

THE
GOLDEN
ORACLE

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THE GOLDEN ORACLE

To the DIY movement,
a universe that wonderfully refuses to be easily understood,
and everything we could be if we just got the hell out of our own way.

Chapter One

The Magic Spot

It was a fairly dark summer night in the northern Nevada desert with just a tiny sliver of waning crescent moon in the sky. The Milky Way was so intense that it looked like long wispy clouds streaking across a backdrop of perfectly distinct twinkling pinpoints of light. That might seem like flowery prose but the desert sky at night is seriously like that. The clear skies and lack of light pollution make it amazing for gazing at the stars. That's why they build all those fancy terrestrial telescopes in the desert. Normally, on a night like this, my friends and I would have been reveling in the beauty of it all. Instead, we were at the bottom of a dry riverbed, running for our lives.

Earlier that evening my friends and I decided to go to The Magic Spot—a location we recently discovered in the Reno foothills a few miles outside of town. We called it The Magic Spot for reasons that will become obvious.

“Want to go to The Magic Spot?”

“Duh!”

I don't remember who originally discovered The Magic Spot but it is one of those places, seemingly abundant in the northern Nevada desert, where there is... something. An energy. A crackle. My friend Alice and I came up with the term 'crisp'. When you get to an area like that you know because everything sharpens and becomes, well, crisp. Crisp-ness isn't necessarily exclusive to one of these special places, but The Magic Spot is perpetually crisp. It lets you know it knows you're there. We liked it because, unlike some of the other crisp places we knew, The Magic Spot was secluded. We could be ourselves without some redneck with a gun rack declaring war on the homos. You can't be too careful with crisp places—they attract all kinds of weirdness.

We parked my VW Bug in the closest area you could easily get to by car: a paved cul-de-sac for a not-yet-constructed suburb. The Magic Spot was a few minutes hike up into the hills from there. You had to climb up the hill until you got to a dry riverbed,

then follow that for a long time until you got to a set of large power lines. From there you climbed out of the riverbed and hiked up into the hills a bit more. Even without knowing all of the specific landmarks you could tell when you got close. It would sort of suck you in, which is how we originally discovered it.

Despite being secluded, I'm sure we weren't the only ones that knew about it. The magic there felt old. I'd bet anything that the Washoe people knew the power, and danger, of that place very well and would have warned away stupid kids like us. That is, if my forefathers hadn't murdered them and drove them from their lands.

I remember being very excited that night. There was a lot about life as a young gay man in Reno in the 90's that sucked, but there was so much more that was amazing. I had a friend group of nerds, misfits, and mystics and we spent our time playing in the desert, running bulletin board systems on our computers, playing D&D, and having very deep conversations. The Magic Spot was particularly good for very deep conversations. Sometimes the conversation became so deep that it felt like the energy of the place was speaking through you—it was a part of the conversation. I Don't remember exactly what the four of us talked about that night but I remember it was important. It felt cleansing.

We talked for who knows how long, like we always did, completely losing track of time. It's easy to lose track of time in a place like that. Then it happened. Everyone stopped talking. Something had changed almost instantly, like a switch being flipped. No one said anything and we just kept looking back and forth at each other trying to figure out what the fuck was going on. We were scared and our survival instincts had kicked in keeping our mouths shut. We had no idea why we were all suddenly simultaneously terrified. We weren't the only ones either; everything had gotten very quiet. No wind, no crickets, nothing. It felt like we were rabbits hiding in a bush with a pack of wolves closing in on us. We had to run or be eaten.

My friend Matt pointed up the hill and whispered, "look". What we saw made the sudden and already almost unbearable fear solidify into stomach-turning terror. There was a humanoid figure crouched near some brush maybe 20 yards away. It looked like it was wearing a black robe except the robe was somehow darker than the rest of the

darkness. It was like the shadow that a shadow would make. That's how it snuck up on us—it was almost impossible to see. What was impossible to not see, however, were its eyes. They were a very dim red—like charcoals that had smoldered down—bright enough to easily make out when it was looking at you but dark enough to maybe go unnoticed if it wasn't. That's when we ran.

We took off down the hill stumbling over rocks and brush heading toward the riverbed. I kept looking back to see where it was and thankfully it didn't seem particularly fast, or at least it wasn't as fast as we were. There was another problem however: whatever that thing was, it wasn't alone. The whole hillside was crawling with them. There were red smoldering eyes peering at us from all over.

Once we hit the flat sandy bottom of the riverbed we were able to flat out run for our lives, which we did. Unfortunately we didn't get very far. Diarmat, who was in front, threw up his arms to stop us, "Oh my god, look!"

Just up ahead one of the shadow things was crawling down the bank into the riverbed to cut us off. I spun around and there were more coming in behind us. We were totally fucked and we were going to die.

At that moment, when we were all certain it was the end, Matt stuck out his finger, pointed at the shadow figure in front of us, and commanded (with the most commanding voice I ever heard him use): "IT'S A STUMP". The shadow stopped moving. I looked back and saw the ones behind us still closing in. We had to move. Staying close to the opposite bank, we started slowly moving toward the frozen shadow in front of us. None of us believed it was actually a stump but what choice did we have? It continued to not move and I could no longer see its eyes.

As we got closer, I could see that a tree stump was now laying along the river bank where the shadow had been crawling in. This was absurd for many reasons only one of which was there were no trees in this area, just scrubby sage brush and rocks. The stump looked unnatural and completely out of place. We didn't stop to examine it. Once we got past we ran as fast as we could back to the car with the shadows chasing us. We made it to the car, jumped in, and I floored it. As we were tearing down the hill and away, back to the safety of human civilization, Diarmat pointed out the window.

There were hordes of those fucking things still ambling along out there. Hundreds of red smoldering eyes.

You might be thinking we were on drugs seeing as we were late teens, in Reno, in the 90's. At that point in my life it would be a good guess. Only we weren't. We weren't on anything. Just four kids hanging out in the desert talking. This incident later became known as 'The Stump Trick' because we agreed that if it hadn't been for Matt's instinctual spell casting turning whatever that thing was into a stump, who knows how the rest of that night might have gone.

This is just one of many experiences in my life that doesn't neatly fit into the bucket of the dominant paradigm. I picked this particular experience, for this context, because it's one of the crazier ones and because there were four of us that had the same experience. It wasn't just me.

Materialism

The current dominant paradigm does a very good job of helping me understand about 97% of my lived experience. That's awesome! It has also given us longer and (mostly) healthier lives, the ability to instantly get turn-by-turn directions anywhere in the world, pictures of the surface of Mars, grocery stores where you can buy food that (usually) won't make you sick, and on and on. I am a big fan of materialism and some of what comes downstream of materialism, like science. I'm a software engineer by trade so when I say I'm a big fan, I really mean it. I've been playing with computers for as long as I can remember and started programming when I was 12. Without the pervasiveness of materialism, reductionism, and science we wouldn't have computers or antibiotics. I would be very bored and also probably dead.

Materialism is awesome, and also utterly useless at helping me understand the other 3% of my lived experience. This booklet is dedicated to that 3%.

Background

I have always been interested in magic and the occult. When I was a little kid, I wanted to be a stage magician. I had a signed portrait of David Copperfield that I simultaneously loved and was terrified of. I made my parents go into every magic shop we saw and buy me trick decks, books on slight-of-hand, and whatever I thought was cool. I would then attempt to perform those tricks (oh, sorry, illusions) for others, usually badly. There was something important about these acts of magic, but I also had the feeling that something wasn't quite right. My interest was pushing me toward something important, but I didn't know what.

I also believed that every object had feelings. If I got angry (I have lifelong anger management challenges) and slammed a door or hit a wall, I would always apologize to it later. I knew this was weird, even back then, so I did it quietly or sometimes just in my head. I had invisible friends and phantoms (hello Mr. Tapper), loved stories of magic and the unexplainable, and generally had a fairly wild and vivid imagination. I was also incredibly fortunate to have parents that did everything they could to support and encourage me. Not only were my parents supportive but I now know that these things are often (but not always) inherited through an ancestral line. My parents have

it (both of them), my sister has it, and my sister's children have it (whether they like it or not).

As previously mentioned, I also have a little sugar in my gas tank. One of my earliest memories was pretending I had to use the bathroom at school so I could look at the boy's butts while they were standing at urinals. That was in the first grade. I was a homo from the get-go. I came out to my mom when I was an early teen and dad learned a bit later. I'm mentioning this here because there seems to be a significant overlap between being on the fringes of the societal norm (particularly in sexuality and gender) and an affinity with magic, which has been documented and celebrated throughout many cultures and over many generations. I didn't think so back then, but being queer was an enormous gift.

I got my first tarot deck in 1990 when I was 16. I know the year because I also purchased Depeche Mode's *Violator* CD at the same time. It was the Morgan-Greer Tarot and it kicked off a lifelong passion for cartomancy. Reading tarot was my sole source of income twice when I was younger: once for pay-per-minute phone readings at Northwest Nevada Telco (no joke), and once at an occult supply store in New Orleans. This was before I discovered that companies would pay me to do what I was already doing for free: computer programming (the similarities between programming and magic is a topic for another document). I have also read cards, on and off, for friends and family ever since.

That occult supply store in New Orleans, *The Witches Closet*, was run by an organization called *The Religious Order of Witchcraft*, one of the only state-registered witchcraft churches in the US at the time. *The Religious Order of Witchcraft* was founded by the fabulous and renowned Mary Oneida Toups, who unfortunately had already passed on before I arrived in New Orleans. I studied with the ROW for a year and left just prior to being ordained (a story for another time). Before moving to New Orleans, I learned Wicca from my first spiritual teacher, Cynthia Chalmers Lefaye, who completely changed my view of spirituality and cartomancy. For example, when Cynthia bought a tarot deck she would leave the instruction cards (or blank cards, or any card you are supposed to remove) in the deck and read with them. Every card provides insight. Obviously she's absolutely amazing and still a close friend and

spiritual ally.

So why all the background and CV-ishness? Because I want to try and convince you of two things and I think I'll have an easier time if you believe I'm legit. The first is that magic and paranormal phenomena (for lack of a better term) are as real an experience as any other phenomena that most people consider real. The second is that, much like in software engineering, one of the best way you can deepen your understanding of something is to build something similar, from scratch, yourself.

Panpsychism

Nothing in this document is new. I'm not really even putting things together in a novel way. Even the opening story of my experience with shadow people is well worn territory (don't believe me? Google "shadow people"). What I can do, however, is put another data point on the scatter plot. I can add another voice to the ever growing chorus of voices warning that we've thrown a few babies out with the it-isn't-real-if-I-can't-explain-it-with-materialism bathwater. In our attempt to fully rationalize the universe, which has been almost universally beneficial, we've made some fundamental assumptions that prevent us from fully engaging with the vast complexity of our shared reality. And that sucks.

As humans, we have a tendency to believe things are either one way or another. We draw hard-and-fast boundaries around everything which, as an evolutionary tool, has allowed us to survive and thrive. Something is either this, or it is that. A this-or-that perspective may work great when deciding if something is predator or prey. However, as a tool for understanding human experience and interaction, it kind of sucks. Instead, what I would like to encourage, is a perspective of this *and* that. Keep a healthy materialistic world view but also leave the door open for your experience to encompass more than just what neatly fits into the box of materialism.

I'm not going to deep dive on all the various schools of thought, philosophies, traditions, practices, and everything else that humans have explored and recorded on this topic. Many much smarter people have done that before me (see the section on Further Research). I do, however, want to mention one canon of philosophy that I think does a good job of helping me incorporate that other 3% into my world view.

Panpsychism is one of the oldest philosophical theories and it posits one teeny, tiny conceptual shift that helps make that thorny 3% fit into a rational mental model.

Consciousness, not matter, is the fundamental substrate of existence.

Materialism says that consciousness is the byproduct of a physical brain. Panpsychism says that physical brains are a byproduct of consciousness. The material universe sits on top of consciousness and the physical brain acts as a conduit between the two. If you can entertain this one neat trick (scientists *hate* him!), that consciousness is the fundamental building block of reality, then all this magic and paranormal stuff becomes just another part of the expression of consciousness.

That isn't to say that the material doesn't matter (see what I did there?). Remember, it's this *and* that. The material is critically important and we desperately need to continue to invest in it because it's where we live (so to speak). In fact we need to double-down on our investment particularly in the era of social media and the "war on facts". There's an alarming number of people in the world that believe climate change isn't real, vaccines cause autism, the world is flat, people that look different are dangerous, and "thoughts and prayers" will fix the fact that idiots are running around with automatic assault rifles capable of murdering hundreds of innocent people.

Revel in the material, but recognize that materialism is just one way of understanding experience—one lens in the philosophical camera bag of crazy lenses. Materialism is like your trusty 50mm standard fixed lens. You use it a lot because it works well for almost everything and *really* great for some things, like portraits. However, sometimes you need to get a close up shot of a cool looking insect. That's where a macro lens comes in. You wouldn't try to get an ultra close up of an insect with a 50mm lens because the image would look like garbage. You also wouldn't deny the existence of the insect just because you couldn't get a good shot with the wrong lens.

Did I take that metaphor too far? Like, subscribe, and leave a comment below.

Sigil Magic

BUTTERBALL

My husband Jake and I recently moved from Washington State, USA to Berlin, Germany. This involved a lot of planning and a lot of work. Most of the work was well defined and just needed to be executed. Stuff like: move out of our house, find a renter, sell our car, get rid of a bunch of shit we didn't use anyway, etc. However, there was one thing about moving that wasn't entirely in our control and caused constant anxiety: moving our 80-pound dog Doc.

Doc (short for Doctor David Thelonious Wong) is our Labrador mix that is wonderfully sweet, goofy as fuck, and pure love. He's one of those dogs that no one can resist. Some people are freaked out by his size when they first meet him, but after a few minutes, everyone falls in love. Moving a dog five thousand miles across the globe and into another country isn't easy. We had to get a bunch of paperwork from his vet with his vaccine records, USDA paperwork certifying that he is chipped and has a current rabies vaccine, a certified crate for transporting him, and on and on. Even after checking all of those boxes, we knew that one grumpy German customs official could ruin everything. I also knew that the risks for a big dog flying 12+ hours in the cargo hold of an airplane were not zero. I decided to reach for magic.

Sigil magic is one of the oldest and most accessible forms of interacting with the paranormal. There's a ton of information out there about sigil magic and I've included some references in the section on Further Research. In this case I used sigil magic to conjure a guardian protector to watch over Doc during the move. Doc loves two things above all others: butter and balls. I don't know any dog that doesn't love butter but Doc is a butter fanatic. It's at the top of his list. His other great love is any kind of ball. They aren't just for playing and chewing, they are also for cuddling, resting one's head on, and bringing to bed. So I created BUTTERBALL, a guardian protector for Doc. I won't go into all the details of the conjuration but it involved, among other things, a rubber chew ball covered in actual butter.

Anyone with experience in this sort of thing can kind of tell when an act of magic has oomph, and when it doesn't. I've done plenty of acts of magic where I felt good about

the work but knew that it wasn't necessarily game changing. BUTTERBALL was one to write a story about. It had oomph in spades.

Then shit got weird.

Getting Doc to the airport, crated, and into the hands of the luggage handlers at the Seattle airport went off without a hitch. Of course, minus our emotional state, we weren't really expecting difficulty getting out of the US. It was in the air and entering Germany where everything had the potential to go sideways. Once we were boarded I made one last mental nod to BUTTERBALL (the physical sigil was with Doc in his crate) then did my best to forget about it and let things run whatever course they were going to take.

When we landed in Germany, we tried to rush through passport control and get to baggage claim as quickly as possible. When we got there something was weird right out of the gate, both metaphorically and literally. There was a camera crew engaged with customs agents in what looked like maybe a training video? It was hard to tell. There was a family of (presumably) actors, someone that looked like a news anchor, two camera crew with expensive looking shoulder cameras, a lighting setup, and what looked like a couple of customs agents (maybe also actors). It was comically absurd but since we still didn't have Doc we basically ignored the whole scene. The baggage claim area was weirdly empty of both people and luggage. There was no sign of Doc's crate and also no sign of anyone we could ask. Eventually we found someone at what I think was a car rental information counter and asked where the oversize luggage was located. He pointed way to the back of the warehouse-like baggage claim and there was Doc's crate! Jake grabbed our luggage, which had just come around on the belt, and I ran over to check on Doc. As I got closer to Doc's crate I could hear someone angrily yelling in German nearby.

I checked on Doc who was not only alive but wagging his tail. There was no smell of poop or urine coming from his crate. He held it for the entire 12 hour flight because he's a fucking boss. All I wanted was to get him out of his crate and give him some water and love, but we still had to get through customs.

To the left of Doc's crate there was a desk with a man behind it in an official-looking

uniform, holding an iPad at arms length out in front of him, yelling at it. I have no idea what he was yelling about but he was clearly pissed off. He was yelling like a sports fan might yell about a bad call from a referee. The fluorescent light above his desk was flickering on and off. It was like a scene out of a David Lynch movie. The man ignored me entirely and just kept yelling at his tablet. Another couple came over and tried to ask the man if there was a snowboard back there that hadn't come out yet. He just yelled at them in German and then went right back to yelling at his iPad. I have no idea if that couple ever got their snowboard. Jake grabbed a luggage cart (which Doc's humongous crate barely fit on) and we made our way to customs at the other end of baggage claim.

There were two sides to the customs checkpoint: one where you can declare things and one for those with nothing to declare. Did we have to declare our dog? We had no idea where to go so Jake finally just pointed us at the lane for nothing to claim. We got up to the checkpoint where there was a single agent intently staring, not at us and our gigantic dog, but at the strange film crew who were now recording the investigation of some luggage. One of the agents/actors was pulling a giant curved ceremonial dagger with jewel encrusted scabbard, that looked like a movie prop, out of the luggage. The agent held it proudly aloft as if to say, "look what I found in these bad people's luggage!" Meanwhile we strolled right by the distracted agent in our lane with a dog crate so large it brushed his arm as we passed. At that moment I remember thinking, "I have a ritual dagger in this suitcase right here that's way more dangerous than that movie prop."

No one looked at Doc's paperwork, checked our luggage, or even seemed to acknowledge our existence. We waltzed right out. It was so insane that, once we were past the checkpoint, I asked Jake where the actual customs was. I couldn't believe that no one was even going to look at this pile of paperwork the German customs website said we had to have and that I had spent weeks getting! Jake pointed to the glass doors next to us that exited onto the sidewalk outside and said, "I think we just went through it."

It wasn't just a little bit abnormal, the whole thing was crisp beyond reason. Maybe BUTTERBALL was a little over exuberant and turned the synchronicity dial to 11.

There is no question in my mind what happened though. Fuck, there was butter all over that baggage claim.

Your Turn

Sigil magic is one of the most approachable ways to get your feet wet and a mainstay of magical practice throughout time and tradition. If you haven't tried it before, just give it a go! Check the Further Research section for how to get started or just Google it. The basic technique is easy to grasp and once you do it, and see it work for yourself, it will give you some momentum to keep experimenting. It will help reinforce what you probably already know: the universe doesn't fit neatly into the box of materialism.

Yet Another Oracle?

Generally, one doesn't want to reinvent the wheel. On the surface, it seems like a waste of time. There is one good thing about making your own wheel though: in the end you'll have a much better understanding of how wheels are made.

Throughout my career as a software engineer I have frequently heard junior programmers complain about package managers. A package manager is a tool that lets programmers include software from other programmers in their projects. Nearly every programming language and platform has one and it's something that's an intrinsic part of every developer's daily life. So, of course, there's a lot of griping about how they work because, on the surface, it seems like an easy problem. When I hear a junior dev complain about the package manager for the language they are using I usually say, "It sounds like you've got some good ideas about how it could be better. Why don't you write one yourself?"

That might seem like a monumental waste of time, however, those that do the exercise end up with a much deeper understanding of the problem space and a better appreciation for the choices the creator of the package manager decided to make. Then, if they still feel they could do better, I encourage them to contribute to the official package manager for the language they are using (nearly all package managers are open source).

What better way to dig deeper into the mystery of cartomancy than to make one for yourself? Give it a go! And don't make excuses. Do you feel like you have no artistic ability? I can point you at a number of oracle decks that have nothing but a text phrase on top of a solid color background. Some fortune tellers in Iran use passages from the poetry of Hafez written on little pieces of paper as an oracle. A friend of mine took some poster board, cut it into card-sized pieces, and doodled on them with pens and water colors. Don't make an excuse of lack of time either. Carve out a little time a few days a week to make progress. Sometimes I only had 20 minutes to work and just did what I could.

Creating my own tarot has been on my todo list for a long time. I really wanted a better understanding of what made tarot work and how I could maybe bring my own flavor

to the craft. I may eventually do an actual tarot deck but I'm pretty happy with how this oracle deck turned out and I learned a ton in the process.

If I can do it then so can you.

Chapter Two

Welcome to The Golden Oracle cartomantic and magic system. I had an absolute blast making it and I hope that you have a blast using it. However, my goal wasn't to make yet another oracle deck. I wanted to better understand how cartomancy works and to build an oracle that I could use not only for cartomancy but also as a system of magic, complete with an origin story. I also wanted to write this booklet to entice others interested in the subject to go through the process of making their own oracle. It's fun, an incredible journey, and you'll come out the other end with a deeper understanding of cartomancy.

The System

The Golden Oracle gets its name from the golden ratio, which provides the basic structure. I originally intended to use a binary tree for the structure which seemed like a nice clean system. The progression of cards in each ring (more on rings later) would have gone from 0 to 16 in a binary numbering sequence of 0, 1, 2, 4, 8, 16 resulting in 32 cards. However, once I started working with that progression it felt a little too tidy. Maybe that's what the creators of the Kabbalah in Jewish mysticism thought, which is why the tree in that tradition has such an irregular shape. A good system needs to represent the beauty and mess of creation. So I opted instead for a progression based on the golden ratio, the Fibonacci sequence of: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 which results in 34 cards. That felt a lot more natural but still structured enough to make sense.

Each place in the first eight places of the Fibonacci sequence represent successive tiers of manifestation, which I call rings, starting with the state before creation as 0 (The Source).

The first three cards all have their own ring and represent a fundamental aspect of creation. Then, starting with Polarity, each ring contains more than one aspect grouped together.

Here's the list of rings with a brief note on what the hell I was thinking when I created this insanity.

The Source

What existed before existence? In some origin myths the state before state is referred to as a void. I don't like that concept because it implies nothingness and there can't be a concept of nothing without a concept of something. It is, of course, impossible to comprehend what existed before existence. In fact even saying 'before existence' is wrong because time doesn't exist in that context either. It's also variously called spirit, akasha, and probably a bazillion other things in other religions and systems. In the Golden Oracle I've called it The Source. This ring has no aspect so both the ring and the title of the card are the same.

Creation

Creation is the ring that represents the moment our reality came into being. It has a single aspect called Manifestation.

Reflection

Reflection comes after Creation with the single aspect Rest, occurring on the opposite side of the ring from Manifestation.

Polarity

In Polarity we have the first moment of complexity, the ability for opposites to exist. Polarity has two aspects representing the opposite ends of a continuum.

Trinity

With Trinity, the two becomes three and we have the first ring after Creation with an aspect at 0 degrees. In the following rings there is always an aspect at 0 degrees providing an umbilical cord back to Creation.

Foundation

The traditional elements of creation are represented as aspects in the ring of Foundation: Water, Fire, Earth, Air and Consciousness.

Quickening

The complex spiraling out from creation begins to take shape in Quickenning. The connections back to the aspects in Foundation hint at a cycle of creation and destruction which takes further form in the ring of Evolving.

Evolving

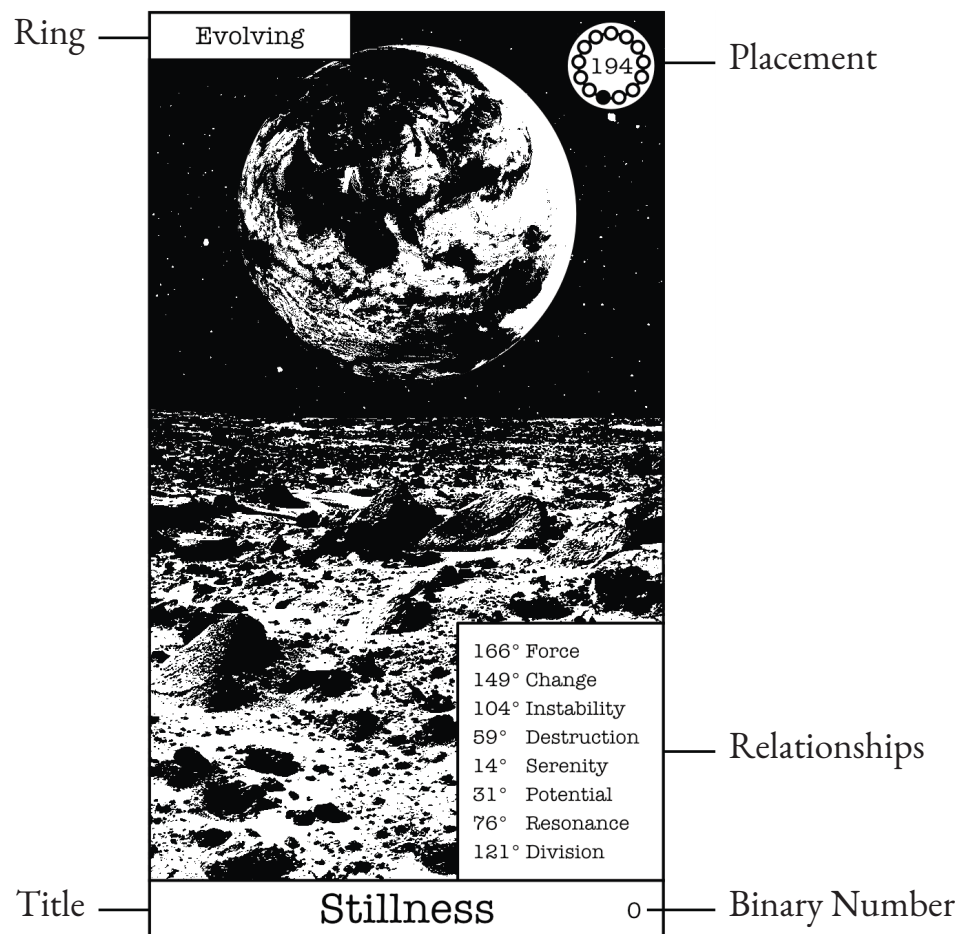
The final ring represented in the Golden Oracle (there are an infinite more not represented) further solidifies the cycle started in Quickenning and brings aspects that are even closer to the day-to-day experiences of human consciousness. The emanations of creation continue to radiate out and somewhere, in a ring much further down, there is an aspect of each of our individual consciousnesses.

Each card represents a particular aspect of the ring it is associated with. The name of the card's ring is printed in the upper left corner and the name of the aspect the card represents is at the bottom. Each aspect's placement on the ring, along with the angle, is shown in the top right of the card.

One of the interesting synchronicities that came out of working with this structure is the relationship between the aspects on different rings. To make it a bit easier to see these relationships I've included a table in the bottom right of each card that shows the distance from the current card's placement on its ring to the placement of all aspects on the prior ring.

Finally I've included one extra little piece of data that can be useful for associating a number with a collection of cards (or "spread" in traditional cartomancy terminology). In the far right corner of the card's title at the bottom, most cards have a 1 or 0. This was a holdover from the original binary tree concept but also something I sort of borrowed from the Lenormand system. In the Lenormand each card has a number associated with the card's rank. Some readers use these numbers for things like date and time, a person's age, or to represent any meaningful number in the context of a reading. This technique isn't unique to Lenormand, but that's how I learned about it. In the Golden Oracle the 1 and 0 can be used in a sequence to produce a number represented as binary. If you don't know the binary numbering system then now's a

good time to Google that shit! If you laid three cards out and the first card has a 1, the second a 0, and the third a 1 then you would have the number 5 (1 in the 1's place + 0 in the 2's place + 1 in the 4's place = $1 + 0 + 4 = 5$). You can choose to use this aspect of the cards, or not, as you see fit. Of course that's true for the whole damn thing so hey, go to town!



Cards

I'm not going to try and provide a complete description for each card. I'll give some of my thoughts on the symbolism, maybe some hidden things that aren't easy to make out, maybe a bit of history related to why I picked the imagery, etc. It's a system that is meant to be played with and explored. Shit, even I don't know what all this stuff means! A lot of it came from somewhere else. Like everything we experience, you'll have your own thoughts and interpretations.



The Source (The Source)

The Source is the all and everything. It is the dreamer and the dream. There is nothing that it isn't and nothing that can be apart from it. In a reading The Source might indicate that separation is an illusion and a need to re-connect with spirit. Sometimes it may indicate that something is simply unknowable. As a blank card it represents anything (and everything) as infinite potential, like The Fool starting on their journey.



Manifestation (Creation)

In many creation myths there is an arbitrary moment that is the beginning of time when The Source brings reality into existence. It is the moment that the dreamer begins to dream. In a reading this card can represent the creative force that shatters the status quo and begins something new. Sometimes disruption is needed for a new dream to begin. Creations are fragile at first and must be nurtured and cared for before they take on a life of their own.



Rest (Reflection)

After any great moment of creation there is a moment of rest and reflection. Sometimes you just need to take time for yourself and to reflect on the path you've created. Do not get caught up in the illusion of it all though. We are the dream of the dreamer creating our own dreams.



Cathode (Polarity)

Every aspect of creation exists within a duality somewhere between two poles on a continuum. Cathode represents one of those poles which in many traditions is associated with expansion, outward movement, action, light, the known, etc. This is the Yang (Chinese character in upper left).



Anode (Polarity)

Anode represents the pole of duality on the opposite end from Cathode: contraction, inward movement, introspection, darkness, the unknown, etc. This is the Yin (Chinese character in the upper left).



All Seeing Eye (Trinity)

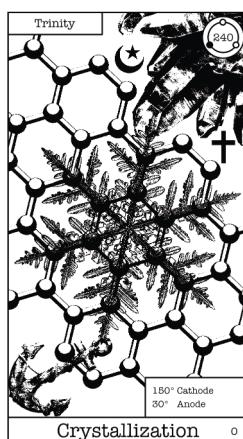
Ever since I was very young I would sometimes, just before falling asleep, see a giant eyeball floating just above me. Sometimes it would be so close I felt like I could reach out and touch it's shiny surface. The Eye has guided me at various times in my life and often shows up for me during meditation or journeying. When it came to representing the top of the ring of Trinity for my oracle, it was a no-brainer. The All Seeing Eye represents the conduit of consciousness into its own creation. Radiating from the eye is a Sierpinski triangle demonstrating the hermetic principle of correspondence: the same pattern exists at all levels of magnification. Hanging in the corner is a Turkish nazar which protects against the evil eye.



Oscillation (Trinity)

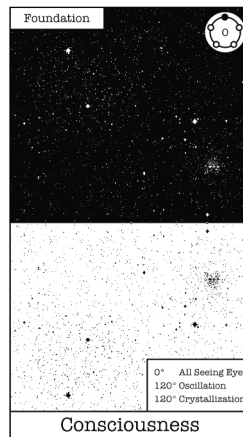
At the bottom right of Trinity's triangle is Oscillation, representing the Hermetic principle of vibration. Everything is in motion and vibration is fundamental to

material reality. Oscillation is also symbolic of fluctuation and might represent, depending on context, indecision. The Greek god of transitions, Janus, presides over a ringing bell.



Crystallization (Trinity)

Opposite Oscillation in the ring of Trinity is Crystallization. On the arms of Baphomet, the famous Goat of Mendes, are written two words: SOLVE and COAGULA (separate and join together). I debated calling Oscillation Solve, and Crystallization Coagula. Crystallization is the processes of bringing together and making sense of the mess of everything. It's about applying structure to the structureless so it can be used and understood. Crystallization can also represent an over-reliance on structure, causing an inflexible anchoring to an idea or concept.



Consciousness (Foundation)

The ring of Foundation has five elements (the sixth place in the Fibonacci sequence) and seemed to neatly fit the traditional points of a pentagram and their related symbolism in modern western traditions. I choose the word Consciousness, instead of Spirit, as that fits my panpsychist worldview a bit better. You can call it Spirit if that suits you. Here we further develop the ancient axiom of As Above, So Below. The patterns of creation manifest at all levels. Know thyself and you will know Creation.



Water (Foundation)

Water is the realm of emotion, introspection, reflection, and mystery. The astrological signs associated with water are: Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces. The chalice represents the element of water in most traditional tarot decks and in many systems of western occultism.



Fire (Foundation)

Fire is the realm of passion, activity, movement, and energy. The astrological signs associated with fire are: Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius. The wand represents the element of fire in most traditional tarot decks and many systems of western occultism.



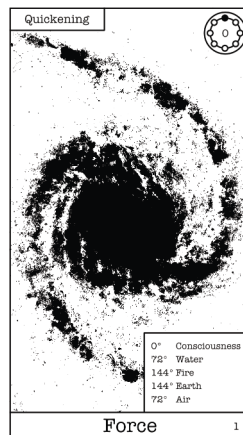
Earth (Foundation)

Earth is the realm of the physical world, structure, nature, and Mother Earth. The astrological signs associated with earth are: Capricorn, Taurus, and Virgo. While coins or pentacles often represent the element of earth in traditional tarot, I choose crystals for the Golden Oracle since that resonates with me more.



Air (Foundation)

Air is the realm of knowledge, intellect, reason, and balance. The astrological signs associated with air are: Libra, Aquarius, and Gemini. Daggers or swords often represent the element of air in traditional tarot decks and many systems of western occultism.



Force (Quickening)

Consciousness in the ring of Quickening becomes Force: the power to create. Force is required to create a galaxy, or get up in the morning and tie your shoes. Force is the result of Oscillation and Crystallization. Force is the precursor to Magic and in a reading may indicate the need to apply force to make shit happen.



Change (Quickening)

The fall of the Berlin wall is a good metaphor for the Change card. Change is a reminder that nothing is static and sometimes Change requires Force. Change can also indicate an endless cycle where the same mistakes are made over and over. There's always a way up and out though, if you take the hand of help that is offered.



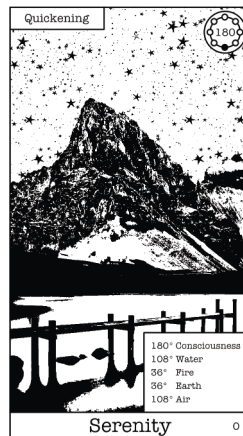
Instability (Quickening)

Stability is an illusion propped up by people in power to fool you into thinking things are just fine. You know you need to worry when someone in power says there's nothing to worry about. The massive original Tacoma Narrows bridge was brought down by the natural resonance created by wind blowing through the gorge. Skepticism of seemingly solid structures might be in order. Unstable weather is difficult to predict but a good sailor knows that staying calm, coming up with a plan, and carefully executing that plan will keep the ship afloat.



Destruction (Quickening)

Destruction is sometimes necessary to make way for something new. And sometimes the new thing isn't any better than the thing that was destroyed. Destruction can also symbolize our own tendency toward self-sabotage through anger, indulgence, and vice. Apep, the Egyptian god of chaos and enemy of Ma'at (balance/order/truth), was constantly in battle with Ra, the sun god, to prevent him rising in the east each morning. However, the sun itself is in a state of constant destruction which produces the heat and light necessary for life. Dichotomy!



Serenity (Quickening)

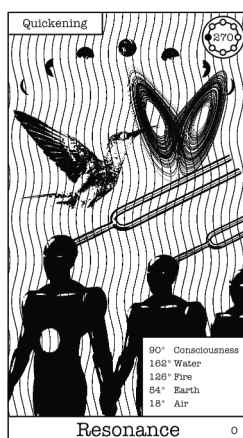
Serenity is 180 degrees opposite Force and is in the exact same position as Rest (Reflection) at the bottom of the ring. Just like with Force, all of the attributes of Quickening are in balance, only from the opposite perspective. Serenity might be asking you to take the time to be calm and still, possibly out in nature. Perhaps a

needed time of Serenity is on the horizon inviting you to bask in its grace before storming off on some new adventure. Or perhaps it is an invitation to use this card as a sigil to bring some needed Serenity into your life.



Potential (Quickening)

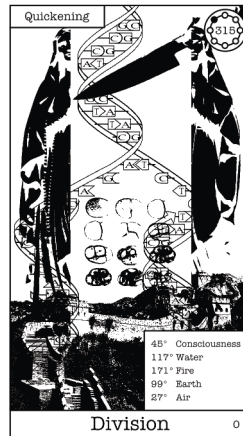
What's inside the box? Maybe something you wished for. Schrödinger's cat is both alive, and dead, until you open it and see for yourself. Potential takes time to bake, like a dormant volcano, or the caterpillar that retreats into its cocoon. Abundance is available but it's your job to turn it into Potential.



Resonance (Quickening)

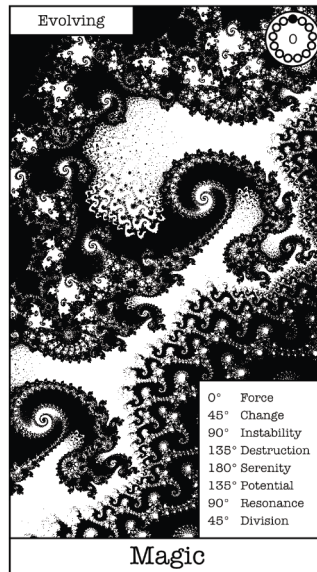
The biggest projects sometimes require a lot of people working toward the same goal. Troops that march together for weeks on end often report a feeling of being a single entity where the individual melts away into the whole. But where is the line between

team player and lackey? Sometimes you need to stand up against the crowd when you know the crowd is wrong. Resonance is the force behind the “butterfly effect” where a small change now can create a massive change down the road. Resonance creates power, but power can be used for good or evil.



Division (Quickenning)

The living cells of an organism replicate through cellular division, enabling growth. Sometimes we create lines of division to separate us from them, or ourselves from ourselves. The power of Division can allow us to grow, to cut away the things we no longer desire, or to create walls where none are needed. Maybe you need more “and” and less “or” in your life.



Magic (Evolving)

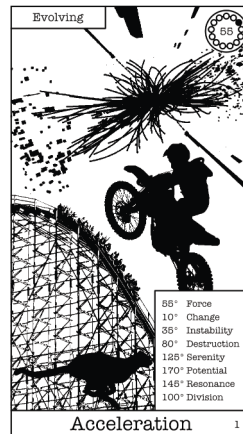
In the final ring of the Golden Oracle, Evolving, the path through Creation, the All Seeing Eye, Consciousness, and Force, results in Magic. Magic is the application of Force on the material plane. The symbolism of the fractal again reminds us that the same patterns apply to all levels of existence. All acts of Magic ripple through every level. Consciousness is the conduit of Magic. Tap into the power of Magic and hack your experience of reality.



Movement (Evolving)

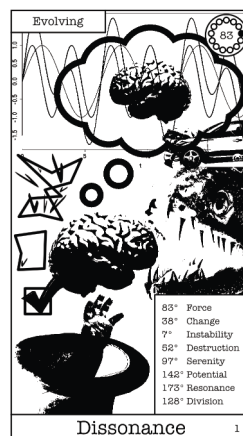
Change in the ring of Evolving becomes Movement. In a reading this card might indicate physical travel but could also symbolize moving within. Sometimes we need to

let something go and move away from it with a smile and a wave. Also, when on the great voyage we call life, always make sure you have an awesome crew.



Acceleration (Evolving)

Acceleration is a thrill. You jam the pedal and shit TAKES OFF. Things are picking up speed and now you hope that a) you planned things well and b) you keep a strong grip on the wheel. Maybe that means you catch your prey, discover proof of the Higgs boson, or go careening off a cliff. Better buckle your seatbelt, because it's liftoff time.



Dissonance (Evolving)

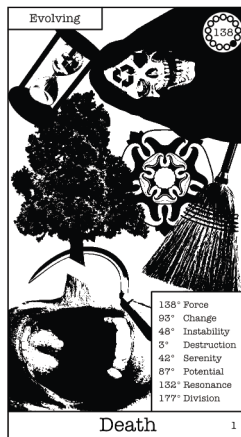
Things are out of harmony and causing friction. It doesn't sound good and it doesn't feel so good either. Dissonance is the gap between what you think happened (or is going to happen) and what actually happened (or is going to happen). The forces that thrive on Dissonance are ever hungry and will eat your brain if you let Dissonance

continue for too long. Trust your instincts and try not to gloss over things that make your this-isn't-quite-right spidey sense tingle. Just because you made the perfect todo list doesn't mean things aren't running off the rails. It's time to re-evaluate with a discerning eye.



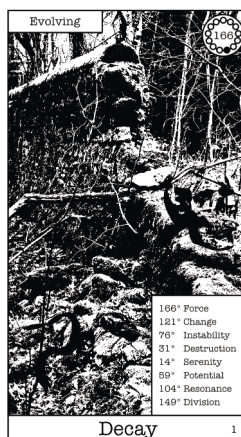
Entropy (Evolving)

The second law of thermodynamics says that in an isolated system, entropy tends to increase with time. It's one of the few scientific theories that actually indicates that time flows in a specific direction, also called "the arrow of time". Entropy is the force that is always working against order and structure, persistently pushing all things toward complexity and chaos. Mans biggest and most fantastic structures will eventually become rubble as time devours them. Entropy is the force of time in our physical reality. If this card comes up in a reading it might be reminding you that all things will eventually come to ruin and you only have so much Force in a single life that you can apply against the forces of Entropy. Spend that time wisely and focus on the things that really matter. You only have so many fucks to give.



Death (Evolving)

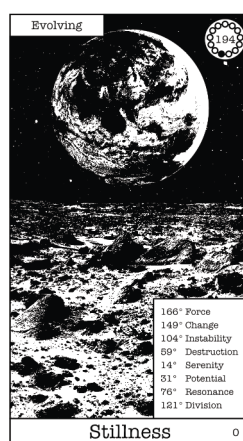
When I first started reading tarot for other people I would always giggle when the death card would come up in someone's reading who isn't familiar with tarot or the energies the card represents. That's why I put a scary monster popping in from the side of the Death card in the Golden Oracle. BOO! The time of reaping can be scary if you want to be scared. Or you can recognize that it's a part of the cycle. Sometimes it can feel like something has been cut down that shouldn't have, but that's the perspective of a consciousness that doesn't have all the variables. Death will come, clear things out, and make way for new growth. Sometimes unexpectedly. Harness the power of Death and ensure that the next phase of your evolution is even more awesome than the one that came before.



Decay (Evolving)

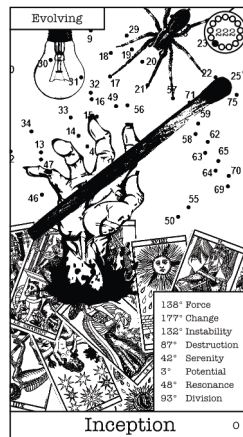
Along with judging the souls of the dead, one of the many responsibilities of Osiris, the

Egyptian god of the underworld, was flooding the river Nile. When the river would flood it brought rich silt deposits to Egypt's soil, allowing the crops to grow. Without the floods there were no crops, which is why Osiris was also responsible for granting life. Humans have a tendency to overlook the power of Decay because we see it as gross, unlike the worms and flies, who see it as party time. Decay is the transformation that turns the stuff Death has reaped into the fertile foundation that nurtures whatever comes next. When life is an absolute mess, or we just feel like a mess, it might be the power of Decay turning what we no longer need into the fertile mulch that feeds the next cycle.



Stillness (Evolving)

Stillness is the manifestation of Serenity in the ring of Evolving. After the cycle of Death and Decay, and before the Inception of the next cycle, comes a time of Stillness. The tide is at its low and is neither ebbing nor flowing. The pendulum is at it's apex and, for a brief moment, appears motionless. In the realm of human affairs, everything seems frantic and critically important. Zoom out far enough though and everything is still and quiet. Stillness invites you to zoom out a bit and understand your dramas in the context of the cosmos. In the original Terminator movie there's a scene where Sarah Conner is frantically waiting tables at her crappy job in a burger joint. While trying to sop up water she accidentally spilled on a patron a child at the next table dumps his ice cream cone into the pocket of her apron. Her coworker later says, "look at it this way: in a hundred years, who's gonna care?"



Inception (Evolving)

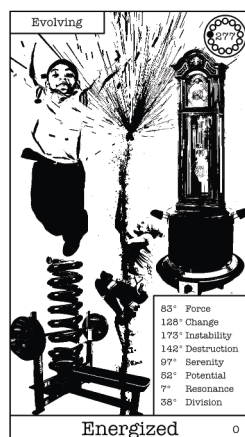
Lurking beneath the surface of Stillness is the seed of Inception. It was always there, hidden from view, waiting for the mulch of Death and Decay to give it the resources it needs to come to life. Inception is a time of new beginnings, fresh ideas, and new projects. Everything you need is already lined up and just waiting for you to connect the dots. You have gained hard earned wisdom through your trials and tribulations and can now use the structures of the past as the springboard for your future plans.



Charging (Evolving)

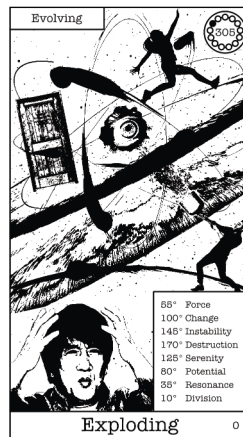
Now is when the mulch of Decay is transformed into the energy that enables growth. It's time to tap into the energy the universe is providing and soak it up. Good things are coming and you'll need all the energy you can store to achieve liftoff. Have you stretched yourself too thin and run out all your reserves? Plug yourself in to the unlimited power that flows through Resonance and into Charging. Charging might

also indicate that your plans are coming together exactly as anticipated and all you need to do now is make sure you are energetically ready for the next big step. Change and Instability are on the opposite side of the ring, so you know that your environment is stable and secure.



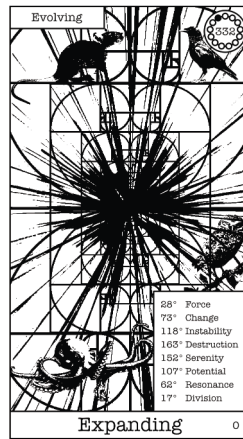
Energized (Evolving)

When you are Energized you can break through barriers, start new habits, and disrupt the status quo. Now is the time! Everything is lined up for you to spring into action and make a big impact. The rockets are lit and Charging left plenty of fuel in the tanks. You are in the zone and as long as you keep your eye on the goal, nothing can stop you. Don't feel disappointed when the state of Energized passes though, as it always does. If you did your job right you channeled all that Energized energy into creating sustainable new habits that will continue long after the stage one rockets have returned to Earth. Use the power of Energized wisely and enjoy the ride.



Exploding (Evolving)

What the actual fuck just happened?... is what you might be asking yourself if Exploding is the energy in your life right now. None of this could have been predicted and you've moved beyond an event horizon where all things are in flux. It's not like the flux of Instability though, this is the power of Division extending into the ring of Evolving. It's like an atom bomb has gone off in the middle of everything. There's a few secret silver linings that the card of Exploding offers though: 1) The time of Exploding gives you a quick peak behind the curtains of reality which you can use to your advantage. Exploding has caused a glitch in the matrix and you now have access to a door that wasn't even there just a second ago. 2) The time of Exploding shows everyone involved that there's a lot more crazy in the universe than anyone thought. It brings players to the table that would otherwise be adversarial, like when the Klingon moon Praxis explodes forcing the Klingons to negotiate a peace treaty with the Federation. 3) The time of Exploding can be a riot of fun, assuming you can let go of over-attachment and just enjoy the show. Sometimes you make perfect plans and Exploding shifts all over them anyway. Ah well, back to the drawing board!



Expanding (Evolving)

What is the ring that comes after Evolving? It has 21 attributes but beyond that, whatever it is, Expanding is the bridge we cross to get there. Expanding is about letting go and allowing our consciousness to evolve, as it is meant to. We are all a part of the same process and the same set of rules and interactions apply to all of us on every level. By looking closely at the patterns of the micro, we get a glimpse into the macro. Expanding is the force that is pushing all of us along on whatever this crazy journey is. Pay attention to the subtle. Listen to your spirit guides/conjured entities/astral plane constructs/dead great grandma. They have something to tell you about where you are headed. Maybe you are about to make your own oracle deck or embark on some other awesome magical project. I sure hope so. We all need to reconnect with our collective Expanding consciousness.

Further Research

Books

Real Magic: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Science, and a Guide to the Secret Power of the Universe (Dean Radin) — If you need further convincing or just a good reminder. I recommend skipping the goofy intro until you have read the rest of the book.

The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom (Jonathan Haidt) — I have read this book many times and I always have it on hand. It's not about magic and the paranormal per se, so might seem strange in this list, however Haidt does such a good job weaving together ancient wisdom and modern science that it really can't be missed. I recommend this book to everyone. It can change your life.

Condensed Chaos: An Introduction to Chaos Magic (Phil Hine) — For a deeper dive on Chaos Magic I would start here. Really fantastic intro and gives you everything you need to get started with a bunch of stuff, including sigil magic.

Liber Null & Psychonaut (Peter J. Carroll) — The origin of chaos magic from the creator himself. I would start with *Condensed Chaos* first then dive into this one after. Good stuff.

Links

<https://bit.ly/2CM2lrN> — Wikipedia entry on Panpsychism.

<https://bit.ly/2B4yTNK> — Video of Grant Morrison being a fucking amazing maniac and talking about sigil magick, psychedelics, reality, and the occult. This is a must watch. Just go watch it. Right now.

Podcasts/Vlogs

Bespoken Bones (<https://bespokenbones.com/>) — The vivacious Pavini Moray interviewing experts and luminaries on a broad range of magical topics.

Kelly-Ann Maddox (<https://bit.ly/2ReZ21n>) — Chaos magician and cartomancer with a ton of great content. There's quite a few fantastic readers and mages on Youtube worth checking out, but Kelly-Ann is at the top of my list.

Special thanks to:

*My wonderful husband, who fully supports all my crazy
My mother and father, who are the best parents anyone could ever hope for
Alice, for all the things
Cynthia, for her friendship and guidance
All my friends and family, for their love and support*

