

## Magic Askew 3.0



Onyx  
Order of the Serpent

*"Let the future tell the truth, and evaluate each one according to his work and accomplishments. The present is theirs; the future, for which I have really worked, is mine."*

-Nikola Tesla

### Introduction

I'll begin with some words from Aleister Crowley (Crowley, 1912):

Frater Perdurabo is the most honest of all the great religious teachers. Others have said: "Believe me!" He says: "Don't believe me!" He does not ask for followers, would despise and refuse them. He wants an independent and self-reliant body of students to follow out their own methods of research. If he can save them time and trouble by giving a few useful "tips," his work will have been done to his own satisfaction.

In that spirit, this is a cursory guide\* on how to create "trapezoidal" (or "angular") environments for ritual workings, inspired by Anton LaVey's *Law of the Trapezoid*. It is one of the foremost Satanic concepts as it forms a solid foundation for all Greater and Lesser magic.

My main motivation here is to suggest trappings and techniques that lend themselves to working in a dark environment (which is my preference). But it is my opinion that the Left-Hand Path should be approached in practical and useful ways - whatever works (Scott, 2019, p.12).

I wrote this essay with the intent that even people who don't engage in ritual might find it useful toward making life a more magical one. Though these ideas are largely based on LaVey's Satanism, this effort is focused on the practical aspects of magic rather than particular belief systems. To follow is a collection of ideas related to Trapezoidal Magic, use them to your advantage as you may.

*\* The original version of this document appeared in The Imperishable Star IV.*

## **Law of the Trapezoid**

In *The Theory and Practice of Satanic Magic* (LaVey, 1969, p.110), Anton LaVey used the term "Command to Look", presumably inspired by the famous book about photography of the same name, which stresses the effect of four geometric shapes to the subconscious mind because of their relationship to ancestral fears (Mortensen, 1937, p.26).

He proposed a fifth shape, the Trapezoid, which through its acute and obtuse angles symbolizes anything perplexing or irregular. The *Die Elektrischen Vorspiele* ritual (LaVey, 1972, p.113) is the de facto primer text, followed by additional explanations of the concept in *The Devil's Notebook* (LaVey, 1992, p.111).

The *Ceremony of the Nine Angles* (LaVey, 1972, p.179) mentions low-key/ultraviolet illumination and trapezoidal symbolism. And its Lovecraftian themes are a perfect match for those inspired by the mythos.

From *The Haunter of the Dark*: "These people say the Shining Trapezohedron shews them heaven and other worlds, and that the Haunter of the Dark tells them secrets in some way." It was also called a "crazily angled stone" and a "window on all time and space" (Lovecraft, 1935).

The future-mindedness of the late 19th and early 20th centuries also offers an ideal magical paradigm to work within. In all its possible manifestations, the Trapezoid is an ideal gateway into non-Euclidean magical realms.

## Thoughts on Magic

More words from Crowley (Crowley, 1954):

Magic is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will.

Research has indicated that the brain stores memories in locations aroused by the five senses. Therefore actually *doing* something may have a more profound effect on the subconscious mind than merely fantasizing about it. Nevertheless, the unique subjective experience of Trapezoidal Magic is effective in removing one from the everyday mundane routine, a bit of self-trickery which helps one to remain focused.

Grimoires may make for interesting reading and inspiration, but tend to be full of long-winded recitations and unnecessary intricacies. It can become more about performances, reaching a magical state of mind doesn't necessarily require a complicated game of Dungeons and Dragons. The Black Magician may also safely dispense with cliché Satanic imagery altogether or combine various forms of symbolism to their satisfaction.

The keys to the endgame are planning and ability to adjust so "Satan's roller-coaster" doesn't get derailed. Make things as simple or as complex as you wish, but also make every attempt to control the business instead of allowing it to control you.

Lesser Magic exists in tandem with the Law of the Trapezoid, as it involves taking the ordinary rectangle of everyday life and skewing the sides toward gaining immediate control of a situation or initiating a process which achieves a desired outcome over time. Subtle approaches are often the most effective: be the sneaky serpent who is clandestine in its ways. If one is viewed as blatantly manipulative, any reputation gained is likely to be lost.

## Nostalgia

A person tends to live in their own time, or others which are appealing. One would be remiss not to read Anton LaVey's take on that matter, which I understand to mean that there is a "third-side perspective" when it comes to keeping with the times without rejecting one's truth of being (LaVey, 1998, p.29, p.108).

## **Sample Ritual Outline**

The original version of this document did not include a ritual outline, as my goal was to keep the information more generally applicable. While there is no set format for a diabolical service, below is one example with additional commentary.

### **I. Sound the bell/gong nine times.**

Some rotate 90 degrees with each sounding to symbolize the four cardinal directions, in doing so one faces the altar again at the end. This step "clears the air". The choice of bell or gong is important and should be majestic and pleasing to the ear. Hitting the side of my rather large white-brass goblet with the back of the ritual dagger makes for an excellent resonant tone... the "bell" can be anything that works.

### **II. Ignite the Black Flame.**

How one chooses to represent the "fire within" runs the gamut, from a single black candle to more elaborate electronic setups. I recommend being cautious around open flames (don't accidentally knock a candle over into the black curtain). Be prudent and keep a small fire extinguisher nearby just in case.

### **III. Invocation.**

There are many options available. One might use one from a book like The Satanic Bible or other source, perhaps alter the wording, or even formulate a new one altogether. A simple example:

I, the Black Magician,  
Beckon the Gates of Hell to upon wide!  
Woe to the Cosmos,  
As my Will comes Forth into Being.

### **IV. Drink from the Chalice.**

This represents Ecstasy or Knowledge. A pleasing beverage should be used.

### **V. Summoning.**

The final part of establishing the ritual setting is to call forth the various names of things to be controlled or reflected upon during the ritual.

## **VI. The Main Working.**

An "illustrative" working is about understanding something better, while the goal of an "operative" working is to initiate a change in the psyche which produces a chain-reaction (or domino-effect) in the real-world toward obtaining one's desires (Aquino, 2010, p.116). Goals should be kept reasonable as it's intractable to control a large number of factors at once. Therefore a more surgical approach is more likely to succeed.

The trappings and psychodrama form what Anton LaVey called an "intellectual decompression chamber" where the "whole will must be employed" (LaVey, 1969, p.119-120). Regardless of one's choice of paradigm, his brief explanation of this is well worth the time and the power of the aesthetics suggested in this guide will become obvious.

## **VII. Quench the Black Flame.**

The effect of the working is now absorbed into the psyche and the physical representation of the Black Flame has now served its purpose.

## **VIII. Sound the bell/gong nine times again in closing.**

This step may be skipped entirely if an "open working" is mandated. Otherwise, patience is a virtue, allow things to sink in a bit before proclaiming:

## **IX. *"So it is Done!"***

## The Gate of Darkness

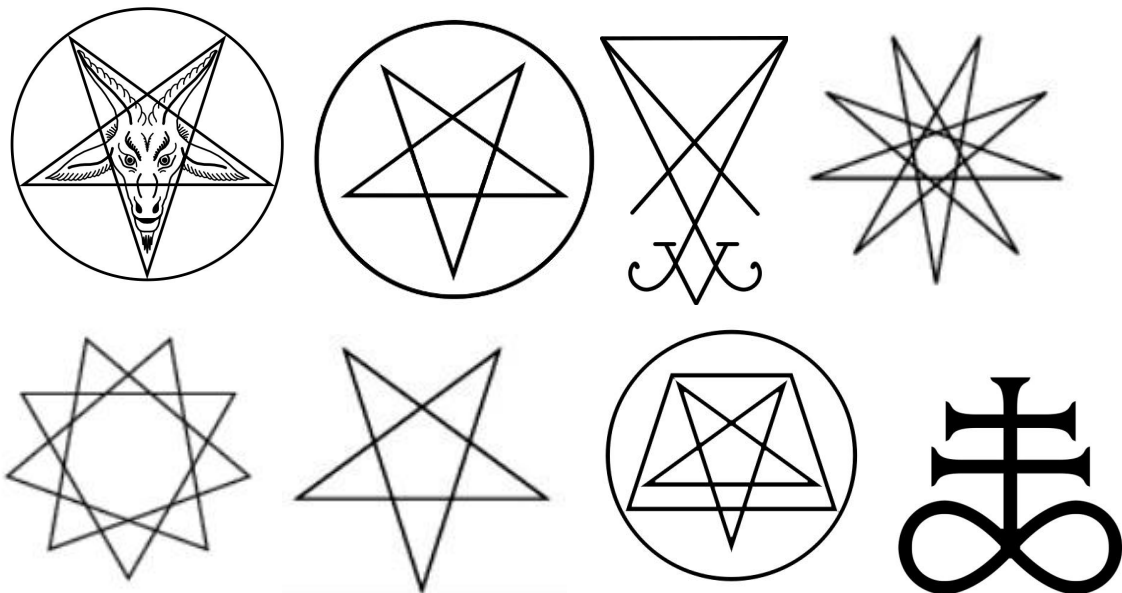
A five-pointed inverted and encircled Pentagram is common, usually centered above the altar. Many use either unadulterated versions, or the head of a goat inscribed within the shape. Occasionally it is surrounded by or merged with a trapezoid in various ways.

Though the inverse Pentagram is portrayed as a symbol of evil in movies such as *Metropolis* (1927), it was used sporadically in conventional religion, one example being its incorporation into the seal of the city of Jerusalem in the 4th century BCE. Therefore basic shapes are only worth the symbolism one chooses to associate with them.

Other variations with additional trihedrals are possible. As nine is a magical number, a regular nonagram star could represent something like the *Nine Satanic Statements* (LaVey, 1969, p.25) among many other things. However it is used, my opinion is that a star properly hovers with a single point facing down toward the Realms of Darkness and Selfhood. This orientation can also represent Balance.

Other things such as the Sigil of Lucifer, the alchemist's symbol for Sulfur, and statuettes or images of various sorts may also be employed. Whatever choice of symbolism is found favorable, the Gate serves as a locus of power for the Satanic service.

Examples:



## **Ultraviolet Lighting**

The trichromatic nature of human vision is incapable of perceiving ultraviolet frequencies. Its effects are only seen indirectly through the phenomenon of fluorescence. A black light is able to reveal the unseen.

While not mandatory, I cannot stress enough the usefulness of a black light. It ensures that words can be read in the dark without resorting to huge fonts and excessive ambient light from candles. An inexpensive 25-watt fixture above the altar is probably enough unless more coverage is required. Compact-fluorescent screw-bulbs are also available that work in any ordinary lamp. It doesn't take much UV to allow reading text on small sheets of bright white paper, so there is no need to go overboard.

## **Other Lighting**

If an actual flame is desired, it's hard to beat Sterno. The resulting flame is rather dim but broad and active, and safe to use indoors. It is also a gel which can be applied to surfaces, for example I often use a small amount on the ritual dagger to ignite the Black Flame, and extinguish all other candles once it is active.

Examples of low-key electric lighting include plasma globes, Jacob's ladders, Tesla coils, laser shows, LED strips, planetariums, strobe lights, lava lamps, etc. High-voltage apparatus tends to produce a lot of ozone - the signature aroma of the Mad Lab. If safer forms of lighting are preferred, one might consider using an ozone generator to mimic the effect. However, exposure to ozone should be kept to a minimum, as it is known to cause various health issues.

## **Optics**

Visual distortion may be obtained in a number of ways. A flexible Fresnel lens assists in the "bending" of reality, while the chromatic aberration of a prism offers unique perceptions of otherwise ordinary things. Projectors and 3D glasses also come to mind.

Optical illusions of any sort are also welcome, from the geometric representations of Vasarely to the realism of Escher. And don't forget that a picture is worth a thousand words, and a well-chosen one can serve as a "Rorschach Test" for the mind.

## UV Reactive Materials

Inexpensive UV flashlights are available in finding reactive objects and materials. Here are some known examples:

**-Fluorite:** Not every stone is reactive, so check with the vendor first. And some glow more than others, for example I have an obelisk that glows but is rather dim in its response.

**-Lacquer:** Glows a greenish color which is similar in hue to uranium glass, and is easy to apply. Linseed oil is similar in nature.

**-Neon Colors:** Think highlighter markers, "hot-pink" fabrics, etc. Some specialty shops sell paint in a complete array of reactive hues.

**-Plastics:** Blue plastic in particular, or neon-colored.

**-Tonic Water:** Some brands of tonic water glow under a black light.

## Noise

One definition of noise: "A musical sound or note is a continuous, uniform, and pleasing sound, such as is given out by one string of a piano; while a noise is an irregular, fitful succession of shocks to the ear..." (Gage, 1902, p.189-190).

Discordant noise may be achieved in a variety of ways. One might set up a couple of audio oscillators to produce an eerie ambient tone, like the resonant gateway in the movie *Phantasm*. An improperly tuned radio is an easy way to obtain background static, which is particularly interesting if an old one prone to superheterodyne howling is used. It's easy to find old analog radios at antique junk stores on the cheap.

Noises are not required, I prefer things rather quiet most of the time. But if you're going to make a bit of a ruckus, make it count. Of course, a computer can be used to generate any number of sounds, but there is something special about having real objects in the room doing the work.



## **Themes**

Here are some scientific, pseudo-scientific, and fictional themes one might use in designing the psycho-dramatic elements of a working. I chose a few which hearken back to an era of both scientific evolution and new inventions of fantasy:

### **Time-Travel:**

Obtaining a sense of time-travel is not that easy, and requires a lot of imagination. Use objects or symbols from the desired period, set clocks to the wrong time, enter into a "Tardis", etc.

### **Psychotronics:**

The study of currently unexplained interactions which occur at a distance (Zdeněk, 1977, p.42). One must be prepared for any "extraordinary manifestations of the human psyche" (Ostrander and Schroeder, 1970, p.418) or "supranormal" results of their magical efforts.

### **Architecture:**

One example of a trapezoid-shaped building is the John Hancock Tower in Chicago. Reportedly, Anton LaVey and Dr. Michael Aquino did a working there to commemorate the Church of Satan's Order of the Trapezoid.

### **X-Ray Vision:**

Few phenomena reveal the unseen like X-Rays, first researched by Wilhelm Röntgen. (Gage, 1902, p.342). X-Ray Vision would be more of a psychic phenomenon though, perhaps aided with special glasses.

### **Luminiferous Aether:**

Before Einstein, physicists accepted the notion of an incompressible, absolute medium through which electromagnetic energy propagates (Gage, 1902, p.206; Martin, 1893, p.148-149). Sir Issac Newton also spoke of an "aethereal medium" (Newton, 1704, Qu. 19).

### **Psychokinesis:**

In Stephen King's *Firestarter*, the girl (and her father) possessed incredible skills of mental domination over both people and things. In the real world, many frauds have surfaced over the years and you can be the next.

### **Fields:**

*The Imperishable Star III* contains an extensive paper on Life Fields, a concept which was later extended to Thought Fields (Aquino, 2016, p.70, *Future Science*, 1977, p.57). Fictional fields are numerous: "walls of resistance", "tractor-beams", etc.

### **Chemistry:**

Test tubes, flasks, and the like. As mentioned tonic water glows under UV light to good effect. As one of my graphic design teachers once indicated, presentation is ninety percent of the sale.

### **Cybernetics:**

The science of cybernetics includes the study of the relationship of man and machine. We have created machines to extend our capabilities, which ones do you employ?

### **Strange Gadgets:**

Just as humankind has created its own religions, we've also created plenty of machines which are often equally as ridiculous. One humorous example is included in the image supplement at the end of this essay.

### **Electricity:**

Antique books are fascinating sources of symbolic imagery, and many were written for laymen who were interested in the radio and television technologies of yesteryear. "Action at a distance".

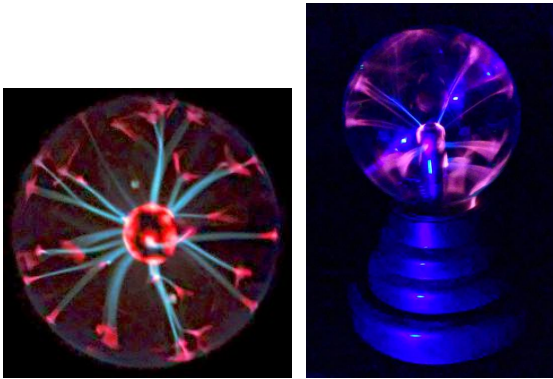
## Conclusion

You can get away with a *lot* in the dark, therefore bringing excellent and unusual aesthetics to the altar or ritual chamber need not be a difficult or expensive pursuit. The surface has barely been scratched, and there are no rules for how to apply or build upon these ideas. Step outside of the ritual box, enter through the gateway of the Trapezoid, and may the future be yours.

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## Supplementary Images



*6" plasma globe and 3" portable version.*



*6" globe on the altar with a black light above.*



*Fire altar with a broad Sterno flame.*



*Hotel ritual, 8" plasma globe and others.*



*Laser Show.*



*Trapezoid themed altar (work-in-progress).*



*UV Flashlight.*



*Tonic water in a translucent stone goblet.*



*UV screw bulb.*



*Fluorite stone atop an industrial steel gear.*



*Vintage Books.*



*John Hancock Tower.*