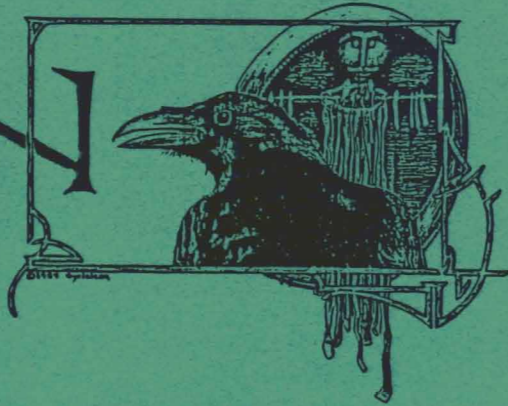


# hugin



HUGIN - ISSUE NUMBER ONE

HUGIN is a journal dedicated to the theoretical, intellectual, and speculative aspects of Asatru. Opinions expressed in these pages are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of any organization.

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# EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Here it is -Hugin Number One!

It's difficult to say what this magazine will become in the future, since any endeavor of this kind is bound to evolve over the course of events. In fact, this evolution has already begun. So how do we see ourselves at this crucial starting point?

Hugin is going to be a bit wilder than The Runestone. This doesn't mean we're going to publish every oddball raving that arrives in the mail, but it does mean that we're going to be somewhat less restrained than in our main journal. If it's a little weirder, a good deal more intellectually demanding, or somewhat more unconventional or controversial, you're likely to see it in Hugin. We shall also be careful to publish a big disclaimer to the effect that the opinions herein are not necessarily the official views or even the unofficial views of the AFA, and that we sure as heck aren't responsible for them! Again, though, this doesn't mean that we'll run anything just because it's strange or outrageous.

Articles in Hugin can be longer than in The Runestone and at this point we don't plan to introduce ads, announcements (in general) or other things that will take up space and dilute the amount of material. Submissions are welcome; write us for author's guidelines.

Enough of this. Let's get on with some pensive provocation!

Hail our Gods and Goddesses!

Steve

THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN HUGIN ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL VIEWS OF THE AFA. READERS ARE ADVISED TO REMEMBER THAT ONE OF OUR GOALS IS TO STIMULATE THOUGHT AND CREATIVITY. IF YOU ARE OFFENDED OR OUTRAGED. . . WRITE US A LETTER OR ARTICLE FOR PUBLICATION!



# TEXAS STARS

"The stars at night, they shine so bright, DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS" declares that golden oldie of a song most people know. That's especially true if you're looking at the stars from the University of Texas' McDonald Observatory in Austin. The Observatory's "Sky Calendar" published in its monthly newsletter is always preceded by the statement, "Unless otherwise indicated, all times are Central Standard for Austin, Texas." Austin time is good time, is divine and cosmic time when it's astral time.

The Sky Calendar entry for January 7, 1985 discusses the Galilean moons of Jupiter. Of Galileo and those moons he sighted, the newsletter states, "He could conclude only that they orbited around Jupiter--a worldshaking idea, since, in those days, Earth was thought to be the center of EVERYTHING."

The Christians, in Galileo's time, thought the Earth was the center of everything and they still think their religion and their god the center of everything. They claim their Jesus is the "savior" of all humanity. In fact, their Jesus can't even save most Christians. In the name of "the Galilean" they refused to see the Galilean moons, Jupiter's moons discovered by Galileo whose work they tried to suppress. He wasn't the only one.

It's good to have the newsletter tell Texans and everybody how old the universe is. It's good to let the light go forth from the astral observatory in Texas. It's good for Jesusists to hear about humanity's astral involvements, involvements and interests which began long before their god walked this planet. The stars at night, long may they continue to shine and illuminate Texans truly, and all humanity too.

The newsletter has occasional aberrations, like when it panders to Christian craziness actually discussing the "possibility" of a "Christmas" star. But for the most part, the newsletter and astronomy help to put Christianity and its crazy claims into proper perspective. Instead of catering to Christian craziness it would be more to the point for the newsletter to explain the mythological and Arabic names and contexts of real, actual, not speculative stars.

Christianity may have killed individuals and entire cultures, like the superior culture of the Graeco-Roman world it undermined. Yet Greek mythology is alive and well in the sky. And some of those froth-at-the-mouth Jesusists

living deep in the heart of Texas should be made aware of their ancestors having renounced their own true, Germanic or Celtic religions, which Christianity did its best to destroy also. Ursa Major, or the Great Bear Constellation was once known as Woden's Wain (wagon or chariot) and the Milky Way used to be called Woden's Way. The newsletter should tell them that, if it ever wants to depart momentarily from astronomy and get into mythology. One day Woden's or Odin's Way may again be their way. Odin's male milk, Odin's female milk lights up the astral pathways, lactically, galactically in yinyang glory. If some Texans will put down their rifles, bibles and footballs long enough to realize it, they'll put away their madness and return to expansive sanity, the ways of their ancestors.

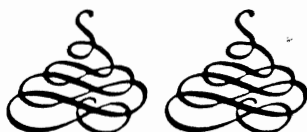
The stars at night, they shine so bright. Deep in the heart of Texas. Yes. New moons for Jupiter and other planets have been discovered. Woden is revealing more and more of his cosmos. Go with Woden and the gods and participate in all the cosmic discoveries, especially the ones you make within you.

In the Lone Star State, many stars shine bright--stars like the McDonald Observatory and the American Atheist Society, both in Austin. They make Austin astral and spectacular, despite the sick, semitic ravings of the Biblists, the lunatics suspicious of every book but that collection of primitive Hebrew mythology, pseudo-history and fantasy projections like the favoring of his chosen by Jehovah and his supposed hatred of those who oppose him.

Now a new star shines in Texas. In Breckenridge, Texas, the Asatru Free Assembly congregates and publishes a journal of Odinic opinion called THE RUNESTONE. Read it, and return to your roots.

"Asatru" means "belief in the gods". "Austin" doesn't derive from it, although it's nice to make the association. Austin derives from the noble name of Roman emperors, "Augustus". Many Roman emperors were deified. In fact, all life is deified merely by existing. Make the god life in you more august and go with the gods, alive in you and in everything visible and invisible around you. By day and by night, let the stars and the gods shine bright inside you--in Texas and everywhere.

© A. Busch



# EN ARCHE EN HO LOGOS

1. When I was in country school in the late 1950's I learnt the motto: honor, duty, country. Odinism is similar, substituting race, or folk, for country. Such does not imply, however, any denial of country: it is, rather, an affirmation of country, defining country as the "where" of race. Odinism recognizes that the United States is a nation created by Nordics (of one persuasion or another), and that it is damn well time to work on keeping it around. Our ancestors came to this land seeking freedom, and were willing to work to maintain it. They were not like those latins and amerinds of today who nightly cross our borders looking for a pleasant life of consumerism: a life, moreover, that they did nothing to create. Ultimately, and for these reasons, Odinism is a political as well as a spiritual movement. We celebrate our culture, and its heritage of two thousand years as the most vital culture on earth. We accordingly desire to manifest that culture.

2. If there is a spirit of Odinism, behind all the folkish claptrap, it is the spirit of questing, achieving, loving freedom, loving life, and loving laughter. The Gospel of John begins, in the Greek, en arche in ho logos. Those words may be translated properly as "In the beginning was the reasoning mind." There is the undeniable premise in which we believe. All else stems from that.

3. The old stories that start off "in the beginning was the ginnunga-gap. . . The cow Audhumla licked Odin, Vili, and Ve from the primeval salt," are teaching devices. They teach us that nothing is, for us, unless it is made, by us. For altogether too many the teaching device, the mythologic framework, has replaced that which it was intended to teach. [An old issue of The Odinist, #34 I believe, dealt with this particular problem.]

4. Make no mistake, however, the folkishness is an essential part of Odinism: and identification with our Indo-European past, and pride in our accomplishments. In spite of the above reference to "folkish claptrap", we love it. It is educational, inspiring, and fun to harken back in our ceremonies to the days of Ragnar Lodbrok and Harald the Stern. We do honor to our ancestors when we sing out a sea chantey, a battle song, or the Havamal.

5. Coincident with the folkish element, there is also a desire amongst us to keep the race pure [avoiding miscegenation of both mind and body], and in control. In control because it is [bleep]ing well our culture that is being attacked from within and without. We are the Volsungs born

anew, determined this time not to be exterminated by the forces of nihilism. Accordingly, an ingrained identification with the Teutonic or Celtic people is necessary for the preservation of our culture.

6. We do not, at least most of us, believe in any sort of immortality through racial survival. We desire to preserve our race, and its position in the West, in order to safeguard our lives, the lives of our grandchildren, and the grandchildren of our people. We believe that our culture is good in a cosmic sense, and that by preserving it, we do good. It must not be forgotten that we are a spiritual people as well as a physical people.

7. Some maintain that, in order to be true Odinists, we have to renounce all other religions, especially Christianity. Those who do, misunderstand Odinism, or Christianity, or (more likely) both. We might well abandon Shinto, or Gnosticism, but not a philosophic faith that has maintained our people longer than any other save Asatru.

8. Nor can we fully embrace the philosophy of Ayn Rand. Her premise of atheism we reject out of hand, as we must reject her denial of anything save empirical reasoning. Like Plato, Plotinus, Anselm, and even Horbinger, we are mystics: we believe in God [or gods if you prefer], but because we see it as right, and just, and good. We are optimistic mystics.

9. When we speak of salvation, we speak of the eternal existence of man's spirit in the company of whatever cosmic force he aligns himself with. We believe that it is necessary however, for the Odinist to align himself with the cosmic good, as ever defined by our people, in order to have any true immortality. Along with the later pagans of Rome, the Mazdan Persians, and the Eriugenan Christians, we hold that evil is merely the absence, or negation, of good. We deny evil any cosmic existence, or any immortality. This is not to say that evil is powerless: evil quite often kicks the [bleep] out of the good. Our job is to interfere with evil, and to work on preserving and furthering the eternal good. En arche en ho logos, and good is a partaking of that reasoning mind.

10. In short, good can be called the workings of the eternal reasoning mind, and evil a perversion and negation of the works of that mind by created beings who have departed from the partaking of its reasoning. Our ancestors would tell each other about the nature of evil by recounting stories of Surtr and the legions of fire, of the evil giants, or of Loki. Even to them, evil was a destruction of good, or the negation of it by forces that left nothing in its place: evil was non-being.

11. An Odinist might wear a button that says: NUKE EVIL!

12. Then is Odin just another name for Christ, or YHWH? Perhaps, but one must remember that the truth in Christianity was demonstrated in a way so as to make it acceptable to Romans, Greeks, and Hellenized Jews. The truth of Odinism, the same truth, is framed rather differently: we are Teutons, the northernmost people of the culture-bearing Indo-Europeans.

13. Then are all religions one? No. Many of them, however, participate in truth. Some religions have little to do with truth. Some only negate it, or try to.

14. So, we might say, the truth of Odinism is that we are a created, culture-bearing people who love freedom, creativity, laughter, and others of our kind. That's not bad, but it needs to go a bit further. The nine principles of Odinism, outlined in the pamphlet "What is Odinism?" are pretty concise, and are implicitly very philosophic. I single out numbers three, four and nine, respectively:

Strive to do the utmost in all things you undertake;

Strive constantly to improve your powers of body, mind and spirit;

Combat evil in all its forms wherever it may be found.

[The last of these principles in all its forms requires comment, because it is the one by which many of us can be led astray. Many Odinists are libertarian or conservative in their political beliefs. Some go further than this, often in the name of "heroic Nordicism". Many of these latter are duped. They would overthrow a tyranny by setting up a harsh rule of Tyr in its place. Avoid this. Fascists of any color do harm, and hinder the growth of the Nordic people. Odinism is not a ramming of our beliefs down other people's throats, not is it genocide, nor race war.]

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LETTERS! WE WANT LETTERS! WANT TO PRAISE OR RAZE ANY OF THESE ARTICLES OR MAKE SOME MEANINGFUL COMMENT? FIRE AWAY! WE WILL USE YOUR NAME UNLESS YOU SPECIFICALLY REQUEST OTHERWISE.



# ODIN AND THE SPIDER

In the interests of our ongoing struggle to rediscover and reconstruct the lost/destroyed/repressed pre-Christian lore and knowledge of our ancestors, I have written this highly speculative article.

Along came ARACHNE RISING by James Vogh ('77, Dial Press, New York), a book which attempts to reestablish what the author claims is the 13th sign of the zodiac, a sign he calls Arachne, the Spider, a "psychic" sign lost not because someone misplaced it, but because (like so much of our own Northern lore) it has been actively repressed over the centuries, and not just by Christians.

In fact, Christians are presented as just the latest in a long series of anti-Arachne cults who have tried to wipe all memory of the Spider from humanity's awareness. Arachne, you see, turns out to be the arch-Lunar/psychic sign, and as such the arch-alternative to the authoritative Solar-tyrant cults such as those which arose in Egypt, and later in Christianity.

Upon reading through ARACHNE RISING I might have just shrugged and thought "so what" (I'm not that interested in astrology these days) and gone on, if not for a couple of other things.

Not long before reading ARACHNE RISING, I had read a book by Kenneth Grant called OUTSIDE THE CIRCLES OF TIME. I was attracted to that book (basically a book of post-Crowleyian ceremonial magickal philosophy) because of the claim on the dust jacket that the notions espoused therein supported in reality the supposedly fictional Cthulu mythos of H.P. Lovecraft. I've been a Lovecraft reader for years, so Grant's book naturally caught my eye.

The cover of Grant's book used a Spider as the central motif, and later in the book he speaks of the Spider being one of the most ancient symbols of the primal Lunar Current.

The Lunar Current is sometimes called the Left Hand Path, and one of its characteristics is, as I understand it from Grant's book, the use of ritual Sex Magick to (among other things) travel between this world and others, whatever or whenever/wherever they might be.

Of course, if you don't already know or haven't yet guessed, the Left Hand Path is most commonly known by the anti-Lunar, anti-women, mud-slinging Solarite definitely sexist term of that ole Black Magic--good song, bad term,

sort of like calling our Gods and goddesses devilspawn to try and get their followers to turn away from them (don't do that sex stuff folks, or you'll all go to that bad place down below--and recall while you're at it the old soul-as-a-spider-hanging-over-the-fiery-pit-on-a-slender-thread image used by Puritan ministers in their fire'n'brimstone sermons).

Anyway, just remember the Sex Magick-Lunar/Arachne Current part for now, and let's go on.

In ARACHNE RISING, in the chapter called "The Hanged One," I came across this passage:

"Odin, like all other manifestations of the Spider, was a priest and a shaman."

It goes on to mention how Odin, also like other Spider-types, traveled around a great deal, even to the land of the dead in search of knowledge. Also mentioned is Odin's acquiring of the runes by hanging on a tree--hanging and the invention of writing are also characteristic of Spider deities. And then there's Sleipnir, which Vogh points out had eight legs, like a spider, and the fact that Odin has well-known magical abilities like, let's say it all together now, THE SPIDER.

For those of you who might have an interest in the Tarot, Vogh lists Odin as the Northern aspect of the Spider and says He's represented by the Tarot's Hanged Man card (the Eastern aspect is the Fool, the Southern the Chariot, and the Western the Wheel of Fortune for reasons I won't go into here).

ARACHNE RISING said no more about Odin, but my mind had been kicked into gear and kept going on its own.

I remembered that Odin learned the sexually oriented seidr magic from Freya (now's the time to recall my earlier mention of Sex Magick being associated with the Lunar/Arachnean Current). I also remembered that Odin's mate Frigga is well known (amongst other things) for Her spinning upon Her wheel (spinning and the spinning wheel are prime symbols of the Spider for obvious reasons in all lands and all climes--while we're at it, let's remember those cord-weaving Norns). And in a book of astronomical lore (STAR NAMES: THEIR LORE AND MEANING by Richard Hinckley Allen) I once read that the "belt" and "sword" stars in the constellation Orion were called Frigga's Spinning Wheel in the north--significant because ARACHNE RISING lists Orion as a constellation with Spider associations.

Now here's what was to me the real kicker--the symbol Vogh chooses to represent this 13th zodiacal sign (he had lots of good solid reasons I won't list here) is the same symbol that astronomers use to represent the planet Earth,

and that symbol, if you don't already know, is the same as our Odinic Sunwheel.

Now I'm not implying we Asafolk should trade in our Hammers and Sunwheels and start wearing silver Spider medallions around our necks as symbols of Odin, but I am implying that there is enough intriguing speculation here to make all our minds kick into a slightly different gear, something which every follower of the one-eyed relentless wisdom-craver should welcome.

The image of Odin, one eye blazing, spear raised, beard flying, ravens swooping, wolves snarling, the God himself riding a raging windstorm astride a monstrous and fearsome dimension-tripping Spider now comes to my mind. Maybe it's just as valid an image as the more traditional one. Maybe it's even the original one.

So much of our lore was destroyed, and if up-front Spider tales associated with Odin ever existed (I don't know of any straight'n'pure Spider tales about any of the Gods and Goddesses in our Northern lore, but that doesn't mean there aren't any, so if someone does know of one or more please let us all know), those images would probably have been the first to be destroyed and then fiercely repressed because that's what happened in other places and times. And those Icelanders who wrote down the old tales might have balked at writing down any Spider stories, if there ever were any and if they were still known by then.

Just one more very speculative thing and then I'll let you go. As I was leaving work one day (before having read the Odin-Spider implication in ARACHNE RISING but while I was reading OUTSIDE THE CIRCLES OF TIME with the Spider on the cover) I saw a large Black Widow spider hanging in her web in a corner of the parking garage. Don't ask me why I looked into that dark corner and saw her. Believe what you will, but I don't usually creep about staring into corners of the parking garage when my thoughts and the rest of me are headed towards home. But on that day my eyes were drawn to her there, hanging silently and patiently in the darkness, the crimson hour-glass on her abdomen defiantly displayed.

I'd never seen a Black Widow spider in the wild, so to speak, and found her fascinating. Fortunately, not being a male Black Widow, I wasn't that fascinated and didn't have to stay around to get devoured, but she left an impression which I thought more about later after reading the Odin-Spider implications in ARACHNE RISING. That was when I remembered a similar feeling from another time.

That other time I had just finished writing "Odinsey" and had just stepped outside when I looked up and saw in the northern sky two large crows flying together, (crows

have to substitute for ravens in Texas, Asafolks).

The feeling I got from that Black Widow and the feeling I got from those suspiciously well-timed post-Odinsey north-flying black crows was pretty much the same.

So, Odin and the Spider? If it feels right to you, fine. If not, fine too. I doubt it matters to Odin or the spiders of Midgard. But from now on, it matters to me.

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## ODIN AND THE NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE (PART 3)

Editor -

Strange things happen to people who almost die, or who seem to die and be resuscitated (as on an operating table). Visions, cosmic experiences, fundamental insights and contacts with beings from "beyond" often result. This article deals with this phenomenon and its meaning. The two pieces of "Odin and the Near Death Experience" that preceded this one (in The Runestone #56 and #57) talked about the near-death experience or NDE in general, and what it tells us about the nature of the cosmos. This was discussed largely in terms of the World Tree, Yggdrasil, and its rootedness in the World Soul, symbolized by the three wells said, in the mythology, to lie by its roots.

With this introduction, let's jump straight into the continuation of these earlier works and see what Brian Regan's up to today!

The World Soul has both a personal and an impersonal aspect, as viewed from the human perspective, though in itself these aspects are one. The beautiful but often shape-changing Gods and giants of Germanic mythology manifest this fact. And on the other hand, NDE'ers (people who undergo a near-death experience) often encounter not just "the light" - the impersonal aspect - itself but also a "being of light" who is the personal side of the light. Depending on the

experiencer's background and mindset, this being may be Jesus, an angel, a Bodhisattva or some other supernatural type. In at least one case known to this author the light was disguised as a horrible, hairy monster of the abominable snowman variety; when the NDE'er hugged this monster out of some strange impulse, it turned into a shaft of light.

It is important to dwell a moment on this "personification" of the Universal Intelligence. NDE'ers--even those who are atheistic or agnostic--report it again and again. They are not seeing some delusion, any more than a healthy human in ordinary consciousness is seeing a delusion when looking at a tree. Even though we do not see the tree in itself (that is, all the molecules that make it up, the electromagnetic forces in it, and so forth), that fact does not mean the tree is not there. It is indeed present, even though translated by our senses and brain into an image which is different than the thing "in itself".

Likewise, the appearances of the Gods are interpretations by our own beings of the Universal Intelligence. The Gods, in other words, are the translations of the living superhuman personhood sensed by us in the World Soul and its infinite depths, the Allsoul. A person reacts with intelligence and appropriateness to another person. So do our Gods. They "match" us because our organism's memory-structures show them to us as the fulfillment of our own selves. We are pieces of the cosmic puzzles, and we see the outline of the puzzle-niche into which we fit -- our interface with the World Soul -- as a God. That outline -- that interface -- is for us at the same time the rest of the puzzle: the all-knowing "Light" of which the ancient Gnostics wrote.

The NDE thrusts the mind into an archaic, "bicameral" mode, in which its two main component functions, (the "I", or "ego", etc. and a quasi-independent, yet today normally subordinate infrastructure, the "it", "id" etc.) becomes vividly distinct. This latter, the infrastructure, codifies its information as the vision of a God or other supernatural being whose form symbolizes the primary content or meaning of the experience. Hence Gods in all religions, not just Asatru, tend to have the characteristics and names of abstract processes or emotions, and also to represent these as ideal forms of the Self. The medium is the message, so to speak.

These divine self-portrayals of the individual soul enable it simultaneously both to send and to receive information, not just through "normal" bodily channels but also through "extraordinary" psychic ones as well. And so it is that those--including "split-minded" schizophrenics--who have had the shamanic experience of seeing the Gods are often clairvoyant or can "remember" the future (since it is



through the faculty of memory that we access the personal and the World Soul).

Since, as we now know, many behavioral traits are genetically inherited, the Gods can likewise be "inherited" in this way. But far more influential is the rearing and education of the individual in such a way that the person idealizes a particular personality type. This type (e.g. Odin) will then actually appear in deified form in the NDE. Moreover, the enormous transformative power of these deep-psychic formations, the Gods, is difficult to overestimate in the life of the individual. Countless shamans and shamanikas (female shamans) among our ancestors attest to this.

It was Princeton University psychologist Julian Jaynes, a disbeliever in anything paranormal, in his now famous The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977) who explained the nature of these apparitions as a product of the human mind interpreting its environment. Very briefly, Jaynes sees them as a device of the brain's (visuo-spatial) right hemisphere to communicate complex information to the (linguistic) left hemisphere. This was the only form of thinking for early man, and modern consciousness is based on a partly learned, partly now inherited suppression of the apparitions and their divine commands.

Jaynes does not discuss the near death experience in his book. (On page 46 Jaynes mentions, however, the out-of-body experiences, concluding: "That there is no phenomenal necessity in locating consciousness in the brain is further reinforced by various abnormal instances in which consciousness seems to be outside the body. . . . locating consciousness can be an arbitrary matter. . . . In reality, consciousness has no location whatever except as we imagine it has.") But it is clear from all we have said that the divine beings encountered at death are the same thing (in different circumstances) as he has described: interpretive apparitions produced by our own minds, which convey to us a different reality, albeit in a form we can understand.

Thus the Aesir, and also the Gods of the earth and fertility, the Vanir, are quite real, for they are a part of our very beings. And they exist, "unused", even for those of us who do not experience them, either in shamanic trance or in NDE's.

What do we learn from all this? The shamanic experiences--deliberate NDE's--of our ancestors reveal a number of important things about the World Soul.

1. It is the Forge of Fate, the Wheel of Weird. This is because the World Soul itself must follow an essentially

predetermined growth plan, just as an individual must, or wither and die. Accordingly, the individual must accept this overall plan as the condition of existence. This means that there is a limited spectrum of futures open to a life. The blueprints of these futures are established in the World Soul. If individuals or groups change their ways, these blueprints exist at any given time and can thus "predict" what will happen unless certain changes occur.

2. The World Soul is the realm of all knowledge. Hence the mythic symbol of Odin speaking with the consciousness-symbolizing head of the Memory-giant, the all-wise Mimir. The story of Odin hiding his eye in Mimir's well is a different statement of this same fact.
3. The World Soul is the source of life. The giant, earth-supporting ash-tree, Yggdrasil ("Horse of the Awesome One"), another form of which was the "Mighty Pillar" (Irminsul) of the ancient Saxons (ca. 775 C.E.) is the Germanic form of the universally known World Tree (axis mundi, etc.), which corresponds symbolically to the central nervous system. It is the tree "of which none knows whence the roots run" (Havamal 138), because they are planted in the infinite depths of the World Soul.
4. The World Soul is the Realm of the Dead. When Odin's men, the berserks, died in battle, they were given entrance to Valhalla ("Hall of the Battle-Slain"): the dead were also said to be in Asgard's Vingolf ("Raised Floor or Hall of Friends"), the domain of the Goddesses; in Folkvang ("Field of Armies"), governed by Freya, the divine instructress of shamans and shamankas; and in Hel, governed by the terrible giantess of the same name. In addition, the maiden goddess Gefjon, ("She who gives") according to Snorri Sturlesson (writing about 1220), took in all females who died as virgins.

Thus we find that our ancestors believed there to be several places, or realms, of the dead. Hel was the least favored, accepting either those who did not fall in battle, or the wicked, according to the tradition. It was probably the earliest "location" allocated to the dead, for etymologically, the word hel is related to the Latin celare "cover over, conceal," and must originally have meant simply 'the grave'. This is also indicated by the word "Midgard" (Visigothic of 360 C.E.: midjungards), meaning the "Yard or Enclosed Dwelling Area in the Middle"--i.e., between a shamanic "Realm of the Aesir" (Asgard) and Hel, the originally one and only "Realm of the Dead" (Visigothic halja). As the centuries wore on, however, countless shamanic and neoromantic experiences taught the North that the after-life was more complex than previously thought. And the abodes of the dead multiplied accordingly.

There is an ancient Norse song entitled "The Waking of Angantyr", which Steve McNallen and Madeleine Hutter edited and published in the Summer, 1983 edition of The Runestone. The song is a poetic rendering of an instance of summoning the dead, a type of magic called seidr in Old Norse (Latinized West Germanic Saithamiae [matronae], meaning apparently "[divine matrons] who impede with seidr"). Seidr is probably a mispronounced loan-word from the Ural-Altaic word shaman, which itself was borrowed from the Sanskrit word for an ascetic Buddhist monk, sramana. Sramana, in its turn, comes from Sanskrit sram- "to grow weary, exhausted, fatigued," and means something like "one who mortifies the flesh."

The Waking of Angantyr, and also an account given in Eirik's Saga Rauda, (section 4), show two things: that conjuring up the dead, or necromancy, was a standard part of pagan Germanic culture; and secondly, that the dead (since they are in the depths of the World Soul) can foretell and sometimes even influence the future, as well as communicate hidden knowledge.

The question of seidr leads to the heart of the matter of the World Soul, for it is actually a special and intense form of the more general process of telepathy.

Telepathic communication is possible between two or more individuals because they allow themselves to share a common fund of knowledge at a transpersonal level. But rather than being a kind of "telephone line" from one party to the next, this common fund, somewhat like TV waves, is "broadcast" everywhere and available to anyone on the same "channel". Identical twins are on "the same channel" because they are born that way, and there are other people ("psychics" or "sensitives") who seem able to "tune in" to any such channel at will. The more input from individuals (in a common race or culture) to this fund, the stronger it is.

But the fund is not dormant and passive, like a library. Rather, it is of the nature of an organizing mind, and hence takes on a personality. This "group soul" personality can sometimes be visualized by two or more persons simultaneously as a God (Aesir or Vanir. Again, the minds of the beholders are responsible for the form of the apparition, but not its deeper content.) It promotes the interests of the group as a whole, even at the expense of the members as individuals. In other words, it functions exactly like the World Soul does on a higher level or the soul of the individual on a lower level.

The dead are able to tell the future because, as bodyless souls, they are memory-complexes which have become integrated into the overarching memory-complex of the World Soul and therefore know at least some of its structure.

They are themselves structural parts of the planetary infra-mind, a world-mind which contains all of the coordinated memories of all of its creatures going back billions of years. If these memories were not coordinated into a vast, organized intellect (sometimes visualized as a city, especially a "city of light" in NDE's), which earlier thinkers have called the *anima mundi*, the *Weltgeist* or the "noosphere", then the dead could not know anything which was beyond their scope as individuals, nor could they know the plan of things to come. And finally, the process of evolution on this planet shows that memory-acquisition is a gradual, cumulative process; the present state of the World Soul is not its original one, nor will it be its final one, unless we, the living, continue to block its evolution. Not many of the dead seem to know this, to judge from the reports. Therefore we may surmise that their knowledge is limited.

The reports of modern individuals who have had NDE's vary. Although there are intensely negative experiences in this domain, most report the experience as beautiful beyond the greatest beauty of this life. In fact, it is a difference in quality, not just in quantity. The reality behind this sensation is the following: the sense of beauty is the means by which we tell life from death, that which is life-furthering from that which is life-threatening, the increase of life from the decrease of life. The sense of beauty is a general sense -- deeper than, say, the sense of sight or smell. For it is more judgemental. To a man, a young, healthy, well-proportioned woman is beautiful because her body promises life in the form of children. To a woman, a healthy baby or young child (especially her own) looks "cute and cuddly" because it is full of life, and such feelings urge her to care for it. A landscape covered with plant life looks more beautiful than a desert. On the other hand, old, diseased and dead bodies are ugly. No life. Feces and urine stink, because they are poisonous. Our sense of beauty automatically lets us know what is life and what is death.

When therefore, most people report that what they perceived in their NDE's was unspeakably beautiful, they are telling us that they have experienced the source of life-- which is, paradoxically, the realm beyond death; the World Soul.

At the same time, the differences in the reports of the NDE's are also important. For we each experience the same reality differently, even on this physical plane, but especially on the psychic one. It is quite possible for an individual to be so confused, mistaken, misguided or wrong-minded that he or she actually experiences the source of life as ugly or miserable. For such a person, the experience would indeed be hellish.

The variations in NDE reports and shamanic-Germanic mythology also imply that the afterlife is organically structured and logically organized in accordance with its own "ecology", in the sense that every soul structures itself to "plug into" some niche in the World Soul, and every niche is different from every other. Spiritual relationships manifest themselves in common memories. Thus, humans tend to experience human realms, although in a few cases animal souls have been reported. (It is possible that apes contact other apes, and so forth.) Scientists are more likely to experience science fiction-like scenarios, since their memory-sets prepare them to see things that way.

But the World Soul as the realm of life, in putting forth a new "memory-branch", also structures each new body as it forms in "this" world -- the physical, sensorily grasped one. The memories (now called "morphogenetic fields" by biologist Rupert Sheldrake in his A New Science of Life: The Hypothesis of Formative Causation, London: Blond & Briggs, 1981) acquired by past generations become the source of the body form and behavioral patterns of the up and coming generation as it grows from conception. In this way, on the average, each new human (or other higher life form) generation starts out a bit "smarter" in native intelligence than its parents did, even though there are throwbacks and mishaps due to various causes (throwbacks and mishaps which are eliminated by normal processes in nature). The new body then acquires and adds new memories to the old complex of memories which has formed that body (become "reincarnated" in it). Thus the soul is the total system of a body's memories.

To return to a point already mentioned: the variations of experience in the NDE among different individuals are a heightened form of the variations of experience in ordinary life. The experiencer shapes the input in accordance with the state of his own mind. (Psychics, by the way, have relayed much intelligence about this "customization of heaven or hell" to the same effect.) Most people create their own realms. This is to a certain extent true already in this life. But afterwards, or outside of the body, it is even more true, according to the evidence from the NDE's and shamanism. This fact led to the variations in the afterlife pictures of Germanic shamanism.

Several things, however, are and always have been absolutely invariable in the experience of those who visit the dead (as opposed to the dead visiting them, in apparitions): 1.) the out-of-body experience (OOBE); 2.) the (often delightful) encounter with the dead; 3.) the awesome profundity of the experience, which drives the recognition of its reality into the marrow of one's being.



On this last point: the massively overwhelming love, power and authority experienced in the NDE exceed the capability of human language to express them. Hence the "mythological" or "religious" or "fantastic" vocabulary found in both NDE's and in the mythology of Asatru. The individual is confronted with the cosmic inframind and its galaxy-begging powers. Ordinary language fails; only the mythic utterance avails. This is where the Gods and giants hold sway, electrifying beings of immense and exponential power, beings in whom the laws and structure of life itself are embodied.

The OOBÉ, the encounter with the dead, and the awesomeness of the experience together represent the process of the soul's confrontation with Ørlog, the growth plan of the soul of the world as the ground of being and beginning.

Often, the OOBÉ is accompanied in the NDE by a "life review" in which one sees one's life or its highlights played out, sometimes in reverse order, before oneself. This is another indication that the self is a composite of memories, even if a unified, organic composite. The meeting with the dead is an approach to the integration of oneself-as-memory into the World Soul-as-memory. And the experience inspires intense awe both because it is real and because the dying soul in the NDE has no choice in the matter except to stay dead or to return to life; everything else is presented to it as divine revelation. (And sometimes it is forced to return, with no choice being offered.)

Following the model shaman, Odin, the shamans ("professional NDE'ers") among our ancestors achieved a state intermediate between life and death. This is why they could, by altering their states of consciousness: 1.) have OOBÉ's (travel to other parts of this earth) more or less at will; 2.) accompany the newly departed to the souls of their ancestors; and 3.) discover occult matters of past, present or probable future.

So it is that our ancestors showed us long ago the meaning of the universe and the nature of our Gods. Those of our people who have paid the heavy price required to undergo an NDE in the modern day and age have learned once again the reality upholding Asatru; the realm of life which lies on the yon side of death.

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# WHO'S BEHIND THE SCENES?

Editor -

This is a letter written to someone querying the author about his theories on cycles and his world-view generally. It's only half of an interchange, but it stands so well on its own that we thought we'd submit it for your examination!

Dear \_\_\_\_\_;

A few "generalities", a few "crucial pieces of the puzzle"?

It becomes quite simple when one thinks of visible living things like ourselves as chess pieces. This implies that unseen players, the gods, represent various opposing contraries. The earth is a chess board, or in similar vein a theatre. We are the actors, the invisible authors are offstage. These authors love meaningful coincidence as much as cause and effect, which they bring to be by manifesting symmetries in the music of time as swings in global mood.

The immortals do all that they do for fun. A mortal only shows possession by them in active fun. Since action is usually strenuous and unpleasant, active fun can only take place when one is exercising an ability one has in an unnecessarily exaggerated degree, or what is normally called a gift or talent.

A philosopher is simply a pure thinker, that is, a man with exaggerated energy and ability for thinking so that he does it for fun, as an art. Art is an aristocratic thing, not understood by modern democracies. There are never more than a few people in the world doing worthwhile work in an art, unless you want to include business, politics, religion, science, sports etc. as minor arts.

A pure thinker loves to confront the paradoxes of the real world, the giant battlefield of clashing motives. This has nothing to do with the peaceful, passive puzzle-solving of professorial minds. But it is disinterested. Uncovering the hidden symmetries of these clashing motives or contraries is done for the pure delight of the thing.

The vivid reality of the invisible authors, and the irony, the hilarious staginess of the stage, are so deeply present in the mind of the pure thinker that his selfish instincts as a born actor on that stage are dangerously weakened.

The decisions of the lower classes are taken in the light of the here and now only, totally naive materialism, totally persuaded of the reality of the stage. The decisions of the middle class are taken in the light of attunement, the passive mysticism of pop religions to whom vigorous active thinking is still only a duty, basically painful. The off-stage authors are envisioned, but only as human-type social workers, or contrarily as devils.

The highest decisions are possible only to the occasional and rare person, the aristocrat, and they are made in the light of art and philosophy, that is, shamanistic and magical possession rather than the mere passive attunement to nature and society of middle class religion or mysticism, though the latter is far more practical and wise for man as an individual.

"Ever desireless, one can see the mystery.  
Ever desiring, one can see the manifestation."

Lao Tse

"The highest problems ruthlessly repel anyone not predestined for their solution by the loftiness and power of his spirituality."

Frederick Nietzsche

To conclude, the mystery of invisible offstage authors moving us about like chesspieces for the pure sport of it, contriving meaningful coincidences at the highest level of poetic irony, could fill the general body of mankind only with terror. The common man does not enjoy thinking of himself as a temporary mask taken up by the indestructible life force who should therefore be fierce, joyous and utterly fearless.

He is profoundly fearful, and he could never provide us with that rich tapestry of farce we laughingly call his life if he were otherwise. If mocked, he will be at pains to convince you exhaustively of the rigid necessity of his petty fears for himself and his endless petty competition with his fellow half-pints.

The gods did not take four billion years to build their mighty theatre only to have you blow the whistle on them by publicly trumpeting the symmetries in the music of time. Your target reader is a common fool, and "The fool is aflutter at every word."- Heraclitus.

You simply ran by accident into the joker in the deck, a pure thinker, and you are behaving like Ibsen's Nora, the

very type of the provincial derailed by too much reading. The underlying assumptions of the secular humanism behind commercial democracy, (which supposedly justify this cultural Sahara of mass-man practicality we inhabit) have dropped away like rotten planking and the Viking ruggedness of the alternatives has you appalled.

You are, in short, a reporter with an incommunicable scoop. That is the farce of your own life.

Ha Ha, Hee Hee, Ho Ho

P.Q.

P.S. The stoical gods of the aristocrat come periodically back into fashion, of course, and will do so when life becomes wholesale slaughter as it will in the coming Dark Age. They have scant appeal in a time of relative peace and prosperity such as the present. Far from danger, far from godliness. But they are real nonetheless.

