

Spring 2025

*In Statu Nascendi*

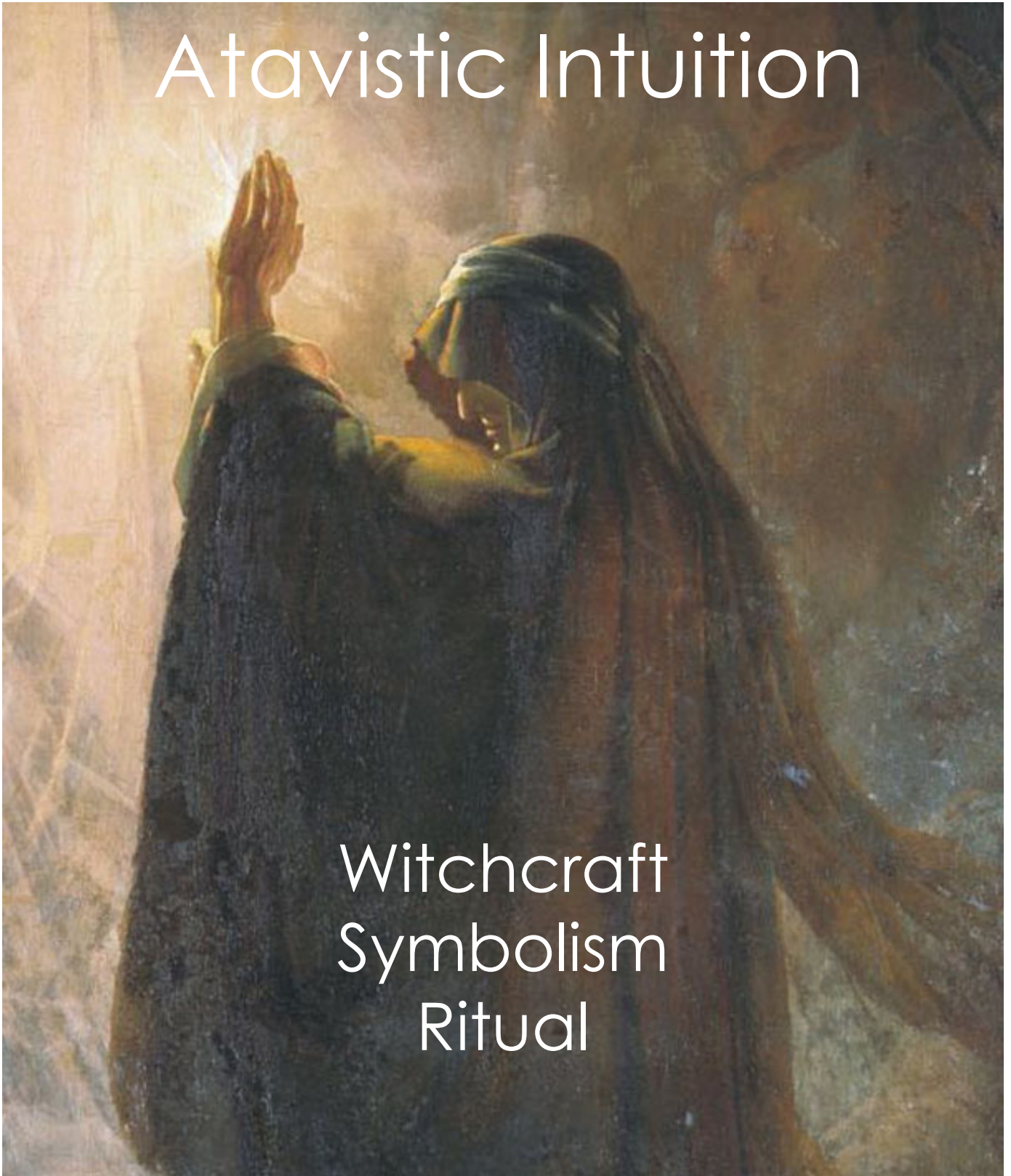
# NASCENT STATE

*Journal of Intuition*

*Magazine*

## Atavistic Intuition

Witchcraft  
Symbolism  
Ritual



Spring 2025

# NASCENT STATE

*Magazine*

## Atavistic Intuition

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### From the Editor



The Witch of Endor by Dmitry Martynov (1857)

Just as logic has a history, intuition also has its own history. For the most part, intuitive culture has existed outside mainstream culture, and for that reason intuition and its adherents have often been misrepresented, misunderstood, and - at times - persecuted.

This spring 2025 edition of Nascent State Magazine focuses on three historical aspects of intuitive culture - Witchcraft, Symbolic Imagery, and Ritual - which have survived into the Modern Era. Understanding the intuitive element of each can help to explain what a purely historical account can miss. Indeed, once we study them from an intuitive point of view, much that is obscure about each becomes clear and comprehensible.

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Jim Blackmann

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# Witchcraft

## *and Intuition*



John William Waterhouse, the Crystal Ball (detail)

Witchcraft has a peculiar history, insofar as it has only been told - until recently - through the voice of its opponents. It was not until 1951, when the Witchcraft Act was repealed, that for the first time the 'craft' was able to speak, publicly at least, in its own voice.

An early example of witchcraft and its treatment can be found in the *Old Testament*. King Saul, who had previously persecuted witches, finally turned to the Witch of Endor for advice on the eve of an important battle. She summoned a spirit, who prophesied that Saul's army would be defeated (and he was).

A second historical source of witchcraft and its treatment comes from King James I. In his *Demonology* and its accompanying *News From Scotland*, he stated that witches were mostly women; 'there are twenty women given to that craft, where there is one man.' Some put this down to his misogyny, but it is equally possible that it is due to the ability of the feminine psyche to access the unconscious mind. Either way, witches have suffered either persecution or denigration throughout history.

James I records that his interest in witchcraft had been aroused by his new bride, Anne of Denmark, who was convinced that a storm which had delayed their return to England had been caused by supernatural forces. James I, not wholly convinced, rounded up a number of Scottish witches, including Agnes Sampson, and had them interrogated. Agnes, already an old woman, was interrogated by means of torture. He records that she told him 'things which were so miraculous and strange,' but thought she was a liar until she told him something he had said in private to his wife on their wedding night:

'Whereat the Kings Majesty wondered greatly, and swore by the living God, that he believed that all the Devils in hell could not have discovered the same: acknowledging her words to be most true, and therefore gave the more credit to the rest which is before declared.'

History further records that, from the middle of the fifteenth century to the middle of the eighteenth century, an estimated 50,000 women were executed for witchcraft. It is therefore no surprise that orthodox history understands little

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about its outlook and practices.

One such practice was the ability to access the unconscious mind. It is interesting to note that when trance mediumship emerged in the following century, its practitioners employed the very same method, and yet owing to the history of witchcraft, it appeared new. The leading lights - exclusively women - were Victoria Woodhull, Anna Kingsford, Emma Hardinge Britten, and Cora Scott. If their names are unfamiliar to the reader, it is probably due to the continued denigration of the practice in orthodox society.



Victoria Woodhull

The case of Victoria Woodhull is particularly striking. In addition to being a trance medium, she was also a financial advisor to the wealthy Cornelius Vanderbilt, as well as being the first woman stockbroker on Wall Street, and the first woman to set up her own newspaper to advise other stockbrokers (she was known as 'The Witch of Wall Street'). In addition to her financial activities, she was the first woman to run for American president under a party she founded, the Equality Party. She was arrested two days before the election and then released without charge. After which she came to live in England, married an aristocrat, and became the first

woman in the UK to drive a motor car. The reader might ask why such a significant figure is unheard of.

With the repeal of the Witchcraft Act, it became possible for witchcraft to be expressed openly by its proponents. In 1959 Gerald Gardner published *The Meaning of Witchcraft* to give an insider's account of the practice. According to his own report, Gardner became a member of the New Forest coven, and then set up another coven in Bricket Wood with Doreen Valiente and Patricia Crowther. Being a disciple of Aleister Crowley (1875 – 1947), he imblued perhaps more Satanism into the craft than had previously been the case, and like Crowley, he was accused of using his knowledge of the craft for self-promotion. It is perhaps for such reasons that witchcraft is still denigrated today.



Doreen Valiente and Patricia Crowther

Owing to the persecution of witches, there is little in the way of records of the craft in history, beyond what was written by its opponents. As for the relationship between witchcraft and intuition, it is worth noting that intuitive culture has been treated in much the same way in history. The Cathars, for example, were highly intuitive, and



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the massacre of an estimated 20,000 Cathars in a single day at Beziers in 1209 was no less violent than any treatment of witches in history.



Treatment of the Cathars, c. 14th Century

The reason for the Church's treatment of the Cathars was the individualism inherent in intuitive thinking. The word 'heretic' means 'one who chooses' (from the Greek 'haireomai'). In their meetings, the Cathars encouraged all their members to speak openly about their thoughts and insights. This meant they were not subject to any imposed dogma, but were highly intuitive. It also meant that the Church, which sought to assert its control over knowledge in Western culture, regarded them as a threat. Amongst other things, the Cathars believed in reincarnation, and they regarded men and women as equals. In the records of the Inquisitors it was noted:

'This they apply even to women, with the same proviso that they belong to their sect. Thus they teach that every holy person is a priest.'

With respect to a belief in reincarnation, Gerald Gardner relates that such views were held by the members of the New Forest coven, who told him:

'You belonged to us in the past. You are of the blood. Come back to where you belong.'

In the Pagan origins of witchcraft, women played an important role, not just in its practice, but in its symbolic content. In Greek mythology, for example, the triple Goddess of the Moon - Selene, Artemis, and Hecate - represents the light of the Moon, governance over our animal nature, and access to the unconscious. In the same way, intuition draws on what is presently hidden in the unconscious as a source of knowledge. That is



Selene and Endymion, Pompeii fresco

why intuitive ideas often appear as though from nowhere, and are instantly illuminating. It can be seen by this that witchcraft is intuitive.

While it is said we have a logical and an intuitive mind, speaking more exactly, we have a mind that encompasses both. The logical mind is dominant, and so in order to hear the intuitive mind, we have to silence it, at least for a while. This is the method employed in mediumship, but it is achieved by putting the subject into a trance state. In the East - in Buddhism and Yoga for example - the logical mind is silenced by means of meditation.

The dominance of logic in Western culture means that we do not attend to our intuitive mind the way we should. An intuitive thought speaks to us directly, and can often reveal - in a whisper - what hours of analysis can miss. The neglect of intuition is why it is often mistaken for instinct or conviction, which are quite different.

It is hardly surprising that witchcraft also embodies many ideas regarded as unorthodox by mainstream society, including nature spirits, incantations, and even reincarnation. The question ought not to be 'Is this unorthodox?', but rather 'Is there anything real in this?' The answer to that comes not by reference to authority - religious or secular - but from the direct development of intuition. While it may be said that some of the practices may be founded on illusion, intuition itself is very real. Those who are drawn to the craft intuitively feel this.



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# Symbolism

## and Insight



Leonardo da Vinci, *The Last Supper* (detail), c. 1495–1498

‘Though this be madness, yet there is method in it.’

Polonius, from *Hamlet*

If grammar is the language of logic, symbolic imagery is the language of intuition. Logic demands fixed definitions and formal arguments, and any statement must be coherent, clearly put, and most of all free of error. Symbolic imagery on the other hand is often surreal and enigmatic, as though it seeks to convey its message by indirect means. For those who are used to the formality of logic, the indirectness of symbolic imagery can be unnecessarily indirect.

Intuitive thinking teaches us not to take the world at face value. When we are presented with an enigma, if we think logically, we will find an explanation within our present understanding of the world. If we think intuitively, we will see the world as an enigma - much like a symbolic image - and for what we presently don't see.

If a symbolic image presents us with a deliberate enigma, it is intended to provoke us to look for what is behind what is presented. In this way a symbolic image provokes the intuitive mind into action. Seen this way, a symbolic imagery is the means to train the mind to think intuitively.

As a form of language, symbolic imagery has existed longer than logic. The Sphinx of Giza is an

example of a complex idea expressed through symbolic imagery. Orthodox history, written in the language of logic, dismisses the Sphinx as a mythical creature created by a superstitious culture. And yet both its content and the demands of its construction indicate it could not have been created on a whim. Quite apart from the Sphinx, the Egyptian culture of the period was highly symbolic, indicating the importance they attached to the method for conveying their most important teachings.

Another example of a complex teaching presented in symbolic imagery is the Tarot. One of the earliest Tarot decks, the *Tarot de Marseilles*, was clearly cut by an inartistic hand, and yet its content is too developed to be the product of ignorance. *The Wheel of Fortune*, *The Hanged Man*, *Temperance (Time)*, *The Moon*, and *The World* are all examples of cards which have a clear philosophical content.

Oswald Wirth (1860 - 1943), the Swiss artist who created his own version of the Tarot, had this to say about symbolic imagery as the means to transmit ideas intuitively:

‘A symbol can always be studied from an infinite number of points of view; and each thinker has the right to discover in the symbol a new



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meaning corresponding to the logic of his own conceptions.

‘As a matter of fact symbols are precisely intended to awaken ideas sleeping in our consciousness. They arouse a thought by means of suggestion and thus cause the truth which lies hidden in the depths of our spirit to reveal itself.’

(*Symbolisme Hermétique*, pp. 58-40, 83)



Temperance (or Time), from the Rider Waite Tarot. Because intuition is largely ignored by mainstream culture, the richness of symbolic imagery as a means to transmit ideas of a complex nature is lost on many, who dismiss it as mere superstition.

The study of symbolic imagery trains the mind to regard the world as an enigma - whether the enigma is a person, an event, a natural object, or even the self - in other words, to learn not to take what we see at face value.

To think intuitively we have to silence the logical mind, at least for a moment, to allow the intuitive

mind to speak. The myth of Echo and Narcissus is a symbolic representation of the relationship of the dominant logical mind to the whispering of the intuitive mind.

Of the many enigmas in life, there is perhaps none moreso our own inner life. We do not see ourselves as we should; the phenomenon of hindsight, for example, when we look back on an action taken by us in the past and see what was not apparent to us at the time, is clear evidence of this. If we ask why don't we not see ourselves rightly, it is because we see what is obvious well enough, but not what is unobvious or hidden. Symbolic imagery, when understood rightly, is a means to self-knowledge.

Alchemy, a form of thinking expressed almost wholly in terms of symbolic imagery, may seem unnecessarily obscure, until its main premise is understood rightly, which is to turn base metal into gold. The base metal in question is not an actual metal - as those who are literally minded would have use believe - but human nature. We are capable of being much more than we are, provided we learn to regard ourselves that way.



Alchemical Ouroboros

For all the rationality of the Modern Era, we are much more governed by symbols than we will admit. What is success, a hero, a victory, a king, or a leader, other than a symbolic image? If God as a father figure is a symbolic image, then so too is the Blind Watchmaker of materialism.

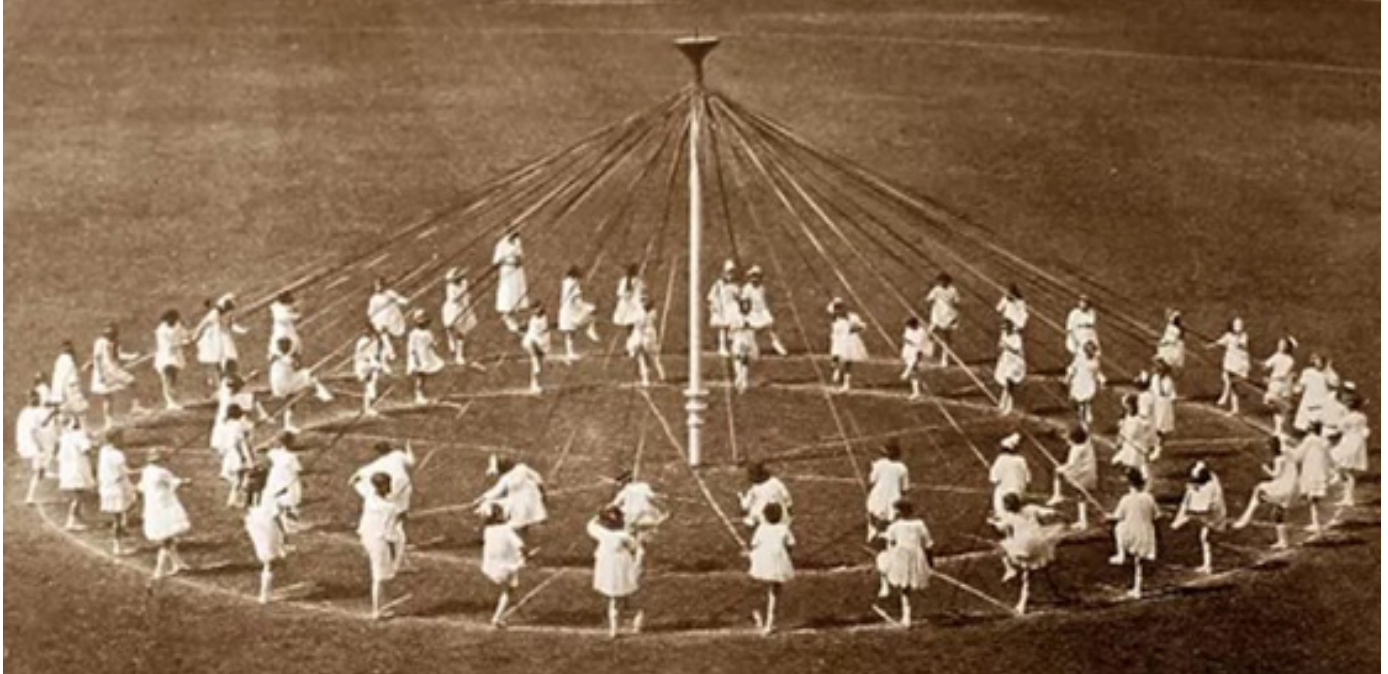
The ability to think intuitively exists within each of us, and like any other ability it can be greatly enhanced by direct attention and practice. The study of symbolic imagery, provided it is done with understanding, is a means to do this.



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# Ritual

*and the emotions*



Maypole dancing, Bournville village, c. 1920

Present day society is dominated by logic. From the point of view of logic, a ritual is a formal occasion and no more. Logic is a purely intellectual approach to understanding human nature and the wider world, and as such it does not consider the part played by emotions, and particularly by intuition, in human nature. From an intuitive point of view, ritual is the means to convey the emotional content of an idea through the direct participation of the individuals involved.

Intuition, drawn from a fuller view of human nature, recognises not just the intellect but also the emotions, and indeed the activity of movement as an equally valid means of gaining a fuller knowledge of human nature and the wider world. This is because intuition is the 'watching mind' (from the Latin 'tueri', meaning to 'watch'). The intuitive mind watches over the intellect, the emotions and our actions as we go about the business of living.

The Modern Era regards ritual as part of a superstitious past, asserting that now we are governed by reason, we are free of such things. For this reason the Modern Era has produced little ritual of its own, And yet on closer

examination, it can be seen that ritual still haunts the more important events in life, such as birth, weddings, funerals, the opening ceremonies for parliaments and presidents, the significant events in the calendar, and the formal sentencing in a high court. The aim of ritual is to draw our attention to the more important events in life, in such a way that they will not be forgotten

Ordinary life, governed by the lesser concerns of the day, cannot convey anything lasting. It could be said that the purpose of a ritual is to remind us there is more to life than mere existence.

Because most, if not all, of the rituals that exist in the Modern Era are drawn from antiquity, they contain much that is associated with superstition, magic and religion, albeit in a diluted form. A. E. Waite, who made a study of Ceremonial Magic, had the following to say about the nature and purpose of rituals:

'In approaching the Ceremonial Magic of the Middle Ages, we must therefore bear in mind that we are dealing with a literature which, though modern in its actual presentation, embodies some elements of great antiquity.'

In other words, ritual conveys its message in a manner more like the oral tradition of history. In



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order to hand down an idea from one generation to the next, the essential meaning of the ritual had to be understood, and by more than just dry intellect.

Because the Modern Era is largely Secular, or non-religious, many find its pre-secular element off-putting. This is because its religious element is associated with the Church, and the Church adopted logic and dogma in the fifth century, and set itself in opposition to free thought. Paganism, however, which existed outside the authority of the Church, never adopted the same dogma.

Many, if not most, of the rituals which have survived into the Modern Era are of Pagan origin, but the association with dogma means that they have been watered down to make them conform to Secularism. This has had the effect of reducing or obscuring the emotional element in them.

Contrast this with the rituals of the East, where logic and its accompanying dogma has been less influential. This can be seen in, for example, the Sufism of the Middle East.



Mevlevi dervishes by Jean-Baptiste van Mour, c. 1720  
P. D. Ouspensky, in his book *A New Model of the Universe*, gives an account of an encounter with the Mevlevi Dervishes in Constantinople in 1908:

‘The ceremony had already begun. As I approached the doors of the Tekke I heard strange soft music — flutes and muffled drums. It was an unexpected and unusually pleasant impression.’

On entering the Tekke (the Sufi lodge), he records his impressions:

‘A round hall strewn with carpets and surrounded by a breast-high wooden partition. Behind the partition, in a circular corridor, spectators. The ceremony of salutation was in progress.

‘Men in black robes with wide sleeves, with tall yellow camel-hair hats narrowing a little towards the top (kulas), one after another, to the accompaniment of music, approached the sheikh, who sat on cushions with his back to the princes’ box. They made low bows to him, first standing at his right, then, having taken a few steps, repeated the same low bows standing at his left. And then, one after another, like black monks, slowly and calmly they sat down along the circular partition of the round room. The music still played.’



Galata Mevlevi Hall, Istanbul. Photo Jeremy Flint.

In this example, the emotional element is more apparent. It could be said that such a ritual, at least any that has not been debased by formality, is intended to convey a set of ideas which would constitute a whole philosophy if it was properly understood. The philosophy it intends to convey - and very means chosen to convey it - is intuitive rather than logical. Ouspensky further writes:

‘And the dervishes continued to turn round and move along the circle. Thirteen of them were whirling at the same time. Now and then one or another stopped and, slowly and calmly, with face illumined and concentrated, sat down by the wall. Others rose and took their places in the circle.’

Logic has the effect of limiting our understanding of a ritual by applying a ‘right versus wrong’ literalistic meaning to it. Many people who regard themselves as ‘Christian’, for example, would object to the suggestion that the Holy Sacrament performed by Christ at the Last Supper, in which he invited the Disciples to eat bread and drink wine - ‘This is my body; This is my blood’ - if they knew that it has an antiquity that can be traced back to the Blood Rituals of Paganism. Seen rightly, the Last Supper was intended to convey

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an important idea symbolically by means of ritual, so the significance of the event would survive even them. Words can be forgotten, but ritual leaves a lasting impression.



Polish Solstice celebration

The rituals that have survived into the Modern Era, from the birth shower to the wedding ceremony, have now become a formal repetition of what they once were, which was intended to remind the participants of the solemnity of the occasion. A logical explanation doesn't have the same effect simply because it doesn't affect us emotionally, and therefore speaks to us in less than fully human terms.

The secular or non-religious view which is dominant in Western culture has resulted in the erosion of our understanding of ritual and its importance. Baptism has become a formal ceremony no more significant than a leaving party. The commercialisation of land has ensured that graveyards are now placed outside of town,

and along with it, the solemnity of the funeral procession through the centre of town, which was intended as a reminder of our own mortality.

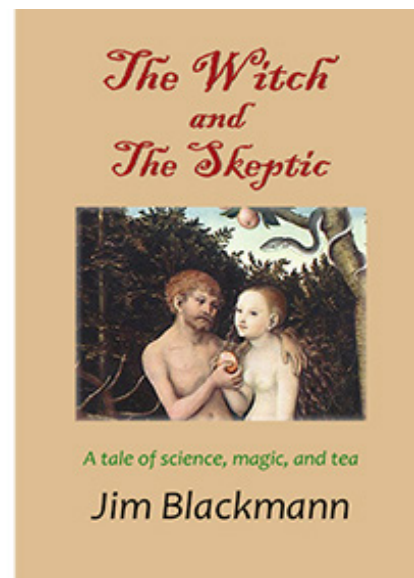
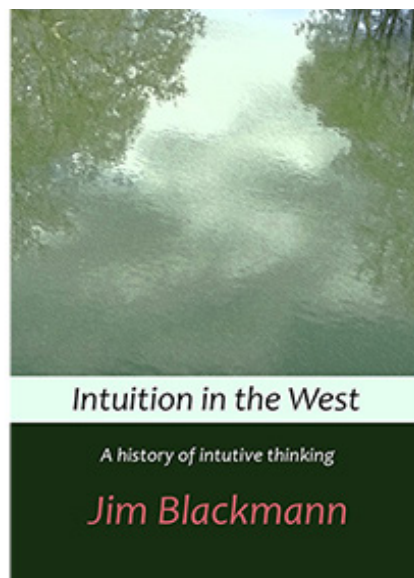
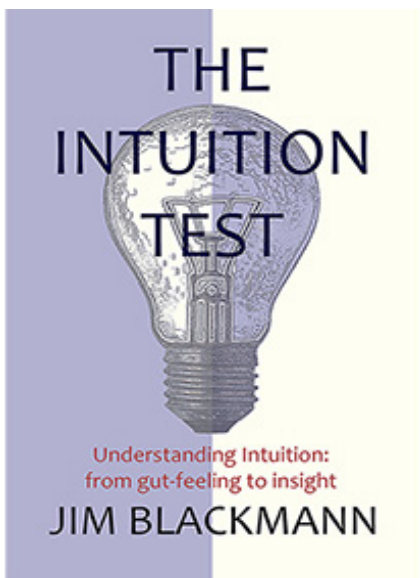


Funeral procession, c. 1920. Photo by Olai Fauske

The dominance of logic is the reason why the Modern Era has produced no rituals of its own, beyond those that have been adapted from religion and made secular. It follows that the means to convey philosophical ideas to the masses through ritual has been lost. The philosophy involved in ritual was not concerned with the abstract pursuit of ideas, but with providing an individual with an overview of life, and in such a way that it remained in the memory a long time after the event was over. A broader perspective of life is just as essential as the ability to hold down a job and pay the rent, and it is only when the normality of a routine life is interrupted that we begin to realise this.

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