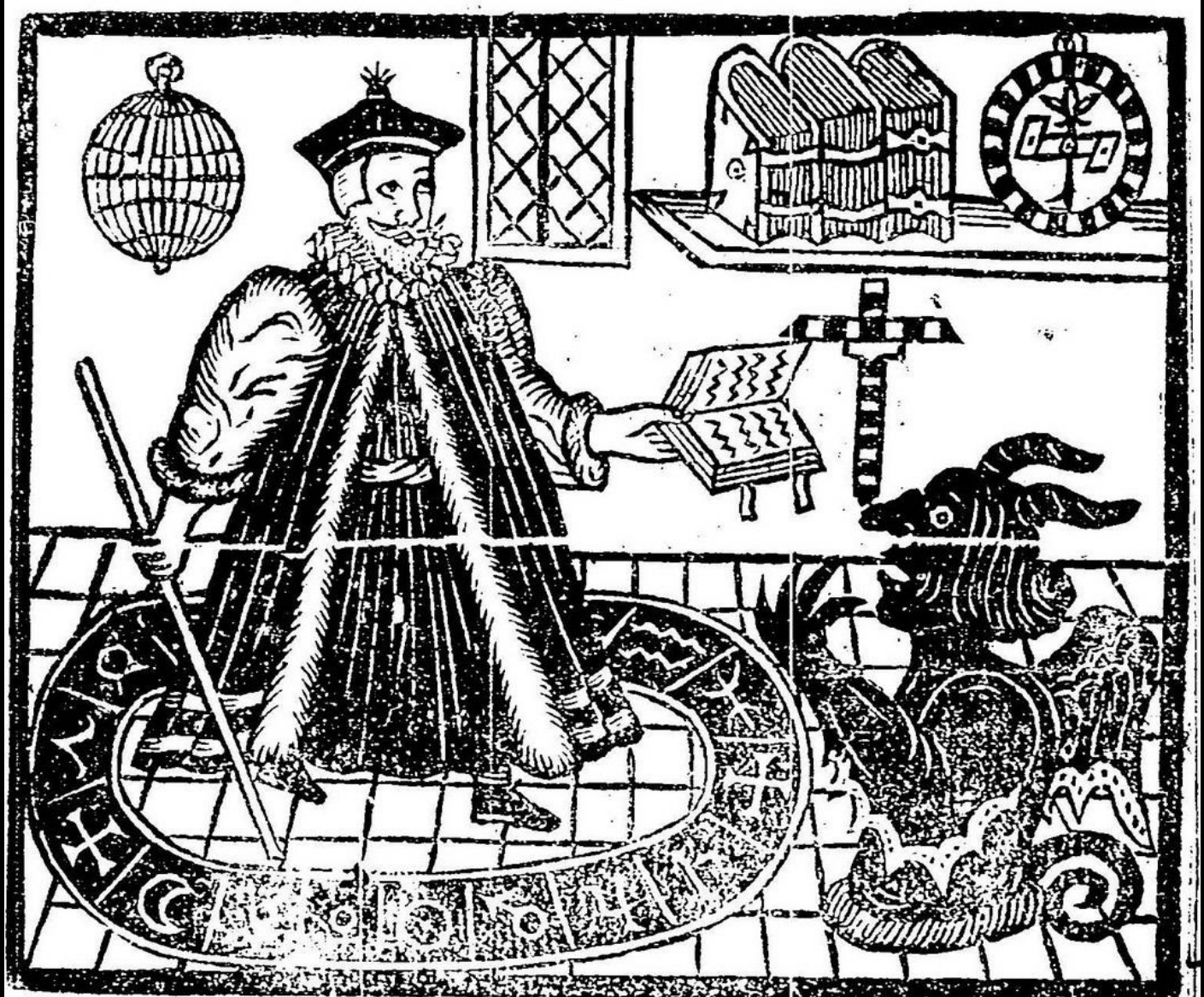
Planet	Day of the Week	Metal	Gemstone	Color	Incense
☾ Moon	Monday	Silver	Pearl	White	Camphor & Sandalwood
♂ Mars	Tuesday	Iron	Red Coral	Red	Pine & Coriander
♀ Mercury	Wednesday	Brass & Bronze	Emerald	Orange	Lavender & Fennel
♃ Jupiter	Thursday	Tin	Yellow Sapphire	Blue	Cedar & Hyssop
♀ Venus	Friday	Copper	Diamond	Green	Rose & Violet
♄ Saturn	Saturday	Lead	Blue Sapphire	Purple & Black	Myrrh & Cypress
☼ Sun	Sunday	Gold	Ruby	Yellow	Cinnamon & Saffron



Any sufficiently advanced simulation of ritual, is ritual

- If a person played *See you in the Beyond the Shroud* or *ephilim* extensively, they would be enacting ritual correspondences in conjunction with real world natural cycles to produce imaginative shifts in consciousness. They are doing ritual.
- Especially the case with solo RPG's
- Especially the case with Nordic LARP





THE MAGIC CIRCLE

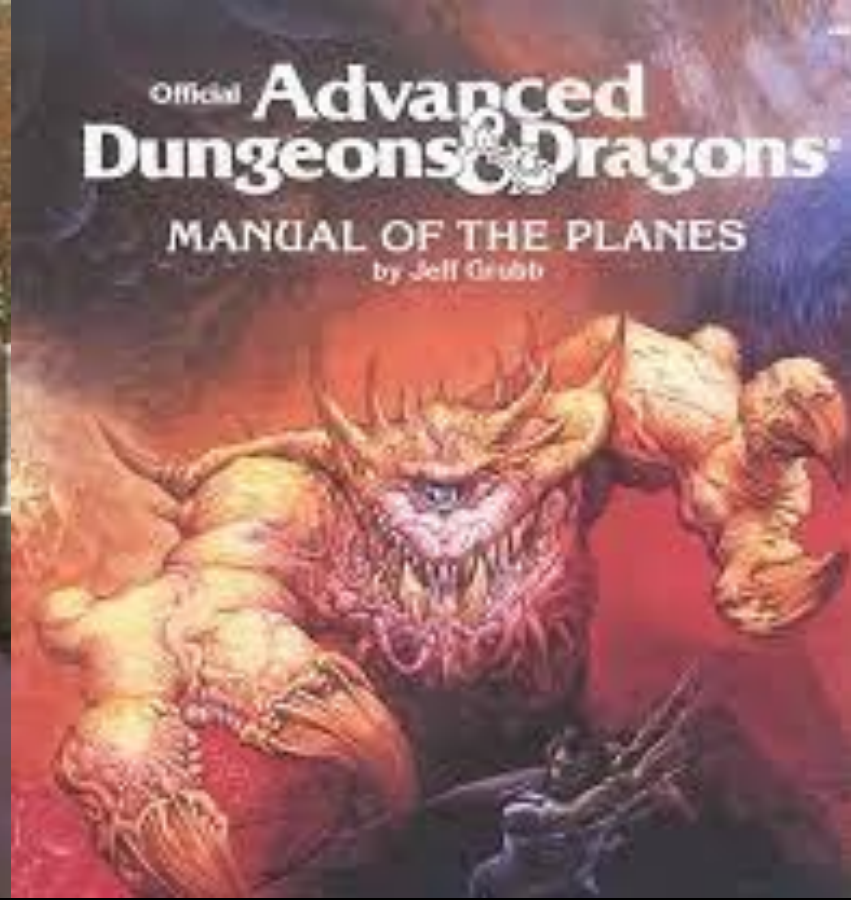
Scoring a goal



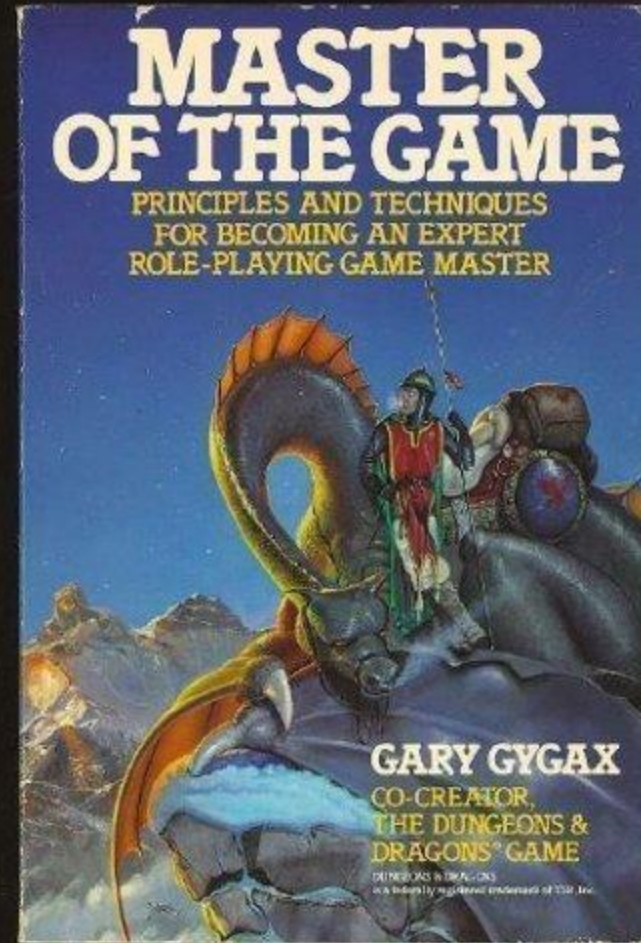
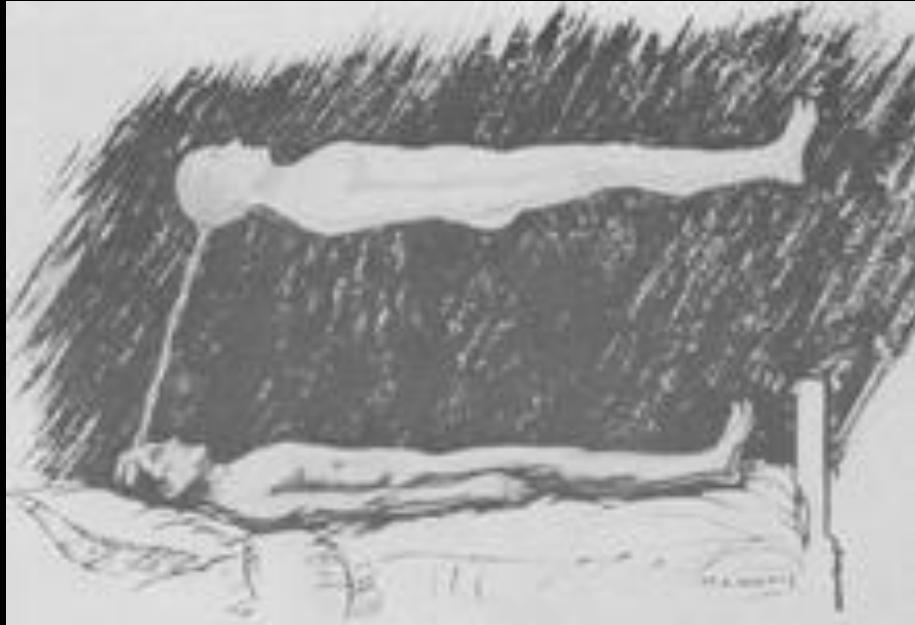
THE REAL WORLD

Kicking a ball into a net





State change as astral projection and planar travel





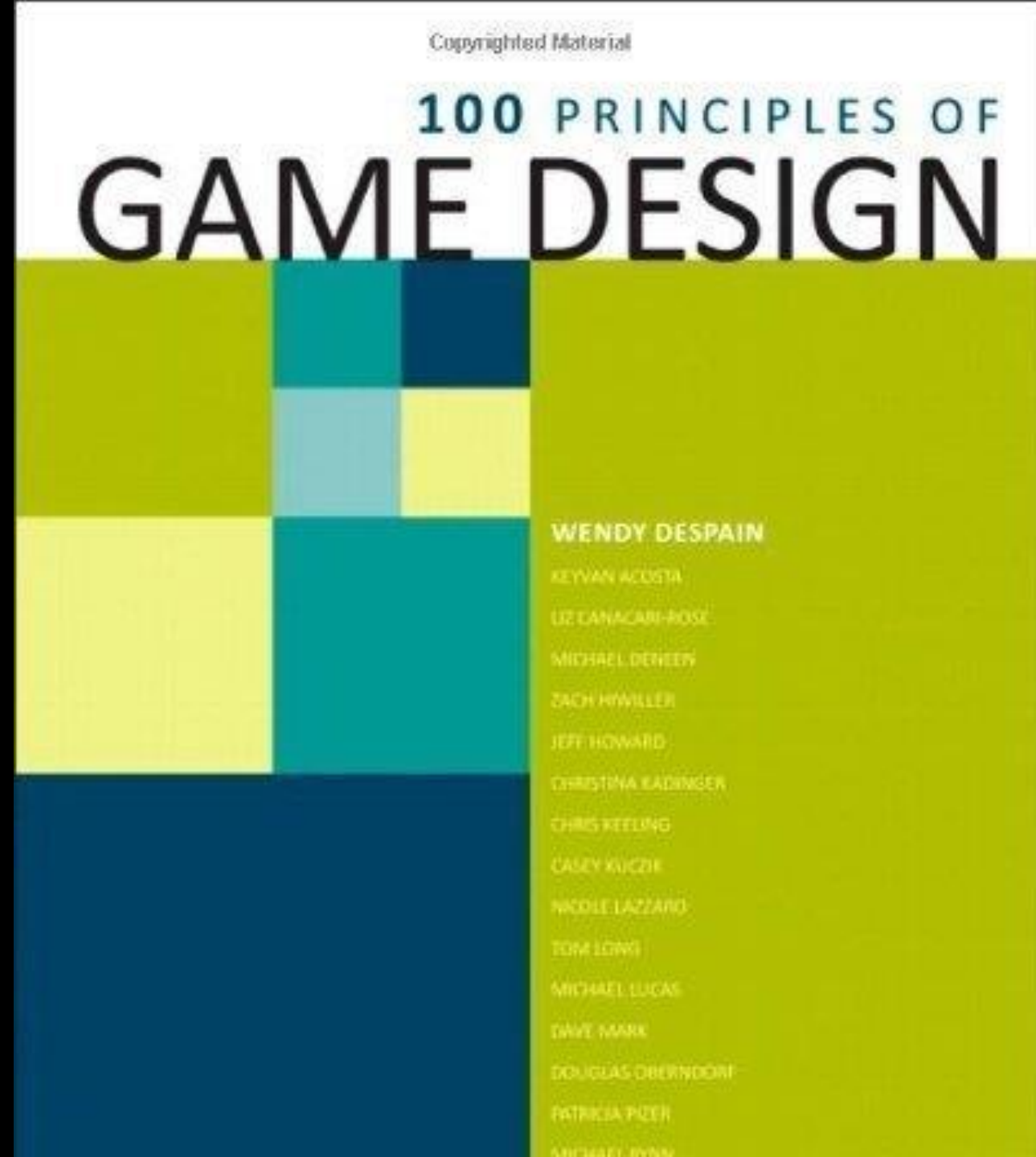
Shifting states means visiting other worlds (and other realms of the mind)

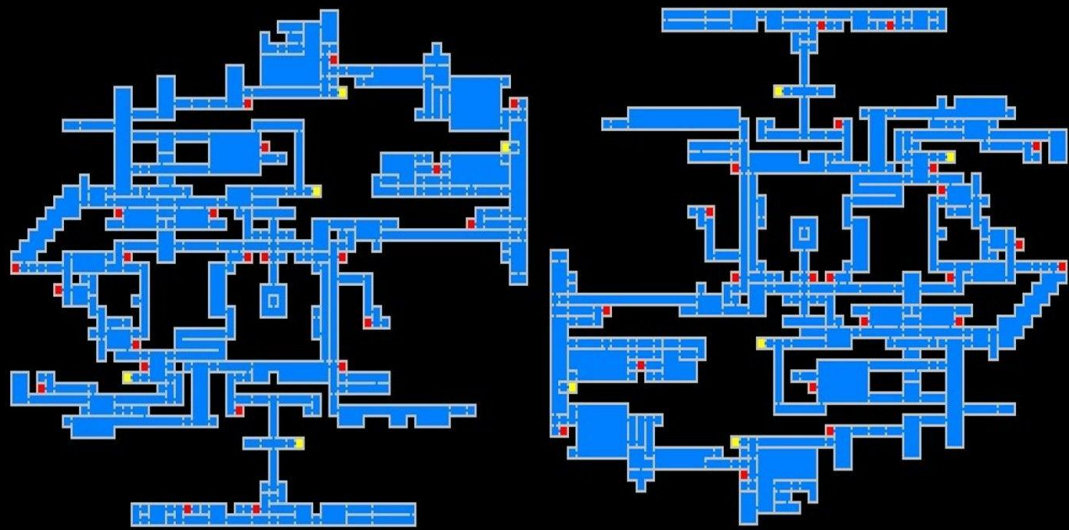


Games can facilitate state change through ritual (what Pete Carroll would call “theurgy,” i.e. elaborate ceremonial magick)

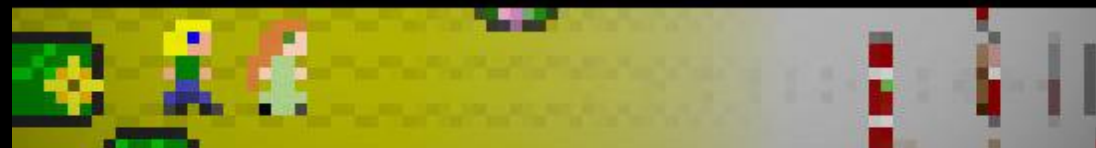
Howard's Law of Occult Design

- “THE POWER OF SECRET SIGNIFICANCE IS DIRECTLY PROPORTIONAL TO SEEMING INNOCENCE AND SIMPLICITY”
- Hidden depth & secret significance
- What I was actually talking about was deep games





Passage



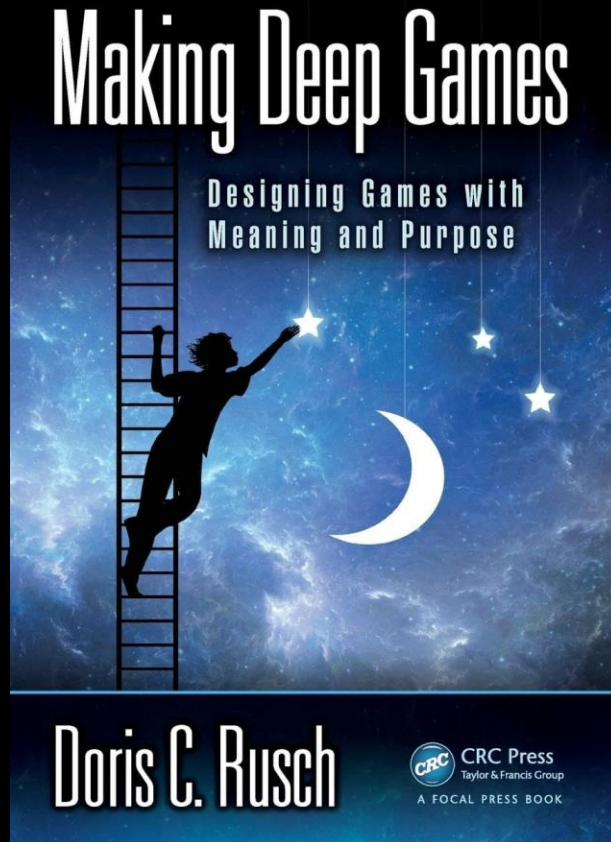
OCCULT GAMES = ANY GAME WITH HIDDEN DEPTH

EX: ROHRER'S *PASSAGE* MORE OCCULT IN THIS SENSE THAN HIS *CORDIAL MINUET*

Passage



DEEP GAMES = DORIS RUSCH



RUSCH IDENTIFIES AS A WITCH AND SEES THIS AS KEY TO HER PRACTICE

DEEP GAMES = EXPRESS A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL METAPHOR

EXPERIENTIAL METAPHOR = METAPHOR CONCEIVED OF AS AN “ABSTRACT STRUCTURE” ALSO KNOWN AS AN “EXPERIENTIAL GESTALT” (A TERM FURTHER DEVELOPED BY RUSCH’S MENTEE AT THE SINGAPORE MIT GAMBIT Game

Of or pertaining to undirected and spontaneously playful behaviour.

1940–

1940 This excess-energy must be expended (without purpose) in some way, most usually in play-activity, called *ludic activity*.

L. E. Hinsie & J. Shatzky, *Psychiatric Dictionary* 323/2 ...

1969 *Ludic*, or playful, elements can be found in just about any sector of human culture.

P. L. Berger, *Rumor of Angels* iii. 76 ...

1971 *Ludic* play and symbolism are among the defining characteristics of humanity.

D. G. Boyle, *Lang. & Thinking in Human Development* vi. 65 ...

Man, Play and Games

The background of the slide features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent silhouettes of soccer players in various dynamic poses, such as running and kicking a ball, set against a light, hazy background.

CAILLOIS' FOUR TYPES OF GAMES:

- 1) AGON (CONFLICT)
- 2) ALEA (CHANCE)
- 3) MIMESIS (IMITATION OR MAKE-BELIEVE)
- 4) ILINX (VERTIGO)



MANY CURRENTS INTERSECT IN PLAYFUL OCCULTISM

A *KALAS* IN THE WAY
ALLUDED TO BY KENNETH
GRANT WHEN HE
DISCUSSES THE LEFT HAND
PATH

BUT MORE IN THE MANNER
OF WATER THAN
ELECTRICITY



Because occultism consists of currents, **tracing their influence** allows us to **tap into their energy**

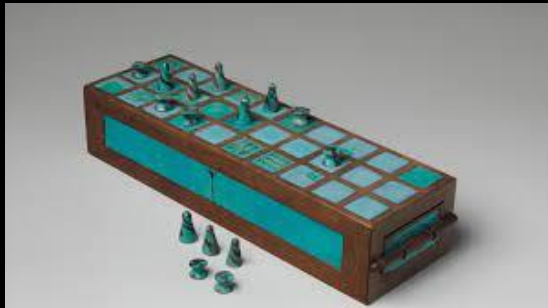
- SANSKRIT: KALAS
- FLOW OF WATER & ELECTRICITY
- THIS CURRENT MANIFESTS THROUGH **INFLUENCE** IN THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF **INFLUX**
- LHP SOURCE MATERIAL AND IDEAS ENERGIZE THE GAME DESIGNERS WHO USE THEM
- UNDERSTANDING INFLUENCE CAN HELP US TO PICK UP THE CURRENT



**“SIGILS ARE MONOGRAMS OF THOUGHT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ENERGY.” *BOOK OF PLEASURE*
GAMES CAN ALSO INDUCE TRANCE STATE (I.E. GNOSIS)**



ALEA: DIVINATION & GAMES CONNECTED









ENOCHIAN CHESS of the GOLDEN DAWN

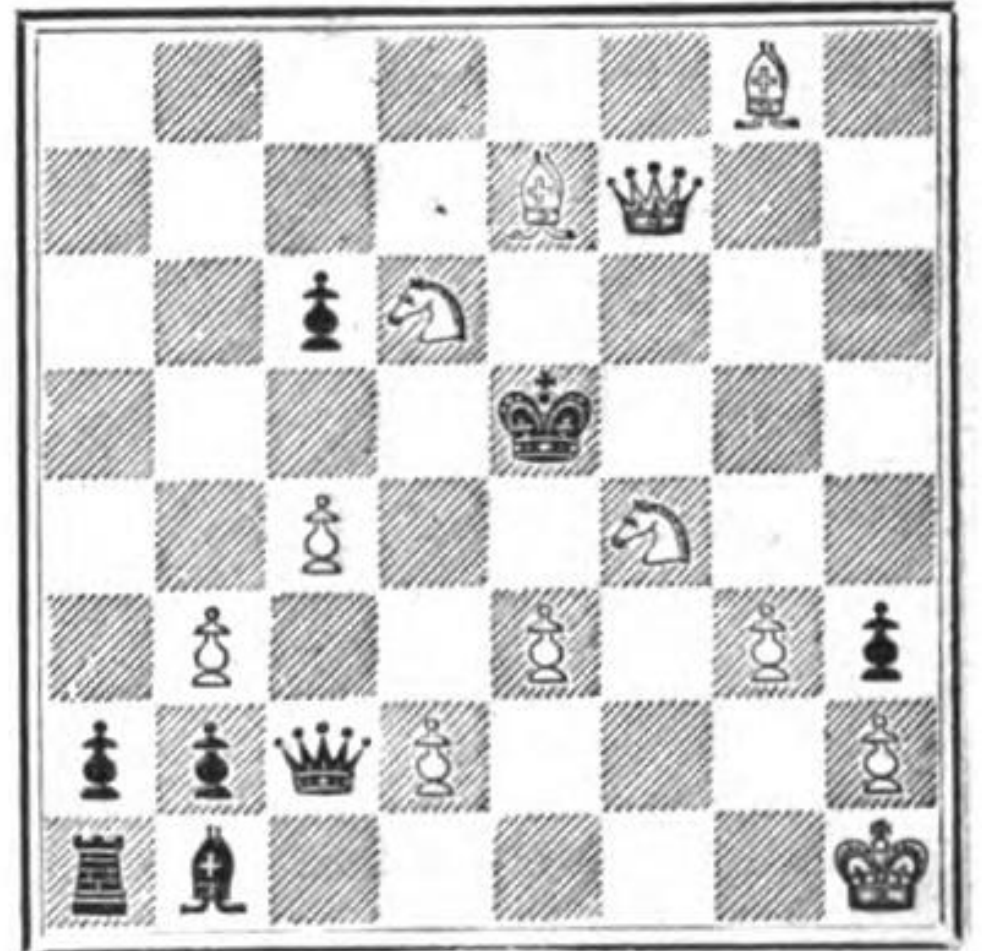


A Four-Handed Chess Game

Chris Zalewski

No. 987.—By E. A. CROWLEY,
LONDON.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White compels Black to mate in
two moves.

CROWLEY & CHESS

- “ON THE SURFACE, THERE SEEMS LITTLE RELATION BETWEEN MAGICK AND CHESS, BUT MY ABILITY TO PLAY THREE GAMES SIMULTANEOUSLY BLINDFOLD WAS NOW VERY USEFUL. I HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN VISUALIZING THE ASTRAL TEMPLE BY AN EFFORT OF WILL, AND OF COURSE I WAS PERFECTLY ABLE TO WATCH THE RESULTS OF THE INVOCATIONS WITH MY ASTRAL EYES.” *THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY*

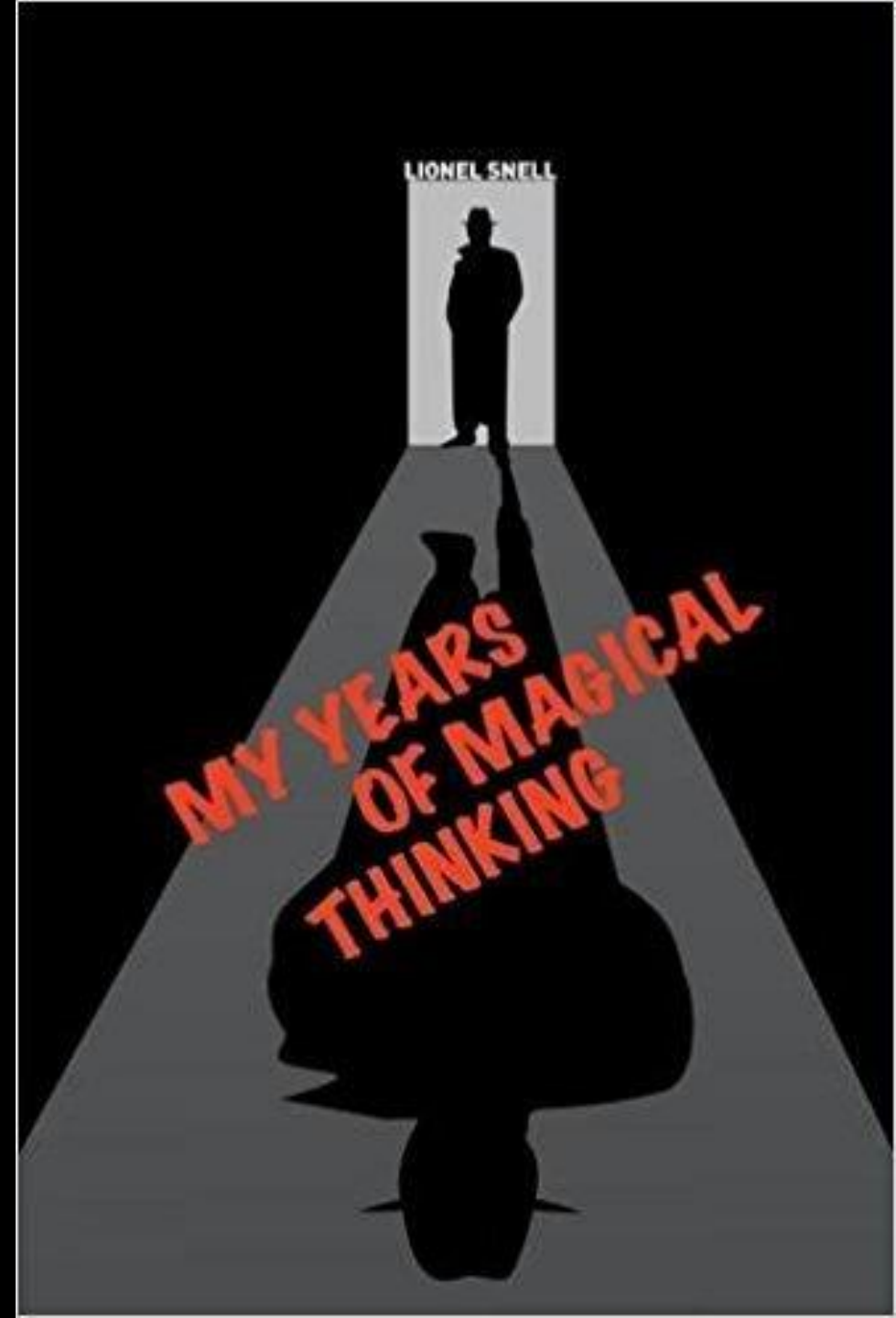
RITUALISTIC

- CAILLOIS: ILINX (VERTIGO GAMES) ARE SHAMANIC
- CAILLOIS' FOUR TYPES OF PLAY ARE "AGON" (CONFLICT-BASED PLAY), "MIMESIS" (IMITATIVE OR MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY), "ALEA" (CHANCE-BASED PLAY), AND "ILINX" (GAMES THAT THRILL THROUGH DELIBERATE DISORIENTATION" (12).



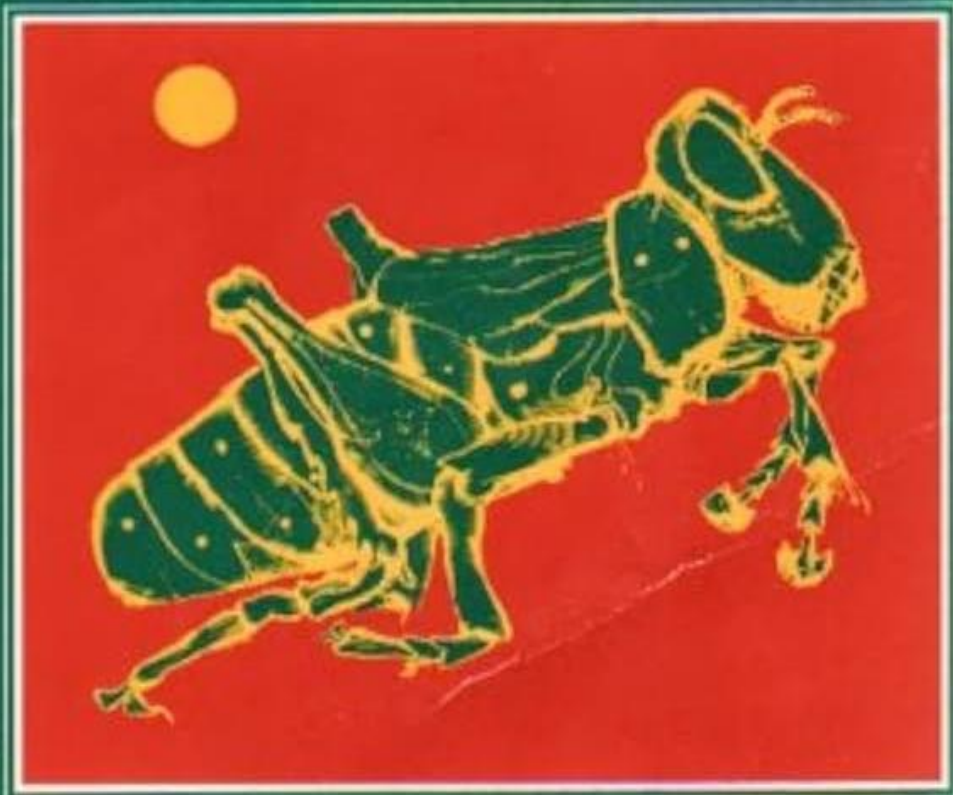
Games Layer: Lionell Snell

- “To an outsider this process might seem to be taken too seriously to be described as ‘a game’, but to someone who has practiced divination, the first important consideration is that the particular set of symbols was a **personal choice**, and that the diviner, having made that choice, then **agrees to accept the rules of that particular set of symbols and to act according to those rules**—just as the chess player accepts and abides by a set of rules that might seem arbitrary to a non-player” (64, emphasis mine).



The Grasshopper

GAMES, LIFE AND UTOPIA



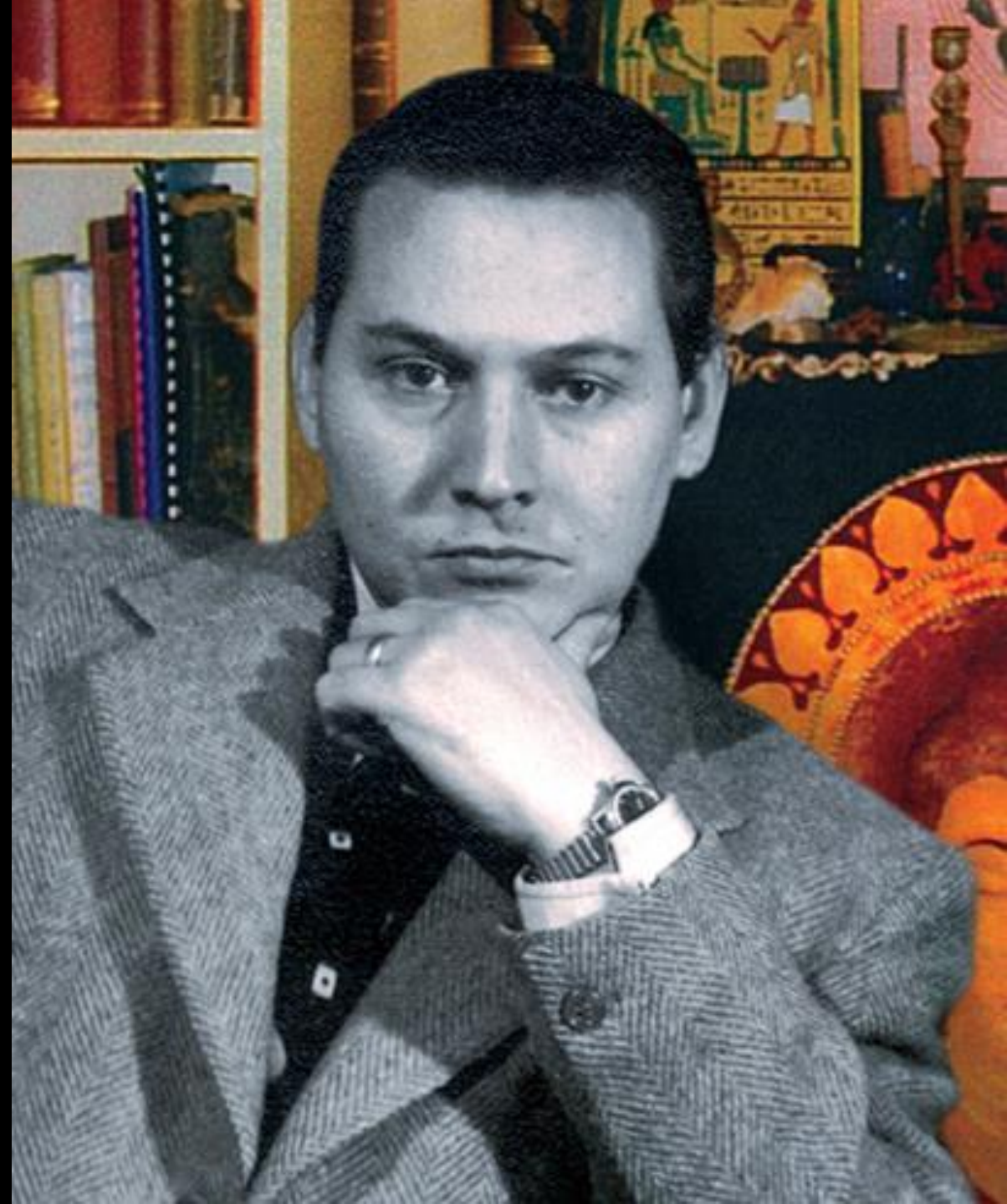
LUSORY ATTITUDE

- "TO PLAY A GAME IS TO ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE A SPECIFIC STATE OF AFFAIRS [PRELUSORY GOAL], USING ONLY MEANS PERMITTED BY RULES [LUSORY MEANS], WHERE THE RULES PROHIBIT USE OF MORE EFFICIENT IN FAVOUR OF LESS EFFICIENT MEANS [CONSTITUTIVE RULES], AND WHERE THE RULES ARE ACCEPTED JUST BECAUSE THEY MAKE POSSIBLE SUCH ACTIVITY [LUSORY ATTITUDE]."

(54-55)

KENNETH GRANT: TYPHONIAN GNOSIS

- THE PLAY OF BEING AND NON-BEING (IAN C. EDWARDS)
- THE SORCERER PLAYS BETWEEN THAT WHICH IS, THAT WHICH IS NOT, THAT WHICH EXISTS NEGATIVELY
- **PLAY WITH THE NEGATIVELY EXISTENT ONES**
- **LEFT HAND PATH**
- ENTITIES THAT DO NOT EXIST SO INTENSELY THAT CAST A SHADOW ON THE WORLD
- ANDREW CHUMBLEY'S CITATION OF THE SUFIS AND THEIR BLACK LIGHT (SEE THE RENSEP ARTICLE ABOUT THIS)



THE GRASSHOPPER
Games, Life and Utopia
BERNARD SUITS



b INTRODUCTION BY THOMAS HURKA
broadview encore editions

LUSORY
ATTITUDE =
TANGENTIAL
TANTRA

WEAVING FATE
*Hypersigils, Changing The Past
& Telling True Lies*

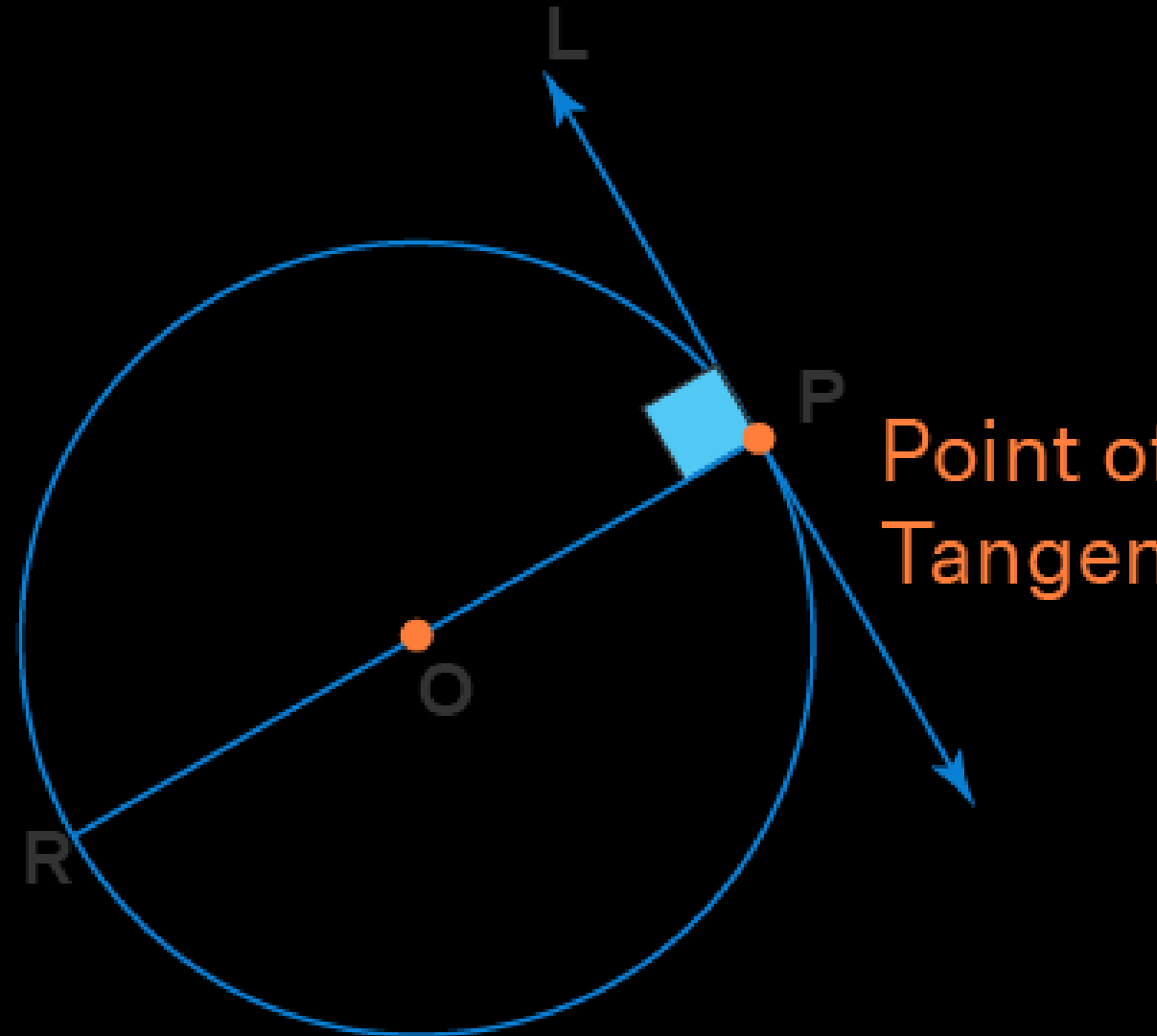


AIDAN WACHTER



IF NOT THROUGH WILL, THEN HOW? ORACULAR TRANSMISSION MANIFESTS THROUGH TANGENTIAL TANTRA

- GRANT DEFINES “TANGENTIAL TANTRUM”
- “A TERM COINED BY FRATER AOSSIC TO DENOTE A SUDDEN AND OBLIQUELY MANIFESTED ORACLE OR TRANSMISSION RECEIVED—OFTEN UNEXPECTEDLY—OUTSIDE NORMAL RITUAL PROCEDURE” (550).
- SUCH AN OCCURRENCE CAN ALMOST ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A TANGENT, I.E. A DIGRESSIVE ANECDOTE SEEMINGLY UNRELATED AND TANGENTIAL TO THE CAREFULLY-REGULATED, LINEAR RITUAL BEING DESCRIBED.
- ALSO, A TANGENT IN THE GEOMETRICAL SENSE (I.E. GOING OFF AT AN OBLIQUE ANGLE)
- ALSO, A TANTRUM IN THE PUNNING SENSE OF A CHILDISH FIT, DISRUPTING THE DECORUM OF A STately CEREMONIAL WORKING



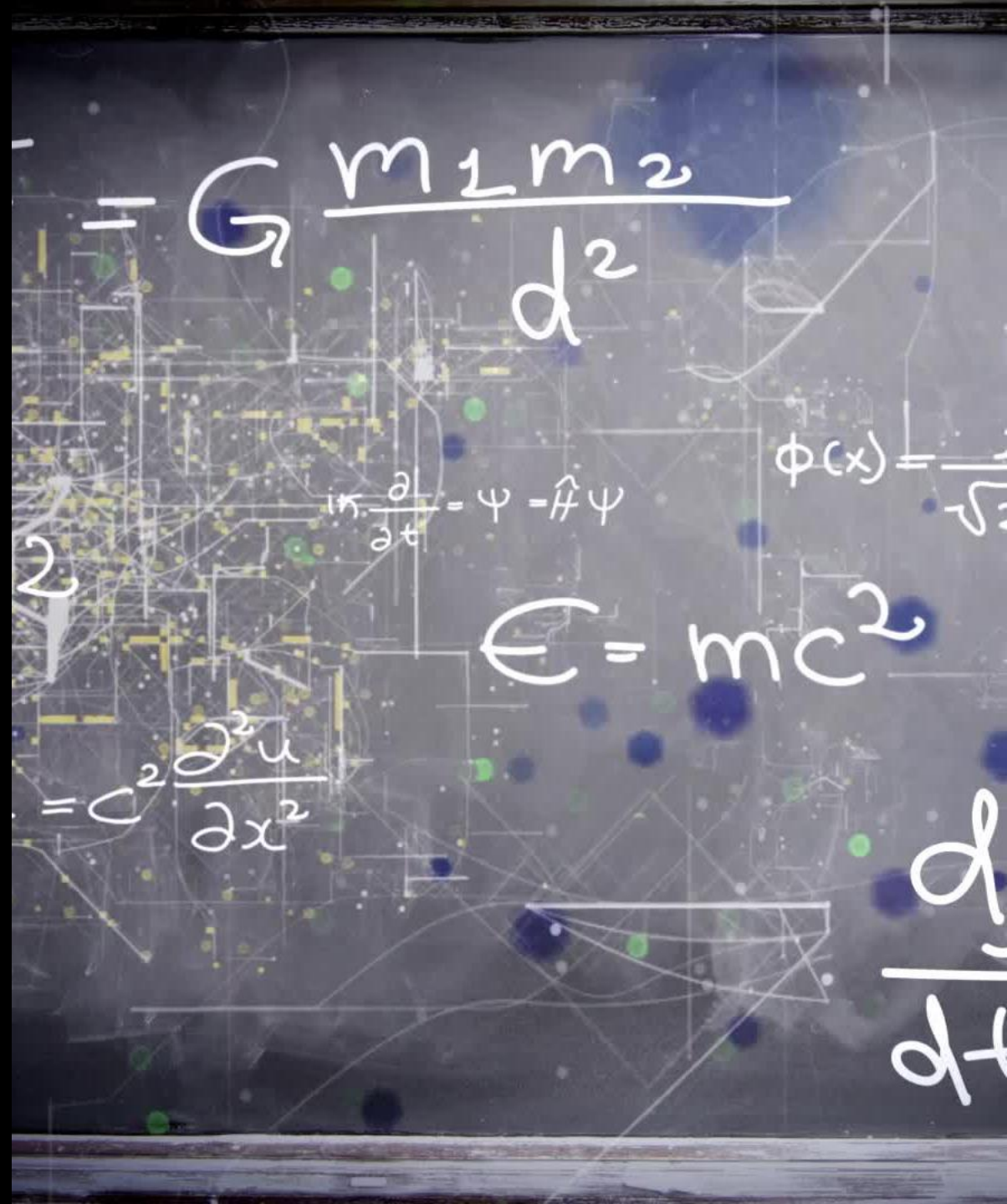
A SPIDER WITH HUMAN HEAD APPEARS IN AGAINST THE LIGHT

- Grant translates the word “Tantra” as “To weave (as a spider its web)” in *The Ninth Arch* glossary (550)
- Also, “a received teaching of non-human authorship” (550)—a definition that Grant also ascribes to the word “Qabalah”
- Grant equates Tangential Tantra with synchronicities



TANGENTIAL TANTRA

- GRANT'S INSISTENCE ON THE VALUE OF BLEED (IN THE FORM OF UNIVERSE B ENTERING UNIVERSE B)
- GRANT'S INSISTENCE ON THE CATCHING OF A CURRENT



LUDOMANTIC LHP IS METAPHYSICAL TRANSGRESSION THROUGH THE SIMULATED BREAKING OF TABOOS

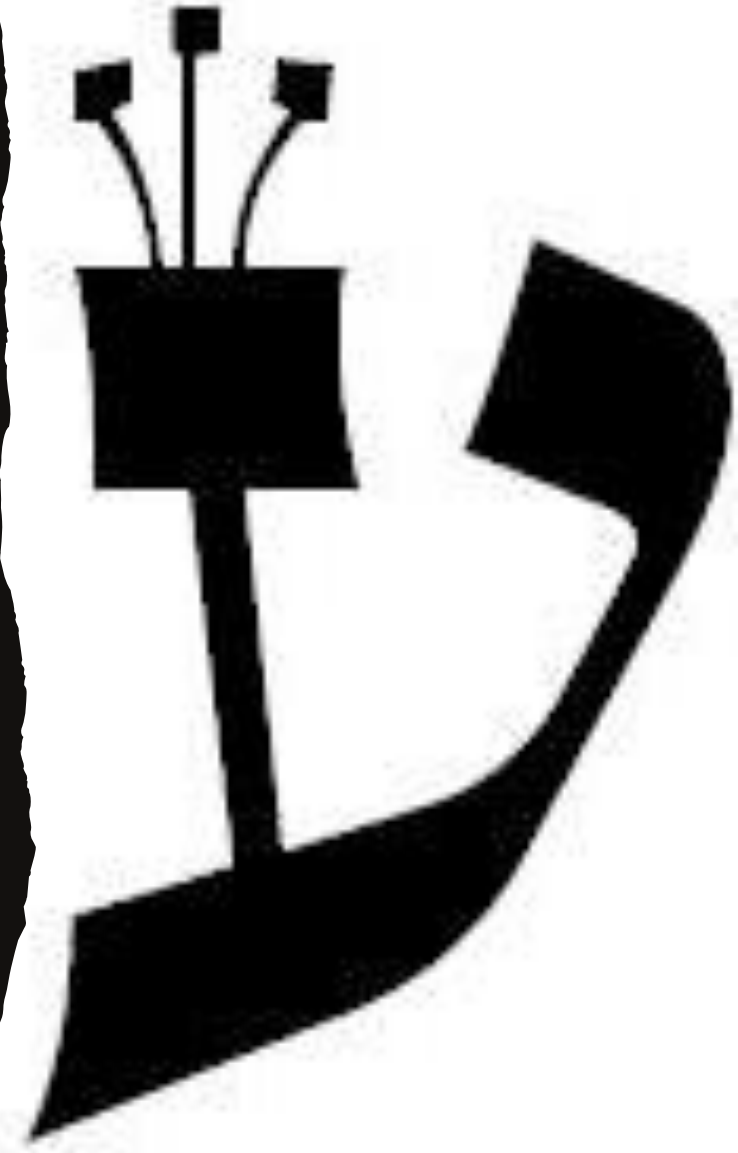
- Non-being against being
- The influx of UNIVERSE B and its negatively existent ones (FICTION understand as real, IMAGINAL) into UNIVERSE A through play
- For Grant, this happens through a bloody portal, which is Da'ath: “the ancients were aware of the crack in space through which such an invasion could pour, and more than one Mystery School has posited Daath as the point of entry” (89).

FICTION & PLAY

- TO *DESCRIBE* NON-EXISTENT THINGS AS REAL IS *FICTION*
- TO *ACT AS IF* NON-EXISTENT THINGS ARE REAL IS *PLAY* (MIMESIS)

Bloody Vagina as
Portal of Da'ath to Universe
B = THE VIA NEGATIVA

- “The *ain* (eye) as *nia*, is the eye reversed: not the eye of the light, but the eye of the dark, the occult eye, the vulva in its negative phase, the witch-moon of blood, the lunar eclipse” (Grant *Night Side of Eden* 49).



In games, this happens through BLEED

Bleed

From Nordic Larp Wiki

Bleed is when emotions bleeds over between player or character, in either direction.

Snipped from the [Jeepform](#) dictionary, in 2009:

Bleed is experienced by a player when her thoughts and feelings are influenced by those of her character, or vice versa. With increasing bleed, the border between player and character becomes more and more transparent. It makes sense to think of the degree of bleed as a measure of how separated different levels of play (actual/inner/meta) are.

Bleed is instrumental for horror role-playing: It is often harder to scare the player through the character than the other way around. An overt secluded dice roll against a player's perception stat is likely to make the character more catious.

A classic example of bleed is when a player's affection for another player carries over into the game or influences her character's perception of the other's character.

Many jeep games rely on bleed either to influence player's actions or to achieve higher purposes in the premise. For example, Fat man down uses bleed to encourage the players to reflect over society's treatment of fat people. Playing Doubt close to home regularly causes bleed as a consequence of using own experiences in the game and re-living relationship situations or reflecting on relationships. Sometimes, the entire purpose of a game is to create bleed.

PLAY AS A MODEL OR PARADIGM
ALLOWS FOR FLEXIBILITY
BETWEEN FICTION AND NON-
FICTION, BEING AND NON-BEING

- PLAY AS IN THE HIDE-AND-GO-SEEK OF ABSOLUTE SUBJECTIVITY OF THE ONE MIND AS IT INTERACTS WITH MAYA, UNDERSTOOD AS THE ILLUSION OF OBJECTIVITY (AND OBJECTIFICATION)
- SHIVA AND SHAKTI
- KRISHNA AND RADHA
- SEE IAIN SINCLAIR'S *Being and Non-Being in Occult Experience*



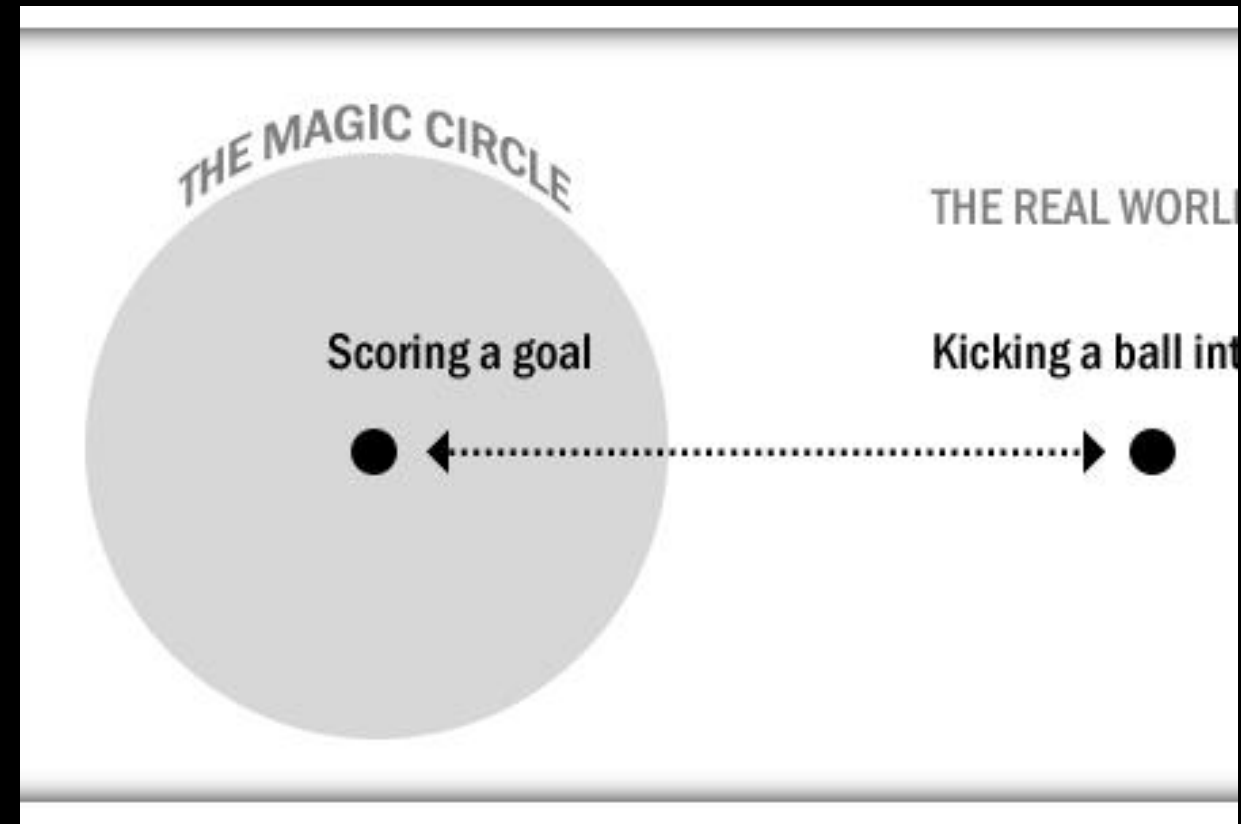
LUDIC OCCULT TECHNIQUE = EMBRACE BLEED

- IN PLAY, IT BECOMES SAFER TO LET THE MAGIC CIRCLE BREAK
- TO ALLOW DELIBERATE INFLUX OF DARK EXPERIENCE, WHICH GRANT SEES AS KEY TO MAGIC:
- IN JEEPFORM/NORDIC LARP, THE DELIBERATE OVERLAP OF PLAYERS' OUT-OF-GAME EMOTIONS AND CONCERNS WITH CHARACTERS' IN-GAME EMOTIONS AND CONCERNS IS CALLED BLEED
- JUST AS TRADITIONAL TANTRIC PRACTITIONERS EMBRACE BLOOD AS A TABOO, SO LHP GAME DESIGN INVOLVES THE EMBRACE OF BLEED

Non-Being, Negative Existence, Fiction & Play

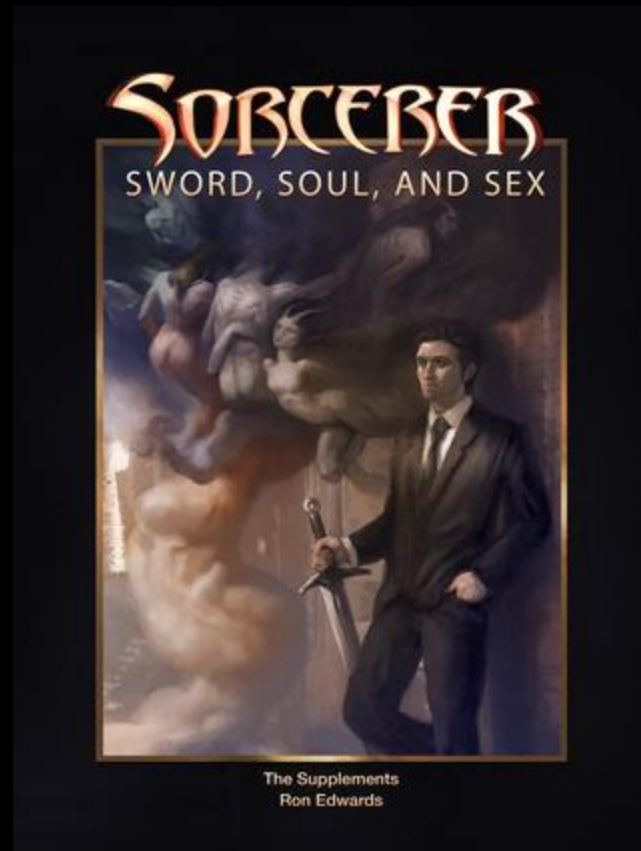
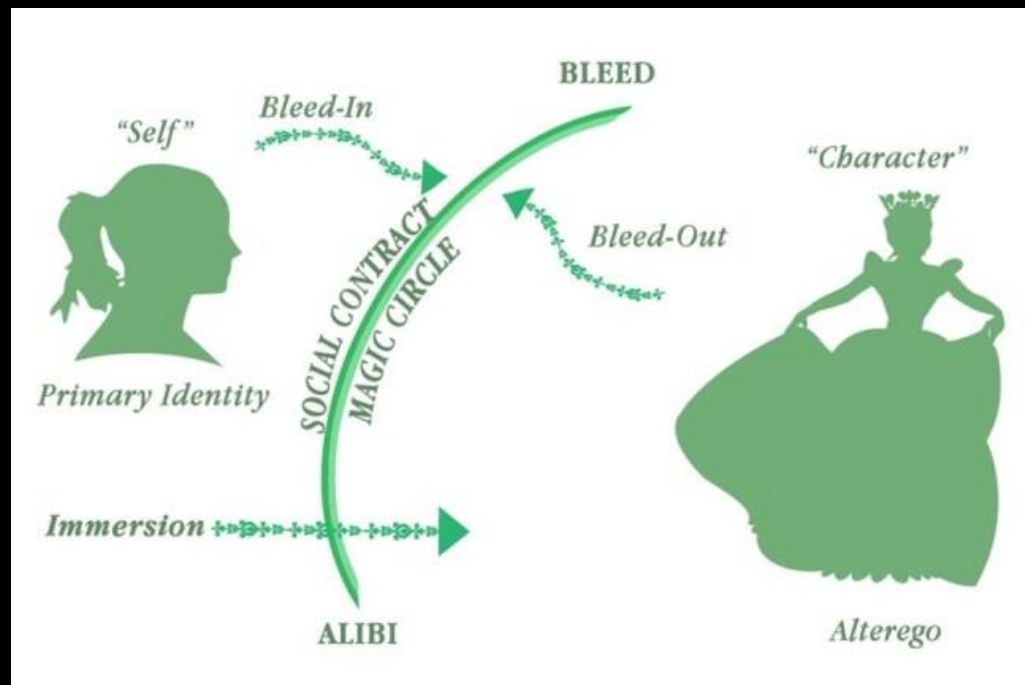
- ALMOST THE REVERSE OF THE IMAGINAL. GRANT QUOTING BLAVATSKY: “THE IDEA THAT THINGS CAN CEASE TO EXIST AND STILL BE, IS A FUNDAMENTAL ONE IN EASTERN PSYCHOLOGY” (79).
- NIGHTSIDE OF INVISIBLE SUN = THE REVERSE SIDE OF A GAME THAT EXPRESSLY DENIES IT IS “REAL OCCULTISM” (WHILE TAKING MORE INSPIRATION FROM REAL OCCULTISM THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER GAME)
- ONTOLOGICAL PARADOXES (IS THE REVERSE SIDE OF NON-BEING REAL? WHAT ABOUT THE REVERSE SIDE OF A SURREALIST GAME THAT WAS ALREADY MORE THAN REAL?)
- INVISIBLE SUN’S NIGHTSIDE PLAYS WITHIN THESE PARADOXES

RIGHT HAND PATH MAGIC AND GAME STUDIES = CONTAINED MAGIC CIRCLE, NO BLEED



RESTRICTED

LEFT HAND PATH = BLEED (ALLOWING FORCES OF NON-BEING IN FROM THE OTHER SIDE)



RESTRICTED

ANDREW CHUMBLEY: CULTUS SABBATI

- CHUMBLEY'S WIDDERSHIN DANCE OF THE SUFI
- THIS LEFTWARD MOVEMENT
- LEFTHAND PATH
- MOVING AGAINST THE CURRENT
- A SYSTEM OF MAGICAL PRACTICE SO DECEPTIVELY ELEGANT (AND SO UTTERLY DEEP)
- SABBATIC CRAFT IS A DEEP GAME, PLAYFUL BUT PACKED AT EVERY MOMENT WITH EXPERIENTIAL METAPHOR



The
AZOËTIA

Andrew D. Chumbley



A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft

QUTUB defines the focus of the Magical Current. Its form reflects the Design; a web of inter-connection through which the Current manifests; an evocatory poem of 72 verses articulates the transmutative process of the Crooked Path; 11 talismanic illustrations combine to express the teleamata of the Way; a commentary demonstrates in microcosm the macrocosmic pattern of the Design; the Rite of the Opposer reveals the Gateway to the Path of the flesh!

There is a stream of initiatic power which flows through the Body of the Gnosis, moulding the Image of the Adept, casting the shadow-form of the Great Opposer -- here its Path is traced . . . from the Yatukih Sorcery of Ancient Persia, through the Yezidic Cult of Shaitan and the widdershins dance of the Sufi, to its present-day recension within the arcana of the Sabbatic Tradition.



SUFI WHIRLING =
ILINX/VERTIGO GAME





linox = vertigo game
(literally whirlpool)

PLAY & DIVINATION

- TREATING CHANCE AS FATE, I.E. CAILLOIS' "ALEA" (GAMES OF CHANCE) APPLIED TO DIVINATION
- ALEA MEETS ILINX







ownload from  ID 67089304 Nelson P. Jewell | Dreamstime.com



linox = vertigo games



GAMES TO PLAY IN THE DARK



A Guide to Summoning Spirits, Divining the
Future, and Invoking the Supernatural

BY LUCIA PETERS

PARTY VERTIGO GAMES
FOR CONTACTING THE OTHER SIDE

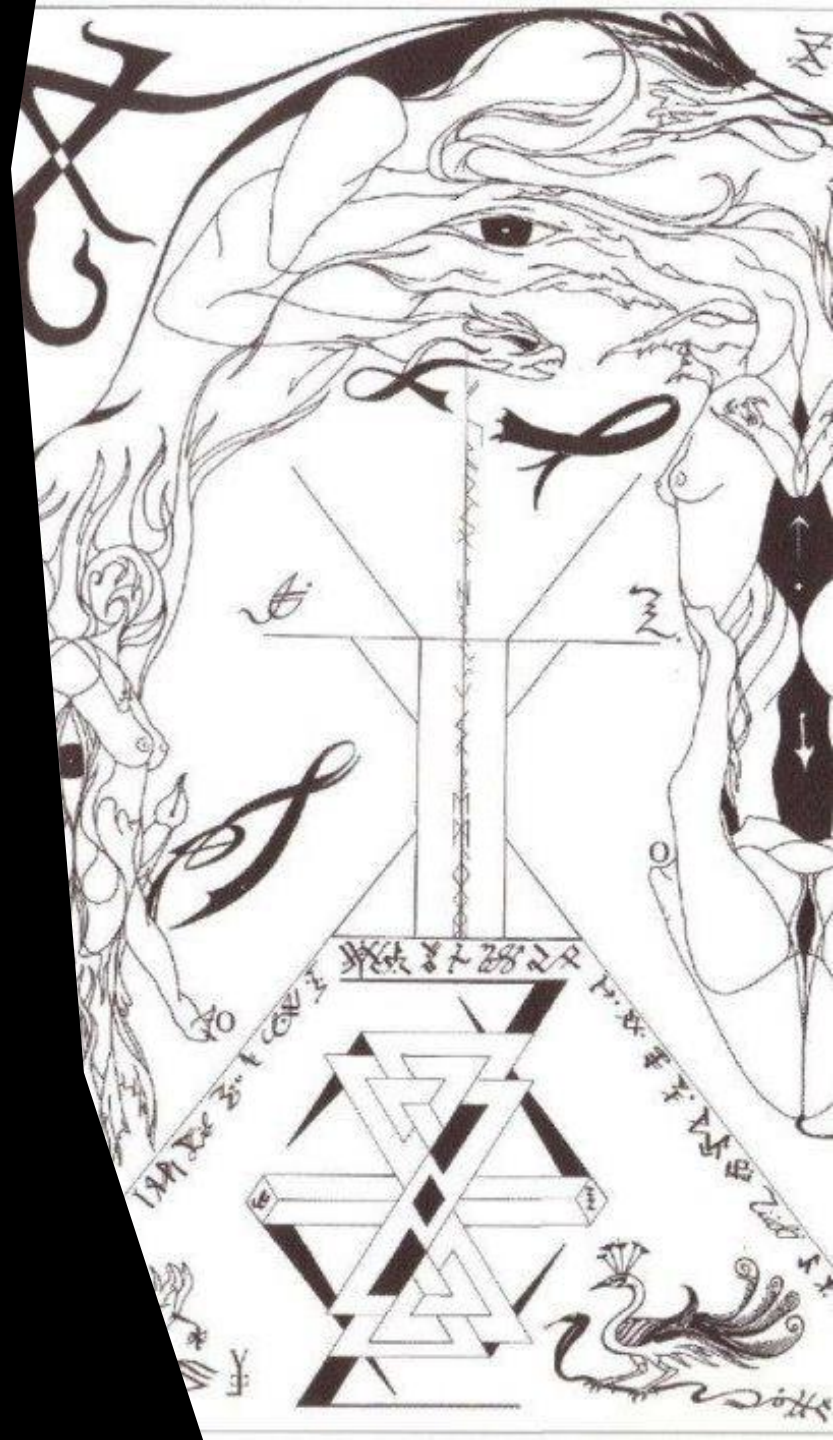
Left Hand Path



Unicursal labyrinth = vertigo game



CULTUS
SABBATI =
VERTIGO
GAMES FOR
SPIRIT
CONTACT



OCCULT PRACTICE

INTERSECTION OF BEING AND NON-BEING

- ENTITIES THAT ARE REAL, UNREAL, HALF-REAL
- NOT JUST IMAGINARY BUT IMAGINAL (CORBIN). SEE INTRODUCTION TO BOOK OF ANTITHESES
- NEGATIVELY EXISTENT ENTITIES: SO UNREAL THAT THEY ARE REAL
- GRANT UNDERSTAND THIS AS LILA (SACRED PLAY OF SHIVA, PURE CONSCIOUSNESS)



LILA (SACRED PLAY)

- BEING AND NON-BEING IN OCCULT EXPERIENCE
- SINCLAIR SPEAKS OF “THE PLAY OF BEING AND NON-BEING”



PLAY AS A MODEL OR PARADIGM
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CHUMBLEY & GRANT: NEGATIVELY EXISTENT ONES

- “ONTOLOGICAL FLICKERING” (AMEEL)
- THE EXPERIENCE OF OCCULT PRACTICE, IN WHICH BEING AND NON-BEING BLUR
- JULIAN VAYNE OF VAIHINGER “PHILOSOPHY OF AS-IF”
- IN WHICH THE SORCERER IS IN THE PRESENCE OF THAT WHICH IS, THAT WHICH IS NOT, THAT WHICH IS MORE THAN REAL, THAT WHICH IS “HALF-REAL” (JUUL’S FORMULATION)
- THE “NEGATIVELY EXISTENT ONES,” THE DENIZENS OF UNIVERSE B, ARE MOST DIRECTLY (AND LEAST RISKILY) ENCOUNTERED THROUGH PLAY

OCCULT PRACTICE IS INHERENTLY LUDIC AND CAN BE APPROACHED THROUGH THE LUSORY ATTITUDE

- RECOGNIZING THIS **LIBERATES MAGICAL PRACTICE** FROM EXCESSIVE GRAVITAS
- **PROTECTS US FROM THE POTENTIALLY SELF-DESTRUCTIVE** EFFECTS OF DEALING WITH DARK FORCES
- WHILE ALSO ALLOWING FOR DEPTH
- IT **PREVENTS THE MONOMANIA** (AND INHERENT ETHICAL RISK) OF “CHANGE THROUGH WILL”
- AND ALLOWS FOR THE **SPONTANEOUS EMERGENCE OF SYNCHRONICITY & SPIRIT CONTACT** (TANGENTIAL TANTRA)

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