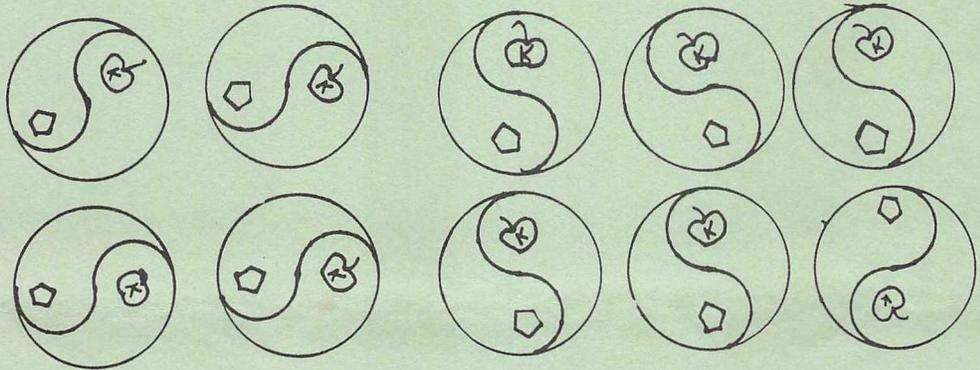
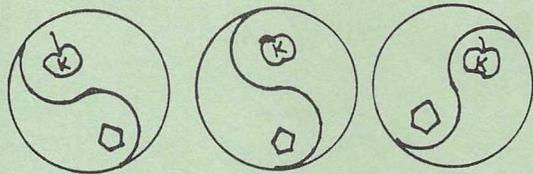
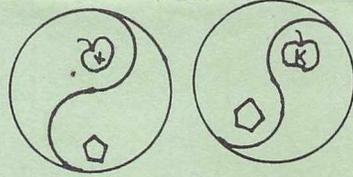
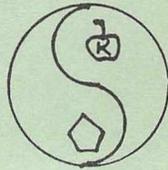
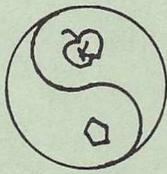


The Diagonal Relationship 17



... AND WHEN HIS MAJESTY SAYS
"GREETINGS, GATE, LET'S CORONATE!"
YOUR HOLINESS STEPS FORWARD TO
THE FANFARE OF
SAXOPHONES ...

AND I SAY:
"AFTER AWHILE,
MASTER
OF GUILF"



AN
91



This is the April, 1981, issue of *The Diagonal Relationship*. Editor & Publisher: Arthur D. Hlavaty, 250 Coligni Ave., New Rochelle, NY 10801, 914-632-1594. Consultant: Adrienne Fein. All material written by the editor, unless otherwise indicated. Copyright 1981 by Arthur D. Hlavaty. All rights returned to contributors. This is Volume 5, Number 1; Whole Number 17; W.A.S.T.E. Paper # 245. DR is available for \$1, letter of comment, trade, or artwork. If there is an X after your name on the envelope, you should send at least one of the above if you wish to receive the next issue.

A MEDITATION ON THE MAJOR ARCANA

DISCLAIMER: There are those to whom the Bible is Absolute Truth, not to be questioned. There are those to whom the Bible is Evil, the Opiate of the Masses, or something, also not to be looked at. Of course, both groups are equally slavish. There is a third group which can, if necessary, study the Bible as literature, for indeed someone who is ignorant of the Bible is fundamentally incapable of understanding Western culture.

I mention that because I am going to talk about the Tarot, which inspires somewhat similar passions in those who are faced with it. True Believers may find what follows blasphemous, or at least smart-assed. More materialistic types may wonder why I am messing around with this mystical bullshit, and whether I am trying to convert them.

What I am doing is something analogous to the Bible as Literature. I am taking the Tarot, and specifically the Major Arcana, as a symbol system which has survived for hundreds of years, being studied and at times modified by a variety of artists, writers, and metaphysicians. I suspend both belief and disbelief on the question

of whether it can be used to "read minds" or "tell the future," and I ask you to do likewise.

The Fool. A person of ambiguous gender, carrying a tramp's bindle. Usually shown at the edge of a cliff, with a small dog yapping at hir heels. S/he looks innocent.

S/he is out on the road, free of society's rules and constraints. S/he makes hir own way. And yet, she is very close to the edge. The law of gravity is, by definition, one that cannot be disobeyed. One can obey it by living on an Earth that holds us, that will not suddenly vanish & leave us in the middle of nowhere. One can obey it while seeming to disobey it, as the Wright Brothers did. One can obey by trying to disobey, as Icarus did, and not knowing enough, splatter on the ground below.

I remember many Fools from my days in the Haight-Ashbury (1966-8). Ambiguous in gender, free of as many of Society's rules as they could be, walking close to the edge. Some pulled back (as I fear I did); some went over the cliff and splattered; and I do believe that some flew away.

I *The Magician.* He stands behind a table on which lie the pentacle, the sword, the wand, and the cup--traditional symbols of the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water). He gestures (hypnotically) with another wand.

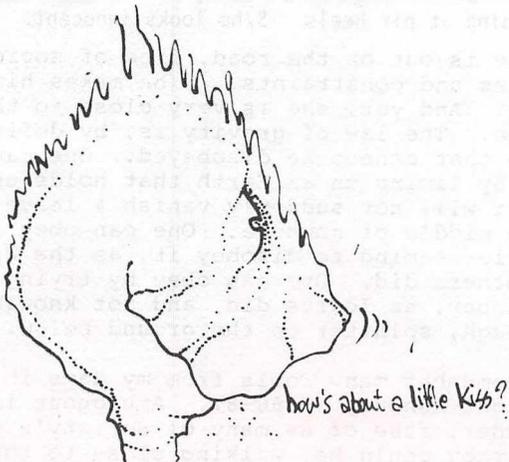
Some would call this man Trickster--the Snake Oil Salesman, the Prestidigitator whose hand is quicker than the eye. And yet there are cultures where the Trickster is seen not as a figure of evil, but as a Creator, as Coyote or Anansi the Maker of All Things.

I myself like the Trickster archetype. I see the Magician as representative of the shamans who have transformed human history. Their field has been different in different cultures; it may be Science, or Religion, or Psychiatry, or Stand-Up Comedy. It may also be Bullshit, for those who see the shaman as Nothing But a parasite, living off the hard work of others are not entirely mistaken, as indeed some of them are.

In William Irwin Thompson's system, the shaman is opposed by the hunter, the physical worker. In the short run, the shaman needs the hunter to provide food. But in the long run, it is the shamans who make the difference.

II *The Priestess.* A slender, solemn young woman, seated between two pillars, on a dark background, and holding a scroll.

She represents Creative Intuition. In Thompson's system, she is the Clown, the forerunner of the artist. To Jungians, she represents the *anima*, the woman within every man. I find the anima (and her brother, the *animus*) as constructs that would be useful, if nothing else, as fudge factors to explain why people have characteristics that, given their genitals, they are not "supposed" to have. But I also accept the idea that there is a female part to me. After all, as Richard Onley points out, any man who believes in heredity has to accept the fact that he is half woman.



III *The Empress.* A large, buxom, beautiful or handsome woman, crowned and seated upon a throne.

I see her as what has been called the Eternal Female: fertile, nourishing, comforting. She is Nature, or the Earth, personified as Mother and Goddess. And yet it must be emphasized that she is only one aspect of Woman, and thus hers only one possible path for women to follow.

IV *The Emperor.* A stern-faced, white-bearded man, seated upon a throne and holding a scepter.

The king, the owner, the manager, the boss. The man who gives the orders. If the Empress is the most female card in the deck, the Emperor is the most male. It seems to me that there are two common mistakes that can be made with the Emperor & the Empress: one is to assume that these are the only paths for man & woman, respectively. The other is to assume that the sexual attributions are purely cultural. We are mammals, as the sociobiologists keep reminding us, and thus our bodies, including the fact of gender, determine a great deal about us. We are human beings, a quantum leap above our mammalian kin in cranial capacity and thus able to transcend an ever-increasing amount of what our bodies would seem to prescribe for us. Any theory of "human nature" must accept both of those factors.

V *The Pope.* Another enthroned man, this one wearing a triple crown and making the traditional two-fingered sign of benediction. He has the traditional symbols of religious authority, the staff and the keys.

The Pope represents Big Church--religion as massive & powerful social institution, rather than as belief in human hearts. One could expand the definition to include not merely the official leader of Roman Catholicism, but every Authority whose followers consider him Infallible, whether religious, psychological, or philosophical.

And yet, one can see it in other terms. Alan Watts loved to point out that the Pope's earliest title was *pontifex*, the bridge builder, and so he called himself a Pope of sorts.

For the Discordian faith has another interpretation. To Discordians, a Pope is anyone who recognizes no higher Authority in matters of faith and morals than himself. Thus I am a Pope (Guilty I), and I invite you to declare yourself one too.

VI *The Lovers.* In the foreground, a man and a woman, naked. Above them, an angel, sheltering & blessing them.

This card appears in more different versions than the ones before, and I mention the picture that I prefer. To me, the essence of the card is that it represents the carnal and the spiritual forms of love together. One can see these as in conflict (as some interpreters do), but I prefer to see them harmonizing.

VII *The Chariot.* A man is driving a chariot, pulled by a black sphinx and a white sphinx. Though the sphinxes are trying to pull in opposite directions, the man has harnessed their energy to lead him where he wants to go.

This is my favorite Tarot card, the one I identify with. I see myself as one who deals in the reconciliation of opposites. I hoped at one time to become a professor of symbolic logic. That did not work out, but I gained an appreciation of the uses of formal two-valued logic. I also began to understand the limitations of this extremely valuable tool. There are systems in which "A or not-A" is an essential truth; there are others in which there are also "sort of A," "more or less A," "A if you really insist, but otherwise not-A," and a variety of others. I want to ride the chariot of logics, to carry me on a path between the extremes.

VIII *Strength.* A young, attractive woman holding the jaws of a lion. It is hard to tell whether she is opening or closing the jaws, but she seems absolutely calm and in control of this situation.

Now here's a surprise. After the sexual archetypes/stereotypes of the earlier cards, particularly the Emperor and Empress, one might expect a muscular male figure to represent Strength, but instead we have a woman, one who does not seem to be capable of exerting much brute force.

And so I interpret this card as something other than mere animal-like muscle power. The strength the woman uses must be something else, and I would choose to identify it with the martial arts. Knowledge is power, in the sense that the true warrior learns to control the power of the other, as well as his own. Thus this card represents the truest strength of all, the strength of understanding.

IX *The Hermit.* An old, bearded man in dark robes, holding up a lighted lantern against the night sky.

Here is another Seeker, like the Fool, except that he is older, and presumably wiser. But perhaps the most relevant difference is that he carries his own Light with him. Perhaps he realizes that the greatest Light of all is the one each of us has been carrying all along.

X *The Wheel.* A Wheel of Fortune, like unto a roulette wheel, bearing the word ROTA (or perhaps TARO).

This represents the role of Chance in our lives--the fact that each and every one of us can be seen as the product of a huge number of random occurrences, with an infinitesimal probability of being precisely as we are. It is also the Wheel of Karma, which tells us that what goes around comes around



XI *Justice.* A crowned woman holding scales in one hand and a sword in the other. Unlike traditional representations of Justice, she is not blindfolded.

This is traditionally interpreted in a literal manner, as representing either legal proceedings or some enforcement of justice in the future, but Jan Woudhuysen (TAROTMANIA) has a most interesting interpretation. He maintains that the significant thing about the card is the lack of a blindfold, so that Justice can see the consequences of her decisions. Thus, it emphasizes that power, even when used in the service of justice, should be handled responsibly.

One can see it, too, as an extension of the view of Karma in the previous card. One sort of consequence of our actions that we should be aware of is what they will do to us. As Christmas Humphreys said, we are punished not for our sins, but by our sins. People who would know better than to use an old & fragile family heirloom to hit somebody over the head with think nothing of using their minds in a similarly destructive way to plot & carry out evil. My own mistakes convince me more and more that any evil I do I am also doing to myself, and that this law of Karma is the same sort of law as the law of Gravity--one which we cannot help obeying.

XII *The Hanged Man.* A man suspended upside-down from a horizontal tree branch by a rope tied around one ankle. He has a halo and a beatific smile.

Another puzzling card. What's he got to smile about? Like many of the interpreters, I choose to focus on the smile. To me, this is a card of Transcendence, of a spiritual triumph that overcomes whatever suffering the body meets.

XIII *Death.* A hooded skeleton, riding a pale horse over a battlefield strewn with corpses.

This one is so obvious, and so unrelievedly negative, that I assume it must mean something else.

XIV *Temperance.* An Angel, with one foot in the water and one on dry land, pours something from one goblet to another.

Another strange one. Whatever this card is referring to, it is not the same thing that the Women's Christian Temperance Union is talking about. The card has predictably inspired a certain ingenuity of interpretation. Crowley changed the name to "Art." Leary (in *THE GAME OF LIFE*) suggests that it represents sex magick. That's one I'm not really sure about yet. Oh well, if I understood the whole deck, I'd get bored with it.

XV *The Devil.* An ugly, naked satyr, seated on a throne. He wears an inverted pentagram on his head. At his feet are male and female demons, loosely chained.

Some pagans would choose to call this card the Horned God and interpret it positively. But while Paganism includes a Horned God as a positive figure, Satanism is trapped in negativity.

For the true Satanist ritual of the Black Mass takes its imagery from that of the Catholic mass, only inverted. Thus it depends upon the Catholic mass for its power, and one who was not raised a Catholic will not feel it. (When I was in college, I belonged to a smart-ass Satanist group ["hear us O prince of darkness. Lead us into temptation and deliver us to Evil, for thine is the sex and the dope and the cheap thrills for ever and ever. Semen."], but the stuff we did never had much of a charge.)

This is the danger that any radical movement faces. It defines itself as the opposite of the Establishment, whether that Establishment is Christianity or capitalism or whatever, and thus remains trapped in the Establishments world view, playing its game by its rules on its territory.

XVI *The Tower.* A bolt of lightning strikes a tower, knocking the top off it. People are falling from it. General chaos.

This represents the fall of all that we build, the *force majeure* of nature striking down human constructs. It thus represents a valuable note of humility, if you believe that humility is valuable.

XVII *The Star.* There is a large eight-pointed golden star, in the sky, with a number of little white ones. Below, a naked woman kneels on the shore of a body of water, with one foot in the water. She is emptying one jug into the water and one onto the land.

I'm afraid I don't understand this one at all, and the books are no help. The most common interpretation seems to be "hope," but I don't see how this card portrays it. There is also, I would presume, some manner of contrast with Temperance, but that is not evident to me, either.

XVIII *The Moon.* Beneath a golden moon, a crayfish crawls out of the water onto a path which winds into the distance. On one side of the path is a dog; on the other a wolf, with castles or forts behind them.

When I look at this card, I think of evolution. The crayfish is the early creature just coming out of the primordial ooze. The dog and the wolf represent two paths-- wild and domesticated.

XIX *The Sun.* Beneath the sun, a naked child, looking triumphant, rides a white horse & carries a red flag.

This card seems to represent Youth, the New Age, the future, stuff like that.

XX *Judgment.* Gabriel blowing his trumpet, while a number of naked people rise out of their coffins.

It seems to me that this card can be interpreted by its title, its picture, or both. It can be seen as judgment, or as a general image of resurrection, rebirth, change, etc.

XXI *The World.* A half-naked woman holds a wand in each hand. In the corners of the card, a man, an eagle, a bull, and a lion observe her.

This one is generally interpreted as "completion" or "reward." These interpretations are not obvious to me.

That's my view of the Tarot major arcana. It is not supposed to be authoritative or complete; it is just one person's interpretation, at one particular time, of what strikes me as a fascinating set of symbols.



DISBELIEF UNSUSPENDED

I said I was going to suspend disbelief in whether the Tarot "worked" while I discussed the symbolism of the cards. Now, having done so, I believe I can come up with some further comments.

It seems immediately obvious that the Tarot cannot tell fortunes. Even the highly superficial discussion of just a few of the cards that I have presented indicates that there are questions, problems, ambiguities, etc. Before the cards could tell anyone's fortune, someone would have to tell what the cards said, and that seems very much open to question. I would thus conclude that the Tarot cannot be a science, at least the way we ordinarily use the word.

I remember back in 1975, a group of scientists issued a statement to the effect that astrology is not a science. I agreed.

Astrology was one of the countercultural things I discovered in San Francisco in the mid-60s, and it immediately struck me as one of the dumber ones. The first person to ask me my sign was a prisoner I was interviewing in the San Francisco City Jail as part of my antipoverty job. "Libra," I replied, being young & innocent. (Nowadays, I tend to reply "Joe's Bar & Grill" or "I didn't have one; my parents were too poor to afford one.") "Me, too," replied the prisoner. "That means you have a deep, intuitive understanding of people." That cheered me until I noticed that my new friend with the equally deep intuitive understanding of people has been arrested for selling weed to an undercover agent.

Further encounters with astrology buffs did not noticeably improve my view of the subject. I concluded that astrology, at least the sun-sign variety, was essentially something like racism: It took a single quality of a person, of dubious importance at best, and made that the definer of What Kind Of Person You Are.

Serious astrologers will point out that what I have been talking about is the crudest, most oversimplified version of their study. A true horoscope requires more precise data than what month one was born, and involves fairly sophisticated mathematical computations.

And yet, even there, the astrologers do not seem to have true scientific precision. Like the Tarot, their study seems to involve ambiguities, possible interpretations, etc. And so I agreed with the scientists who said that astrology is not the sort of thing they do.

But then I noticed that one of the signers of this document was economist Paul Samuelson. Now that struck me as *chutapah*. I thought about it a bit more & decided that I really couldn't blame him. If I were an economist (Gods forbid!) and I heard people saying, "That stuff is nonsense despite all its sophisticated math," I would rush to point out that they weren't talking about my subject.

By the usual criteria of science--repeatable experiments, unambiguous objective data, etc., astrology and the Tarot do not even approach scientific status.

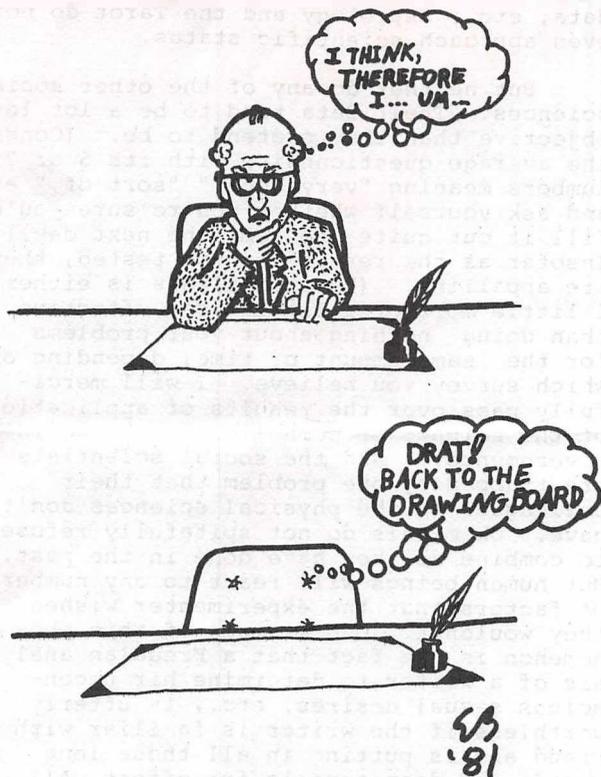
But neither do any of the other social sciences. Their data tend to be a lot less objective than they pretend to be. (Consider the average questionnaire with its 5 or 7 numbers meaning "very much," "sort of," etc., and ask yourself whether you're sure you'd fill it out quite the same the next day.) Insofar as the results can be tested, they are appalling. (Psychoanalysis is either a little more or a little less effective than doing nothing about your problems for the same amount of time, depending on which survey you believe. I will mercifully pass over the results of application of the science of economics by the world's governments.) And the social scientists are trapped by one problem that their colleagues in the physical sciences don't have. Chemicals do not spitefully refuse to combine as they have done in the past. But human beings will react to any number of factors that the experimenter wishes they wouldn't. One example of this phenomenon is the fact that a Freudian analysis of a writer to determine his unconscious sexual desires, etc., is utterly worthless if the writer is familiar with Freud and is putting in all those long swords and deep tunnels for effect. All of which makes you wonder if the title of Stanislaw Andreski's excellent SOCIAL SCIENCE AS SORCERY (from which I have taken some of these examples) isn't unfair to sorcery.

But no. While there are a few intelligent and conscientious toilers in the fields of psi, the occult, astrology, etc., the average quality of writings in these fields is ghastly. Most of the writers are gullible, cannot distinguish between an assertion and a proof, and generally give the impression that if they are in possession of a truth, it is only because they stumbled over it in the street and have not yet been offered \$10 worth of costume jewelry for it. Even the most hidebound of fundamentalist materialists sounds scientific compared to them.

Nevertheless, both social science and sorcery do work in some cases. Psychotherapy does help some people, while some find value in astrological or Tarot readings. One significant factor seems to be the person doing the sorcery. There may not be rules to follow, or guaranteed procedures, but there are techniques that work, in the right hands.

To see what's going on here, let's take a look at teaching. As I've mentioned here before, traditional teaching was to a large extent made into something that could be done objectively--spelling, arithmetic, rote memorization in general. This sort of thing cannot be done too badly, largely because it cannot be done very well.

US and THEM



Last time around, I mentioned the idea of dividing the world up into US and THEM, with the implication that this was a fairly common, if not universal, form of data processing. That raised a few questions, so I thought I'd say a bit more about it.

I was originally taught that I was not supposed to make US/THEM distinctions. I was raised as a liberal, which means (as Murray Rothbard has pointed out) that I believed that I owned one four-billionth of everybody (including myself) and that everyone owned one four-billionth of me, and I was to treat everyone equally. This did not work out for me. I will admit the possibility that it did work out for some people, but I can't think of any. They'd certainly be saints.

So how do I divide the world up? Well, let's start with US. At the center of US is me. As Hillel said, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?"

But he added, "If I am for myself alone, what am I?" and I've always known that there had to be an US as well as a me. So the smallest plural US is Adrienne Fein & me, and around us one of maybe half a dozen, and so outwards in concentric circles, all fuzzy sets as I cannot quantify my feelings to the point of being sure whether someone is 5th or 6th circle.

Mathematically, a set can be defined by listing its members, or by giving the characteristics required. Besides the sets of US I have defined on an individual basis, there are sets defined collectively.

One of these sets is SCIENCE FICTION FANS. I've been hanging out with this tribe for almost 4 years and enjoying it. I do not by any means believe that each & every person in the subculture is a superior being. But it's a statically superior group. If someone is a fan, the odds are higher that the person is one of US than with the general population, and so I think of fandom as US. If something seems to be good for fandom, then it is a Good Thing.

I'm beginning to feel the same way about pagans. I mentioned this a year ago, when I reviewed DRAWING DOWN THE MOON. I do not want to live "close to Nature." I like the great indoors. Nonetheless, pagans tend to be interesting people. Besides, I am enough of a Taoist to believe that all those who are trying to achieve their goals without force or fraud are in essence on the same side, and pagans, to a greater extent than most nonstandard thinkers, seem to be trying to be left alone, rather than to impose their trip on others.

The best teachers succeed by being able to react to the students. To a certain extent, this can be programed. (If the student asks X, reply Y.) But there is an element of individual decision making, of knowing which correct answer is the appropriate one for this student at this time.

Similarly Carl Rogers's nondirective therapy can be simulated by a computer. But I suspect that when Rogers himself does it, it works a lot better.

As Theodore Sturgeon has pointed out, the word "science" originally meant knowledge. So we can say that any arrangement of knowledge can be scientific, even if it does not match the current paradigms.

We have tried to study human beings by the paradigms of objective science, and we have largely failed, because people refuse to be objects (and a good thing too). We have abandoned science for sorcery, and that too has failed, because we have been left with no standards.

What we need is a new paradigm. I would suggest that, alongside the objective sciences, we place the *interactive* sciences, in which we do not merely accept, but glory in, the fact that we are dealing with conscious human beings, where we learn to do with others instead of to them.



There is one larger group that I identify as US, and that is Smart People. I define that in the broadest way possible, to include not only the forms of intelligence measured (inaccurately, but not randomly) by IQ tests, but creativity, empathy, all the useful manifestations of Mind. Perhaps this identification is what is left of my liberal background. I was supposed to define US as widely as possible; I was rightly told not to make such judgments on irrelevant bases like race or sex. This is what I wound up with.

OK, that's US. Now how about THEM?

One way of stating the US/THEM distinction is the open, tolerant statement, "Those who are not against us are with us." Another is the warlike, "Those who are not with us are against us." I find it interesting to note that two of the Gospels quote Jesus as saying the former, and two quote Him as saying the latter. I find it even more interesting that according to the laws of formal two-valued logic, those two statements are equivalent, and both are equivalent to "The world is divided into US and THEM."

So I have concluded that it is possible for people to be neither US nor THEM, and indeed that it might be a good idea to classify most of the world in that category.

And yet there is a group that does not wish to allow me to do this, that insists on setting up situations where those who are not with us are against us. This group includes some very well-intentioned people, but they are the ones who demand political solutions.

Politics is, by its nature, a zero-sum game. That is, no one can win without someone else losing an equivalent amount. Politics is always about taking from someone to give to others. It creates nothing.

(One of the defenders of this approach is honest enough to call his book THE ZERO-SUM SOCIETY. Another takes it a step further. ENTROPY preaches a negative-sum game in which we should all try to do as little as possible, so humanity can die more slowly. Not only is view loathesome, in my opinion, but it requires the assumption that the Earth is a closed system, which is only slightly more intelligent than worrying about falling off the edge.)

The believers in politics set up a system where helping others was, by definition, and now can't understand why so many people have joined the "Me Generation." They fail to realize that the important factor is not the finite amount of stuff on the planet, but the unboundedness of the human mind. Unfuck 'em. If we can find a way to get politics out of our lives, we can have a world where there is no THEM.

strictly diagonal,
baby--
strictly
diagonal.



ORIGEN

Once there was a man named Origen, who hated a part of himself. It seems that he wanted to devote all of his energies to being a Christian, but he kept getting distracted by lustful desires. After prayerful thought, he came to a solution. He lopped off the source of the desires and presumably lived happily ever after.

We laugh at Origen, and not unreasonably so, and yet there is one thing that can be said in his defense. It seems to me that he localized the problem correctly. He realized that his sexual feelings were *his* problem, and not something Out There. The more common approach is to attempt to castrate the Universe. As one who does not consider sexuality a Bad Thing, I would suggest that the "Moral" "Majority" and others of that ilk give prayerful thought to Jesus' suggestion (Matthew 19:12).

But these are not the only people who have grudges against parts of their bodies. Over on the other end of the political spectrum we find some who believe that the Dirty Part of the human body is not between the legs, but between the ears. Some of these, like Philip Slater, state openly that analytical intelligence is an evil and destructive force; others accept mind-denying Marxist doctrines like the Labor Theory of Value. But these, too, project their unhappiness on to the outside world, instead of recognizing it in themselves.

A compassionate society should offer these people the chance to relieve their own unhappiness. Free castration or lobotomy for all who seek it, and let them stop bothering those of us who unrepentantly enjoy our brains and genitals.

AGON IN THE ASTRODOME

In Classical Greek tragedy, the protagonist is a man who is almost perfect. He is, typically, strong, courageous, intelligent, etc., but being human, he is not quite perfect. He suffers from a Fatal Flaw; not only that, but pride (*hubris*) will not allow him to see this flaw in himself. And so after his many good qualities have brought him to the top of the world, his fatal flaw sends him crashing to the bottom.

There are those who believe that Greek tragedy is outdated, either because greatness no longer exists in our world, or because our great men now know enough to avoid the tragic protagonist's fate. I invite them to consider O. A. "Bum" Phillips.

In 1975, Bum Phillips became Head Coach of the Houston Oilers, a football team famous mostly for losing games and wearing out coaches. Before long he had turned the team around, and they have been in the playoffs for the last few years.

He did this largely by drafting Earl Campbell, a large strong running back, and giving him the ball as often as possible. Since Campbell is very good at running with the ball, he won a lot of games that way.

But there was a lot more to it than that. Phillips won a lot by being the sort of person that he is. He is intelligent, which always helps. He insists that his players put out full & disciplined effort on the field, but he does not believe in discipline for its own sake. Finally, he is a compassionate human being. For this reason, among others, he will give players another chance when other teams have given them up as hopeless smartasses, goofoffs, or dopers. Some of these players have helped the team a good deal.

Now in 1975, when Bum Phillips became Head Coach, the best way to win football games was to have a large strong running back, put him behind an even larger and stronger offensive line, and give him the ball an awful lot. Then if you had a large strong defense as well, you would win games. The way to win was to be strong and not make mistakes.

But many fans (including me) thought that a football game in which two large strong teams tried to see which could make the fewest mistakes was about as boring to watch as grass growing or maybe even a baseball game.

And so the moguls of the NFL decided to pander to popular taste and change the rules. The technical details would be tedious to many of my readers, but essentially, the essence of pass defense used to be having your defensive backs beat the shit out of pass receivers before they could have the ball thrown to them, and the rules makers made this sort of tactic illegal.

The changes had the desired effect. There is more passing and more scoring every year, and teams which have good passers & receivers tend to prosper. I for one think this change is a good thing.

Bum Phillips does not. He was quoted as saying that he thought that it just wasn't right that receivers would be permitted to do their thing unmolested.

And well he might. Last year, the Oilers went to the playoffs once again, only to be utterly humiliated by the Oakland Raiders, a passing team which went on to win the Super Bowl. The owner of the Oilers asked Phillips to hire an offensive coach who would build a passing game, whilst Phillips concentrated on the defense, which has always been his favorite part of the game anyway. Phillips refused, and the owner fired him.

Phillips's many good qualities did not go unrecognized. The New Orleans Saints, a team so wretched that their fans called them the Aints and wore paper bags over their heads because they were ashamed to be seen rooting for them, hired Phillips to turn them around.

Happy ending? The first thing Phillips announced was that he was not hiring an offensive coach. He is about to use the very first draft choice in the NFL to pick the biggest, strongest running back he can find. I admire the man in many ways, but I suggest that Saints fans not be in a hurry to throw out their paper bags.



FROM SILENT TRISTERO'S EMPIRE

Adrienne Fein
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Excellent analogy between stroke patients and disadvantaged groups...children...

in fact, this applies to trying to be of practical assistance to almost anyone. Doing for them is no good. Helping them to do for themselves is--teaching someone how to fish rather than catching fish to feed that person....

While intelligence, especially if broadly defined to include intuition and creativity, is our primary tool, I wonder whether simple lack of intelligence is our main problem. I think our main problem may be the factors which keep many of us from using anywhere near as much intelligence as we have. This applies to everything from subconscious self-destructive tendencies to prejudice: a husband telling his wife that her place is at home cooking washing floors, doing laundry, etc., because he doesn't want any wife of his to work, can't really be using much intelligence....

I have a sneaking suspicion that if we increase intelligence in limited terms, such as somehow making everyone's I.Q. higher, it won't help all that much unless we make sure people are free (and some are willing) to use the new intelligence in practical ways. (I'm not sure how relevant this is to THE ILLUMINATI PAPERS, but it's something I felt like saying. In fact, much of my loc concerns ways in which perfectly intelligent people can seemingly fail to apply that intelligence and logic to evaluating their own statements.)

In fact, it almost seems as though the use and misuse of intelligence and logic is a consistent motif in DR 16.

You yourself seem to be using less than complete logic in your discussion of loving US by hating THEM.

It is possible to love US without feeling hatred or even contempt for THEM. It is possible to do this without professing to love everyone equally. It is possible to feel simply indifferent or completely neutral towards those who are not (or are not yet) US. Indeed, it is even possible to see them as potential-USes, who deserve politeness if not friendship.

Oh, yes, that was what I was going to do: draw you a cartoon of a bunch of school kids burning their vaccination certificates on the school steps, "The Student Activists of the Eighties"....The vaccination certificate requirement, as you imply, certainly shows that people in charge of those schools don't use much logic....

In fact, some of the examples of media misunderstanding which you present, may illustrate problems in failure to apply intelligence and evaluation....(Although I think a science fiction writer in the 1800's very well might talk about a citizen journeying into the null...unfortunately. That's one reason why I don't read much older science fiction. It does tend to sound like that....)

The NEW YORK TIMES seems to have presented an example of blocked intelligence such as I mentioned previously. One might think that lesbians would have rather less need for abortion than heterosexual women, since one of the advantages of same-sex sex is considered to be that it does not have the drawback of reproduction. (I suppose I should say, "unwanted reproduction.")

The media treatment of Dallas Egbert, as well as the comments about D & D, show profound lack of thought. Upon thinking it over, it strikes me that it would be a great deal easier to act out a game of Monopoly in Real Life than it would be to act out D & D--however would one award oneself the extra strength points?! I suppose one could "act out" some sort of fantasy adventure, as one can play Cowboys-&-Indians, Cops-&-Robbers, Soldiers, Spacemen, or Robin Hood. But that ain't D & D, no way. And so what? Maybe Dallas was a little old for that sort of thing, but if he was involved, well--a lot of college students

do like to go back and do childish things in groups--in my circles, blowing soap bubbles, flying kites, and building sand castles on the beach in groups, were all popular. (These are things adults can continue at greater levels of skill and complexity, and also a way of testing whether one really is ready to leave childhood, I suppose....)

As to D & D being un-Christian, I thought that Free Will was a major part of Christian Doctrine, and that Free Will allows people to choose evil? In fact, the existence of evil is sometimes philosophically justified on the grounds that we must have a complete range of choices in order to be truly free, and if we do not freely choose God, all worship of God is meaningless....

I don't think David Palter is correct in saying that punishment is the only deterrent we have. There might be other deterrents like social shaming. I think it may be true that the mental-health system has failed to cure criminals. But I think the prison system has failed equally. People who are released from prisons commit further crimes, probably as many as committed by those released from mental hospitals. (Probably far more!) NO treatment (except so-called treatments like lobotomy) and NO punishment (except literal life imprisonment or capital punishment) can guarantee that a criminal will not commit a future crime after treatment or punishment. (Not unless we simply want to remove free will and freedom of choice, insofar as we are able. Which, unfortunately, is pretty far these days.) If people have the freedom to choose, some of the time they will choose wrongly, or choose evil. I don't think that can be changed or avoided. We can only minimize the damages caused by this state of affairs, by helping those who commit crimes only when they are terribly disturbed, by punishing those who commit crimes seemingly for no good reason (or out of viciousness or pure greed), by educating people, by trying to make sure no one needs to steal--there are many things we can do, according to taste or moral/ethical sociopolitical philosophy; I am not saying we must or should give up. We can discourage crime, certainly. But we cannot, it seems, abolish it. We cannot expect that any system we use to minimize it will abolish it.

It seems to me that there are holes in David Palter's logic, in several places.

Mary Frey isn't being terribly logical. She is trying to impose her religious beliefs on others: specifically, that religion is not a suitable topic for discussion in fanzines. And that people should reach their own conclusions and then shut up about them.

Combined with her expressed views on book reviews, I think her comments on religion reveal a certain inability to understand that other people's viewpoints really are different. For instance, if I said a book was wonderful and everyone should read it, it might be precisely because I liked the social significance and literary merit revealed by the author. I doubt that Mary Frey could successfully use my book reviews as buying guides, if I followed the form she recommends....



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I was delighted to
read of your oceanic
experience at the
Samhain festival.

The first "satori"
is a turning point;

the second is much easier. After a while, it becomes fairly regular and even deeper....One discovers gradations in the oceanic, more and more comes through....(See Maslow on what he calls "the Peak Experience.")

Encouragement: it tends to happen after 35, as documented by Bucke in *Cosmic Consciousness*. If this is the fifth neurological circuit, as Leary sez, it may be genetically programmed. Biosurvival circuit turns on at birth, emotional-territorial circuit at about 8 months (walking), semantic circuit between one and two years, sociosexual circuit at puberty, between 11 and 13. Neurosomatic (oceanic) may be more and more likely to open up (if one is not rigidly armored against it) the more years one lives after about 35 or 40.... Maybe it is becoming more common because people are living longer than they used to.

Further encouragement: in many cases, after neurosomatic circuit begins to work, conditions like asthma "miraculously" disappear. (That's why Mary Baker Eddy invented Christian Science after her fifth circuit opened....)

I don't share Michael Shoemaker's disdain for those who think they have found something new, or for those who think they are important. Everybody I admire in history (a) thought they found something new and (b) thought they were important. E.g. Beethoven, Shakespeare, Joyce, Michelangelo, Galileo, Leonardo, Jefferson, Newton, Blake, Frank Lloyd Wright, etc. etc. As Wright said, give me honest arrogance rather than hypocritical humility any day. And as Mark Twain said, it is dangerous to associate with the depressed, because they will make you depressed, whereas those who expect to accomplish great things will make you think you can do great things yourself.

All my friends believe they are geniuses or damned close to it; that's why they're fun to have around. You can find all the humility you ever care to see at a mental health clinic, but that scene is very dreary indeed.

I also disagree with Shoemaker's *Ecclesiastes*-like insistence that "there is nothing new under the sun." Evolution being a stochastic process, there is newness appearing every second; one has only to open one's eyes and LOOK for it. Besides, as Picasso or somebody else of that school said once, Art always shows heredity but never shows identity. Many are children or grandchildren of Pirandello, as Shoemaker would have it, but all are new voices nonetheless.

I hope that Shoemaker soon comes to feel that he is so damned COSMICALLY important that he will enjoy rather than deprecate the possibility that others are important, too.

(A) Anybody who speaks English probably has, somewhere, a signal that I can learn from; (B) The more important they think they are, the more likely they are to utter that signal.

In this connection, I also dissent from Mary Frey's expressed wish that people stop discussing religion in your pages. I had no desire to write anything about religion for you when I saw that letter, but after seeing it I nonetheless felt constrained, repressed, mildly annoyed, and somewhat (in the jargon of the day) "dehumanized." I think the desire to communicate is very strong in third-circuited (symbol-using) critters and all representations of it are unhealthy. It is, in general, much better for humanity if those who wish to avoid

certain signals (political, religious, pornographic or whatever) simply AVOID them, i.e., avert their eyes, go elsewhere etc., rather than trying to shut up those who wish to communicate. That is, I think it is more in keeping with our humanity for people to walk away from communication than to stifle the communicator. (This is a generalization but not an absolute. In some cases, seeing real distress, I am willing to stifle myself until an unhappy person leaves the scene. Courtesy and tact are real factors even if one can't include them in a legal definition of civil liberties....)

Since I believe that ONLY immediate sense impressions are given to us by the universe (and even they are edited by our previous imprints and ideas), all maps and models and theories are projections of the mind that creates them. Thus, the Atheist creates an Atheist universe, the Theist creates a Theist universe...and both are too modest to take credit for such marvelous artistic-philosophical organizing and in-form-ation making skill!!! (They don't even take credit, generally, for making roses red....) Perhaps they both need more sense of self-importance.



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The statement by Adrienne Fein about her concern over what R. A. Wilson "leaves out" is answered, I think,

by the reading I've been doing lately in the theories of Colin Wilson, whose works I'd suggest she--and you, for that matter--read. I just finished *Mysteries*, which is sort-of a follow-up to his *The Occult* and some of the most mind-stretching thought I've read in a while. He borrows a bit from Gurdjieff but modifies it--anyway, he speaks about a hierarchy, or "ladder of selves." Actually, it's not at all incompatible with R. A. Wilson's system of the eight circuits, with the latter four belonging to what C. Wilson sees as higher selves; but C.'s theories make more sense on a lot of more practical levels--it explains, for instance, why you can be utterly exhausted and a new idea hits you and you write for twelve hours straight with incredible energy, as often happens to me--whereas a lot of R. A. / Leary thought seems to deal with hypothetical and future conditions too much to convince me it's valid. C. also goes along with Blake (he is a Blake fancier and mentions him often) in saying that man, as he exists in his physical body, is capable of perceiving the infinite and functioning on that level; I agree with this. To say that in the future we may reprogram our DNA to make us function on a cosmic level is to me a cop-out: clearly, we are all (or at least most) capable of functioning on that level for very brief instants of time, so it cannot be necessary to radically change the organism or even our programming to do so. This may be just a matter of terminology, but terminology and conceptualization is everything in cases like this--it's not something we have to become, but something we are and have to learn to let ourselves be. Why does "the robot"--that animal level of consciousness--take back control even after moments of higher perception and functioning? C. Wilson says it's because we're lazy, and lack discipline--he even calls a higher self that sometimes asserts itself "the schoolmistress effect." How very British! I think it's more due to fear, after a lifetime of being told it's wrong to be different, to consider yourself better than others, to "upset the system." "The robot" is safe and comfortable and does not go against that training.

Maia
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I appreciated your review of Spider Robinson; all his books have done Good Things to my mind. I don't know if I'd

quite agree with your statement, "...love for US is strengthened and defined by hatred, or at least contempt, for THEM." Maybe I don't quite understand your definition of "THEM." I do think it's possible to be "against" THEM (as you say, the powermad and fanatical) without hating. Hatred, like anger, is one of those emotions which generates more of itself, rather than a solution to the problems which are causing it. There's a bit too much of the attitude, "Let's take care of the problem," for hatred to be a factor in the Callahan's stories.

And a loud "phooey" for those critics you mentioned. One of the reasons I like Robinson so much is his idealism. Reading the stories in CALLAHAN'S and ANTIMONY make me feel better about myself and about humanity, make me feel that it is worthwhile to be honest and kind and hope (or even work!) for a better world. Is that so terrible?

"It occurs to me," you say, "that there are many situations in which imposing a rigid two-valued logic does not work." Myself, I've yet to find a situation in which rigid two-valued logic does work. I have no difficulty with the concept that if a thing isn't A it's something other than A. Many people, however, seem to think that if it isn't A it's the opposite of A, and there are no other possibilities.

It would indeed be nice if society were properly run, and creativity rather than rule-following were rewarded. It's not likely, though. Hark-ing back to Spiro Agnew and his distaste for "effete intellectual snobs," I suspect that the Powers That Be are scared shitless of people who are smarter than they are. I see this at all levels of authority. My bosses don't quite know what to make of me, teachers and principals consider challenges to authority as insubordination, parents can't deal with offspring who are smarter than they and who therefore demand reasons for the rules imposed on them--in other words, the intelligent people are those who don't merely follow orders, and who therefore make life difficult for rulers, and challenge their right and their ability to impose rules on us. I'll assume that systems are self-perpetuating, and so that it would be difficult to replace authoritarianism with a leadership system that encourages independence in those it supposedly leads.



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Dungeons and Dragons continues to be in the public eye, thanks to the efforts of syndicated columnist

Max Rafferty, who never misses a chance to condemn this "evil, immoral, and sick" game. His column appears regularly in one of our local papers and has caused much grief for several of my students, whose parents have forced them to discard all D & D paraphernalia. It is only too true that our society (and our schools) has no place for the truly intelligent. The "Moral Majority" (to which Rafferty seems to be sympathetic) may also in time bring about television censorship, with their boycott campaigns and incessant letter writing. Saturday Night Live's Charles Rocket added fuel to the fire in a recent episode when he used the word fuck in one of the skits.

Censorship that I've known and hated: having to delete profanities from paperback books in my "paperback library" at school; deleting Huckleberry Finn from the eleventh-grade reading list because of its satire on organized religion; watching the librarian pull such "offensive" books as Catcher in the Rye, Go Ask Alice, and others because parents object to them; having to avoid stories and novels by Faulkner because they contain the word "nigger;" seeing a science teacher rebuked for teaching evolution. After all, Dayton, Tennessee is only 45 miles from Chattanooga! This is the way it is in most of the South, except for certain cosmopolitan areas, such as Atlanta and Miami.



Roy Tackett
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I put small credence in these self-proclaimed modern pagans. They are, for the most part, simply

rebelling against a Christian upbringing and playing at something they know very little about. How many of these professed believers in the ancient gods have even the slightest knowledge of the ancient gods? And if they are simply trading the god of the Jews for the gods of the Kelts then what have they gained? Superstition is superstition is superstition is superstition is superstition.

You "wonder if the New York City Board of Education believes that it still has compulsory public schooling." Was talking to a couple of retired NYC school-teachers last fall who say that there is no "schooling" (in the sense of education) in NYC at all. At least in the public sector.



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Regarding Harry Andruschak's comments about religion, I have rarely seen so many unfounded

generalizations in so few paragraphs (and I'm an editor for a social science publisher!). I can only speak for one of the religions he tosses off, although he is probably inaccurate about the others as well. Judaism does not place much emphasis on either life after death or the devil. Its only emphasis is on the conduct of life in the here-and-now. Nor does it have a "priesthood" lusting after money or power. Any large, organized group contains a few people interested in leading it, and gaining power and money thereby, whether it is religious or secular.

Dennis Jarog
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A bit of synchronicity: in reading the current TIME mag I came across an article on the rapid petro-development of Saudi Arabia. One of the concerns of the Saudis is the rapid seduction by money of the people and the consequent loss of old values. I won't make value judgments on the old traditions. Rather it seems that the addictive nature of money is at work once again. I think you put your finger on the crux of the problem. Buying something does give one a good feeling (the common euphemism--I treated myself) but the feeling is slippery, without texture, and rapidly becomes illusory. Maya (illusion) has replaced loyalty--there is no place where one can stand and say--this is bedrock, this is foundation, this is where I will build my self. And without a firm foundation for the inner being, how can one create a reality?

And on to the second point I wanted to comment on --'creating your own reality' is really a code for self-gratification. 99 out of a 100 will take it as license because creating a reality also means imposing a discipline upon it; the mehums only think of the fun and games. 'Do what thou wilt' creates a world but few are willing to pay the price. Freedom means responsibility to a standard that I set; there is none to hold me to that standard but myself, and again if I reject my own standard then freedom as well as the reality I created become a joke and the freedom is again simply license. Someday I may well create my own reality at present I am trying to understand the reality imposed by society; how can I create my own unless I learn the mistakes that the other has.



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And I can think of a third explanation for the welfare system, in addition to the do-gooders and the exploit-

ers. If the welfare system in its present form were scrapped somehow, it would probably touch off as severe a Depression as a cutoff of petroleum from the Middle East. An astonishing number of persons are employed directly or indirectly to administer the welfare system. If they lost their jobs, and if such secondary effects occurred as a sharp reduction in college enrollment because it wouldn't be any use to study to gain employment in social work, and if the tottery auto industry were tumbled assbackwards by the end of orders for autos by welfare workers, I would need some solution to the problem of how to wind up this sentence.

Barbara Tennison might like to search out a copy of Korzybski's *Science and Sanity*, the book which touched off all those early novels by A. E. van Vogt. It contains instructions for making what Korzybski called, I believe, a structural differential, a device which had a vague resemblance to a rosary and was used in somewhat the same way by the devout followers of his particular brand of semantics. It's been a long time since I fought and clawed my way through that book, but I seem to remember the structural differential serving to keep the user constantly aware of the different levels of abstraction, which are related to what Barbara has to say about words and objects. At one end of the object was the symbol of the unknowable reality of an object, the atomic and subatomic particles of which it is composed, then came the object as a conglomeration of all these wee components, then the object as it is perceived by humans, then the name given to such objects, then the statements about the name, then the arguments over the statements about the object which may have been symbolized by the other end of the structural differential, but I've probably forgotten or misremembered some of the levels.

David Palter
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The "Thoth" exercise described on page 12, reprinted from *The Illuminati Papers*, strikes me

(without having tried it, admittedly) as a technique which is at best inefficient, and at worst dangerous. (The danger comes from the mixture of drugs with mental exercises; such efforts can get out of control.) Merely telling yourself "I can be happy," no matter how fervently or repeatedly, is not in general as useful as actually analysing your circumstances to find out why you aren't happy--there is always some actual reason, such as the fact that you are engaged in continual acrimonious arguments with your spouse, that your job is intolerably boring, that your teeth ache, etc.--and then taking action directly designed to remedy the cause of your unhappiness. In any of the examples I gave, the cause of your unhappiness will not resolve no matter how many times you tell yourself "I can be happy." A divorce, a new job, or dental treatment would respectively be more likely to solve those problems. (They are not guaranteed solutions, but they are at least on the right track.)

Visualizing an aura of godhood around yourself may be an amusing indulgence in megalomania, or even recognition of a valid goal for yourself, but it is hardly going to transform you into a godlike state. I'm sorry, the solution is not that simple (I wish it were.) There are reasons why you are not now in a godlike state (just as there are reasons why you may not be happy) and unless those reasons are specifically dealt with, no easy, magical technique (or magickal technique for that matter) is going to sidestep all the difficulties and catapult you into a superior state of being. That is in its own way just as foolish as the psychiatric approach of solving a person's mental difficulties by giving him/her a drug. "Just swallow this pill and all your problems will go away," is foolish wishful thinking and can usually be relied upon to make your problems worse.

Sophisticated techniques of spiritual rehabilitation do exist, but it seems that they are not to be found in *The Illuminati Papers*. The book is still of interest, but should not be swallowed whole. Even for a relatively benevolent religion such as Discordianism, one must still exercise selectivity.



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Your comment on quota-hiring systems risking the possibility that women and minorities will become dependent on them elicits my response. From what I've seen, they are likely to accomplish their end of getting all levels of public office/employment filled by minorities in proportion to their population, if the method is given long enough to work.

Certain people ask, what about promotion by merit? They especially love to pose the classic question: what if two equally qualified persons apply whose only difference is ethnic background?

That would be very important, if people were presently being promoted on merit. But since friendship, the Old Boys (now joined by Old Girls) Network, who's sleeping with who, and who will work cheapest, already exert a powerful bias, "equal opportunity" can only be assured in the long run by the presence of equal elements of bias. By imposing hiring quotas, one force-feeds into a system enough minority and women employees to establish a foothold. Then it's back to monkey-business as usual, once you meet minimum requirements, everything else is up for grabs.

BACKTALK (The Editor Replies)

Adrienne Fein: There are techniques for what Gregory Bateson calls "deuterolearning"--i.e., learning to learn, to use & evaluate information, etc. These include symbolic logic, General Semantics, and some of the methods taught in the Human Potential Movement. They are rarely taught in the public schools, possibly because they encourage the questioning of official dogmas. I suspect that the same mental properties that aid in primary learning are used in deuterolearning. // I never denied that it's possible to love US without hating THEM. I merely said that negative feelings for THEM can and frequently do strengthen positive feelings for US. My statement was psychological, not logical.

Robert Anton Wilson: I appreciate your words of encouragement. They would work even better if this had been my first "oceanic experience" (I've had three or four others, with and without chemical assistance), but I do appreciate it.

Bernadette Bosky: "Fear is failure, and the fore-runner of failure."

Maia: Rigid two-valued logic is quite useful in Mathematics and the objective sciences (though there are times when it causes problems even there.)

Janis Johnson: I was wondering what had happened to Max Rafferty.

Roy Tackett: The pagans I know have studied their Gods in great depth. I prefer to be selective about Gods, rather than promiscuously rejecting them all. // Like John Holt and Ivan Illich, I am careful to distinguish between "schooling" and "education," though I have heard of a few people who can do both at once.

Harry Warner, jr. The real welfare parasites are the caseworkers. They and their overpaid, underworked brethren in everything from defense to garbage are what have destroyed the economy. I don't mean this personally. Many can be retrained for useful work, and some--like the minority in the teaching biz who are qualified & dedicated--are forced to practice their vocation in a system that oppresses them too.

David Palter: I suspect that some of those who have tried the Thoth exercise found it far more valuable than your comments would suggest. I cannot, however, speak from experience on that. *I can do the exercise this time around. I can do the exercise this time around. I can do the*

THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP welcomes letters of comment, and prints as much of as many as possible, consistent with editorial laziness & cheapness. There are 2 ways to guarantee that your letter will NOT be published: 1) Ask me not to. 2) Handwrite it. I prefer the former.

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Expanded Universe, by Robert A. Heinlein (Ace pb, \$9.95)

This is the other long-awaited Heinlein book. It is indeed expanded. Ace has taken THE WORLDS OF ROBERT A. HEINLEIN, a collection of short stories (and one essay) first published in 1966, and added other stories, articles, and an autobiographical narrative that ties the whole thing together.

The results are, unsurprisingly, mixed. I thought that the original WORLDS was a first-rate collection of science-fiction stories. The added fiction is mostly popular mainstream stuff, and mainly of curiosity value; I suspect that few would want to read these if they were attributed to "John Doe." I was most interested in the autobiographical segments, and thought that the nonfiction ranged from insightful to tedious and bombastic.

One other thing: In this book Heinlein speaks, in his own voice and at some length, of his views on such subjects as war, communism, and the proper role of the government in the economy. I would like to ask those who defend the dogma that we can never tell anything about a writer's own views from his fiction whether they were surprised by anything Heinlein said.

In Joy Still Felt, by Isaac Asimov (Avon pb, \$9.95)

The other giant of modern science fiction has produced an even more gigantic autobiographical volume. Asimov is an interesting and intelligent man, and, like its predecessor, this book presents almost everything one would want to know about the part of its author's life under discussion--and a few hundred pages more.

Masks of the Illuminati, by Robert Anton Wilson (Pocket/Timescape pb, \$2.50)

One of John D. MacDonald's characters once said that the only good abstract art was produced by artists who first learned to draw a cow that looks like a cow. I'm not sure if the analogous principle holds in literature. (Barthelme would seem to be a counterexample.)

In any event, Robert Anton Wilson has now demonstrated that he can write a tightly-plotted novel (a formal mystery, in fact) if he so chooses. It also works as a historical fiction in the manner of RAGTIME (Its detectives are Albert Einstein and James Joyce), and has the usual weirdness one would expect of a Wilson book. Try it.

