LECTURE NOTES

for

If and When You Are Closeted...

These lecture notes are provided for the purpose of accessibility. Five generous volunteers took these notes on all our behalf. Notes for the supplemental video after Chapter 4, “If and When You Are Closeted,” Chapter 11, “The Magic Chain and the Witch’s Power to Bless,” and Chapter 12 are provided by me. I may add further points of clarification after the notation “BW Addition:” in these lecture notes where, in retrospect, I feel like I wasn’t clear enough in the video and now want to add more commentary.

I recommend that you take notes on these notes—extract what you want from these notes and either write them into the margins of your workbook or print out passages of notes you want to keep and tape those print-outs into your workbook.

Video Lecture & Reading Assignment Downloads:
https://youtu.be/qWT8DdOAHVM

Western Witchcraft I: The Fundamentals and Doctrinal Basis

Learn more about the online course here:
https://wp.me/p32or0-4kw
If and When You Are Closeted…

Video Length: 13 minutes 43 seconds

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This video lecture was tucked in last minute in response to some concerns that were brought to my attention: What if you are closeted or you know that if you are too obvious that you are working with occult texts, even if it’s a text by someone as deeply Catholic as Eliphas Levi, what do you do?

This video demonstrates a way to set up an altar in a way that no one will know that it is an altar. I used a white dining room table setting mat (choose a color that is going to be religiously inoffensive) to be the “veil.” You can place this discretely in the corner of a cabinet, dresser, or study desk so it looks like interior décor.

For the sword, go with an ornamental sword that could be culture-specific; that way it simply looks like you’re interested in collecting swords. For example, a katana that you place on a stand. It won’t look like a ritual dagger or altar tool. It just looks like you have this random hobby of collecting culturally-specific swords or knives. Pick a “ritual dagger” that will assimilate with your interior décor.

For the “pillars of the temple,” go with twin ornaments if you want to go with that look, or two similar ornaments that represent the dark-light polarity. Go to the dollar store and find ceramics that reflect that binary or duad. Here’s the thing: you can use generic objects that aren’t “esoteric” to look at, but are deeply esoteric and sentimental to you.

I give the example of the “See No Evil, Speak No Evil, Hear No Evil” porcelain owls that I show at around timestamp 4:20, which signify the trinity to me. Also, if your family prescribes to a specific religion, it probably has a representation of the Holy Trinity in that religious tradition already, so then integrate their religious iconography into your altar. Represent the Holy Trinity with what is already iconographic of a Trinitarian principle from your family’s designated religion.

Now let’s talk about the wand, since Levi does emphasize the importance of the wand as a magus’s tool. As instructed, scrape off the top layer of bark of a branch and that’s it. That’s all you need. It doesn’t even look occult. It just looks like you’ve kept a piece of a tree as a personal souvenir and now it’s set on top of your desk or tabletop. You don’t have to carve or wood-burn anything “occult” looking onto your wand.

At timestamp 11:00, I show a smaller piece of branch that you can use. Instead of wood-burning all the “occult symbols” I have on the piece I’m showing, just burn the simple rings down the length of the branch, and as you carve in each of the rings, focus attentively on reciting prayers, affirmations, and incantations that will encode your wand with intentions and power. The rings look non-descript enough that the piece of wood, this branch, will or should not trigger any undue attention. If anyone asks you about what that branch is, you can simply say it’s a souvenir from a memorable hiking trip, or a memento from camping in the woods.

You can also spread the various objects out in a scattered manner across a tabletop so it does not look methodically arranged—it just looks like random trinkets and baubles set on a desk. You know it is
meaningful and methodical, but others who don’t know better won’t realize there’s any organization to the chaos.

For the pentacle, perhaps do not actually draw a visible pentagram onto your plaque or disc. In the video, I show an octagonal piece of flat, smooth selenite that looks like a plate. I recommend using Astral Light and your psychic intentions to inscribe the plate with the pentagram. It isn’t visible to physical eyes, but you will know that it is there, and you can see it through your psychic sight.

For the ritual chalice, just take a pretty bowl made of a natural material (in the video, I show a selenite bowl) and if you want, you can place rosary beads or prayer beads inside the bowl just to show that there’s a “purpose” for that decorative bowl on your desk. If it would appear odd for you to have prayer beads on your desktop, then fill the ritual chalice, this decorative bowl, with anything that’s going to keep it discrete.

Craft an altar that does not look like an altar. Yes, you can most certainly hide everything in plain sight. Just be creative about how you display your items, and carefully choose items in styles or aesthetics that won’t catch anyone’s attention. It just looks like ordinary, boring, run-of-the-mill home décor.

In terms of being a closeted occultist, you are in great company. When you read these old alchemical grimoires, all of them were written in code. I have a speculation that some of these alchemical texts weren’t literally about turning lead into gold, but that was used as a metaphor for magical operations, with gold representing transcendence, transcendental magic. We in our profane, unrefined state are the lead. Then these codes they used—the serpent, the phoenix, the dragon, references to the Tria Prima of the Great Work (which Levi even points us to as symbolic of virtues, i.e., salt is wisdom, mercury is practical knowledge or skills, and sulfur is willpower), the four elements (signifying the four directives of the magus), etc. are code for various inner alchemical processes for the transformation of the magus. These are spell books and instructions in spell-crafting or ritual magic.

Isaac Newton, an acclaimed scientist, has been well-documented by historians to be fascinated with the occult. At the end of his life, he had many of his personal journals and notebooks burned, so no one would ever see them. There’s a lot of speculation that he burned his occult writings because he knew they were heretical.

By the way, random side point: Newton was believed to have had Asperger’s, or on the autism spectrum.

Anyway, Newton was definitely “closeted,” which is why so much of the notebooks he kept of his occult studies and workings that he didn’t manage to burn were in code. He was also notorious for being introverted.

So if you are a closeted occultist, then just know that you are in very good company—nam ing Newton as just one.

One of the great things about being a closeted occultist is you are training yourself on how to hide occult knowledge in plain sight, how to be creative and use coded language, work with symbolism, which is so important in occult workings anyway, and training yourself to balance between the seen and the unseen, to master that relationship dynamic between what is visible and what isn’t. So in many ways, being a closeted occultist and having to work and study as a closeted occultist will give you an edge over others.

About the recommended rituals: Although I don’t want you to have any excuses to not do the rituals, I also understand that not everyone is in the same place right now. If you’re in a place and situation where you can’t perform any of these more elaborate rituals without negative judgment and repercussion, then don’t. Don’t do them. You have the course materials for life. There are plenty of other opportunities in your life.
where you will be able to revisit the course materials and at those future times, go through the more
elaborate rituals.

If right now it would be more detrimental to your well-being or it would disrupt the harmony between you
and your environment (which includes people you live with, family members, loved ones, friends, your
community, etc.), then don’t do the rituals or be a lot more discrete with any sort of altar setup you choose
to have, if you choose to even have one at all.

Remember: one of the tenets of the magus is to establish some kind of concord and harmony with your
environment. That includes harmony with the people you live with or the people you say you love.

That said, do not skip the basic energy cultivation exercises. You have no excuse for skipping those, such
as the isometrics exercises and learning how to control and harness the Astral Light. So if you are skipping
the longer rituals with all your altar tools out in full display, then you need to compensate by focusing more
attentively on the energy exercises.

In terms of divination, if you don’t feel comfortable owning any divinatory tools, you can print out
temporary 30-card tarot decks from the SKT image files provided with your course materials. Print on
normal copy paper, do the divinatory exercise in your workbook, and then throw out or recycle that copy
paper printed tarot card images. This is not sacrilege, I promise you. I am the creator of the deck and know
the spirits of it well, so I am assuring you it is perfectly okay to print temporary copies of the 30-card deck,
do one reading with it, and then toss it. Sure, maybe you want to anoint it with holy oil, or consecrate it in
some way, pass it through the smoke of ritual incense first, before using it for divinatory work, but you can
craft the deck with the intention that it be temporary, so you don’t keep it and risk someone finding it and
interrogating you about it.

Don’t forget that the Book of Voices I provide you with among your course materials has the card meanings
for the SKT 30-card deck, so if you are a total tarot beginner, just look up each card’s meaning in that
glossary and work off those card meanings as you interpret your divinatory reading.