

Rite of the ghouls

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HPL wrote of the necrophagic ghoul in *Pickman's Model and Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath*. In Lovecraft's mythos the ghoul was a semi-human creature with a canine or monstrous facial appearance. The ghouls were said to feed on the human dead or even occasionally live humans. HPL claimed, in his stories, that it was possible a human to be transformed into a ghoul. The ghouls of HPL's stories are based on the ghouls or ghuls of Arab myth and magick. In Arab myth ghuls are again semi-human creatures with monstrous or animalistic faces. Like HPL's ghouls the Arab ghul lived in lonely and deserted places feeding on the dead. In Arab myth it is said the powerful magicians can transform into ghuls. The ghuls are associated with a homophagic diet (eating humans), necrophilia, and magickal transformation.

The ghuls of Arab magick are reminiscent of many aspects of shamanism. In many cultures it is common for the shaman to transform into an animalistic or semihuman form. Ritual cannibalism was found in almost every culture at one time or another. Even today in cultures where ritual cannibalism is no longer physically enacted there still remains traces of symbolic cannibalism. Tibetan and Hindu sadhus often undergo rites involving a corpse, sometimes even with necrophilic elements. In HPL, Arab magick, and shamanism there are undercurrents of devouring, being devoured, and transformation into animalistic forms.

The so called "grotesqueness and monstrosity of the liminal sacra (shamanic knowledge)" in shamanism are not darkness for its own sake. The "monstrous" elements in shamanism are intended to force the practitioner to face and integrate primal, animalistic aspects of her or his psychic make up. Such drives have been termed the "Shadow" by Jung. Although our culture has labeled these drives "evil" they are within us all. Shamanic practices help us to accept and integrate the Shadow.

According to many researchers the dark and bizarre rituals in shamanism are designed to force the practitioner to confront cultural "taboos" and ego limits in order to free the shaman from these artificial confines. Thus the "monstrosities" of magick and shamanism are psychodynamic techniques aiming at liberation. They help us to confront and transcend our taboos and to integrate the Shadow or the "evil" and animalistic drives in our psychic make up. Sometimes, in shamanic initiation, the "monstrous" elements are combined with other tactics to eliminate false ego structures such as taunting or mockery.

It should be noted that symbolic cannibalism, when it involves symbolically "eating" the shaman, is closely related to experiences that often occur spontaneously in an initiatory ordeal or crisis. Very often a shaman will undergo a prolonged psychophysical illness that ends in an initiatory experience. The initiatory experience often involves being torn to pieces or being devoured by demonic forms. This same archetypal process has been encountered more recently in psychological research using entheogens or dynamic breathing. This process is a type of ego death. It is the false limited idea of "self" that is dismembered and devoured. This initiatory process is often called the death/rebirth rite. The old limited notion of "self" dies and a new, broader, and less constrained "self" is reborn. The Tibetan Tchod rite is based on the exact same type of death/rebirth sequence (involving being devoured by demons.) However, the Tibetan version of this rite often also includes necrophilic undertones.

According to Vilmos Diotze in *Tracing Shamans in Siberia* "possession"

states in which the shaman is transformed into an animalistic or semihuman form encountered have an important value.

"possession states in the countries in which they play an important part of religious rituals have an important distress-relieving, integrative, and adaptive function. As far as mental illness is concerned, they may be of prophylactic value.

As we can see the animalistic possession and symbolic cannibalism involved in shamanic and magickal initiations are aimed at freeing the practitioner from cultural restrictions and artificial ego limits. They are powerful and liberating psychological techniques.

About the same time I was considering how the above shamanic methods relate to the ghouls of HPL's mythos and Arab magick I happened upon Kenneth Grant's ideas on the "mortuary feast" of the Lamas of Leng, Andahada's "Feast of the Hive" and "Demon Feast" and Spare's "Feast of the Supersensualists". After reading Grant I read what materials were available to me on Spare. Both Grant and Spare used themes of transformation into a semihuman form and symbolic homophagy (cannibalism) in an initiatory context. Grant and Spare also included sexual elements into their work. When taken as a whole this struck me as closely parallel to the Arab magickal traditions regarding Ghuls. Both involve transformation into monstrous forms devouring or being devoured, and sexual (necrophilic?) undertones. After reading Grant I began to toy with constructing a shamanic initiatory rite based on the Ghul legends of HPL and Arab magick. It included being devoured, transformation into an animal-like ghoul and necrophilic elements.

"Pickman's Model" by HPL, and Grant's writings were big influences as was the Tibetan Buddhist Tchod rite. More recently Phil Hine's Pseudonomicon has influenced my understanding of the psychodynamics of this rite. Mr. Hine has significantly impacted this rite and my understanding of why it works. The actual nomenclature of this rite is derived from the infamous 18th century printing of "Cultes des Goules" used by Abbe' Boullan in his Lyons workings.

This is the third version of this rite. The first was written in 1989 and contained only instructions with no commentary. The second was written in July 1994 after reading Hine's Pseudonomicon. It contained the rite as well as some commentary and several quote's from Mr. Hine that helped to explain the nature of this sort of Rite. The current version was written in October 1994 and contains somewhat longer commentary and but fewer quotations from Mr. Hine.

This rite was designed to be used in a group setting. However, it can be modified to be used on the "astral", by a solo magician or partially on the "astral" by two celebrants. Also, this rite was written from my own Cthulhu mythos perspective and should be modified to fit into whatever myth system the magician uses. This rite (like all magick) should not be considered to be carved in stone. Otherwise it becomes just another dogma to transcend!!

Location: Outdoors in a rural setting. There should be no evidence of the very existence of man at the ritual site except for those objects used for the rite itself. The site should reflect the meaning of "wild" in the word wilderness.

Time: At night well after dark. Because of the rite's association with Nyarlathotep (Nyharluthotep) and therefore Azathoth (Asa-Thoth) the ultimate time to perform this rite is "when the Sun is in the Sign of the Ram, the Lion, or the Archer; the Moon decreasing and Mars and Saturn

conjoin" Short of this any time that the celebrants feel that "the spheres do intersect and the influences flow from the Void". _1_

Materials: the Altar of the Old Ones, the Incense of Zkauba, animal offal (obtained from a butcher), theatrical make-up, animal and human skulls (replicas will do if they are realistic), A tape player and a recording of drumming at 3-7 cycles per second _2_, a charcoal burner,; optional are entheogens _3_.

In this rite the imagined body as well as the ego-complex of the magician is devoured by the other celebrants (the ghouls). At this point the magician transforms into one of the ghouls her/himself. The rite is now at the climax and the Ghoul/magician joins the feast of offal and engages in ritual copulation with the "corpse" on the Altar of the Old Ones. Quoting Mr. Hine "Undercurrent of such a ritual is the idea of relinquishing control to others, and of facing one's own taboos and desires in a way that means that they cannot be dodged or evaded."

Well no point in further meandering. Here it is.

The Rite of the Ghouls

Set the Altar of the Old Ones in a clearing of a dense woods. Above the altar place a large wooden "banner" to act as the "Center of Focus" in the opening. On this banner the Egyptian hieroglyphics for Asa-Thoth (Azathoth) and Yak-SutThoth (Yog-Sothoth) should be painted on the top. Below these but in larger Hieroglyphics the name Nyharluthotep (Nyarlathotep) should be painted in a bold style. At the South end (the head) of the Altar should be placed several animal skulls and at least one human skull (or a realistic replica). Below the Altar (below it's foot end ie north) about ten-twenty feet should be placed a large quantity of animal offal (from a butcher). A single small charcoal burner for the incense should be the only source of light. This burner should be placed between the altar and the "banner".

Opening:

This rite should not be preceded by any form of banishing. Nor should any use of a type of magick circle be used. The attitude of this rite must be one of total helplessness before the demonic forces that will devour the magician. For this reason the magician will be placed in the center of the other celebrants nude and without any weapons or other magickal objects. The other celebrants should also be nude (to increase the animalistic/taboo atmosphere) but should be wearing theatrical make-up in order to give their faces and bodies a monstrous/animal-like appearance. The acting priest of the Old Ones (one of the other celebrants not the magician) begins the rite thus:

The priest starts the drumming tape and throws a large amount of the incense of Zkauba into the charcoal burner. The priest holds his left hand in the Voorish sign and the celebrants do likewise.

Priest: "Hail the limitless Void!

Priest: Ia! Yog-Sothoth the infinite Chaos

Celebrants: Hail Yog-Sothoth

Priest: Ia! Azathoth the primal center of the Void

Celebrants: Hail Azathoth

Priest: Ia! Nyarlathotep Mighty Messenger

Celebrants: Hail Nyarlathotep Mighty Messenger

Priest: Nyarlathotep, purveyor of Chaos, Lord of Ghouls, remove the

illusion of reality from the mind of (name of magician) by the annihilation of that mind! Watch over this feast of Ghouls as (name) is killed and devoured. Rejoice in your black gulf that Chaos is once again unleashed on the earth.

Celebrants: Hail Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos!

(Nyarlathotep is featured in the opening because of "his" close association with the ghouls in myth. The mention of the Other Gods helps to create a sense of continuity with previous mythos work and serves to create a link with later work.)

(Priest and celebrants give the sign of Kish)

Priest: (name), you offer yourself up to the ghouls as a sacrifice.

(name)you are now now completely helpless before the might of the Old Ones and their minions the ghouls!

(name), your mind and soul shall be ripped apart and you shall be reborn in darkness. As this happens remember that "the wailings of the mad are but the birth-cries of the new man-the old man gone like dust in the desert wind. Cleansed of the lies of mankind, the new man-the man of darkness-is free to absorb the beauty of nothingness, to glory in the stark might of the utter void. As your useless reason dissolves, Rejoice!" _4_

(During this opening the magician is laying on the ground near or on the offal. The celebrants form a rough U around the magician with the altar at the opening of the U. The magician should maintain a mind-set of helplessness during this opening. It is also important that the magician allows Her/himself to slip into a state of fear and then paranoia.)

(The main body of this rite does not involve the usual sort of ritualistic elements common to western magick. The majority of this rite involves the chaotic acting out of Sub/Superhuman drives. Therefore, to make the transition, from the relatively ordered opening to the bulk of the rite, smoother a specific technique is needed. The technique used is gradually going from R'lyehian and Enochian phases and words to pure "glossolalia" or speaking in tongues as the Xtians call it.)

Priest and celebrants together:

Z'rdo K'af' Caosago Mosp'l'h T'loch, Z'rdo K'af' Caosago Mosp'l'h T'loch,
N'gha Z'rdo Hoath Adphaht Affa p'lz'n, N'kai Z'rdo Hoath Nyarlathotep,
Z'rdo "-all ollog. Z'rdo "-all ollog.

Ia! Nyarlathotep Fhtagn N'gha n'gah ia thos N'kai!!!

The celebrants begin to use glossolalia (quickly uttering seemingly meaningless "words"). In the beginning the Celebrant may wish to use random combinations of any of the Enochian or R'lyehian words above. N'gha and N'kai are particularly useful for entering a non-human state. These words have an incredibly long history {pre-human?} and possess strong magickal "morphogenic" fields. The use of glossolalia when combined with drumming and the use of entheogens {as it is in this rite} can rapidly create a strong state of Gnosis in which possession is likely to occur. In this rite the celebrants should combine chaotic and frenzied dancing with the use of Glossolalia. The celebrants begin to chant random syllables and dance animalistically. When they, as a group, feel themselves to be possessed by ghouls they begin to walk or crawl towards the magician to begin their feast. The magician her or himself should remain silent during this period. She or he should allow her or himself to be taken into the state of fear that should naturally be aroused by this stage. She or he should allow thoughts like "am I going to lose my mind?", "Am I slowly

going crazy, what the hell am I doing out here!" "what if they really kill me" "are they losing it, maybe they lured me out here because they wanted to do a REAL human sacrifice" etc. etc. The magician should allow her or himself to fall into a state of fear and paranoia. She or he should be intensely aware of her or his utter helplessness. The use of entheogens will greatly increase this state of mind. The feast should be wild and uncivilized. The ghouls should nuzzle, bite, lick, claw, and use offal to rub the body of the magician. When the ghouls start feasting on the offal {which they smear on the magician then eat or wipe across their mouths} and the imagined body and soul of the magician they should (according to Mr. Hine) mock and taunt the magician. Remember the ego-complex as well as the imagined body is to be consumed. Tactics such as mockery "dismember" the magicians sense of self importance. The magician should begin to sense a feeling much like being lost. This rite should create a profound type of sensory-overload. When the magician feels completely lost in this state, a temporary type of ego-death occurs. This state is to be embraced when it comes. When the magician feels the state to have reached a peak she or he begins her or his transformation into a Ghoul. The celebrants may reinforce the transformation by rolling the magician around in the offal. The magician should begin to make whatever animalistic sounds or motions she or he feels appropriate. When the transformation is complete the magician walks or crawls to the Altar of the Old Ones. On this Altar is the "corpse" (one of the celebrants wearing make-up to look dead). The Ghoul-magician now copulates with the "corpse". This should involve the same type of nuzzling, light clawing, and light biting that is common in animal sex. The celebrants should nuzzle and rub against one another (or also engage in sex if they choose). The body of the "corpse" can have a particular symbol or sigil painted on it to create a link between the mind of the Ghoul-magician and the thing symbolized. The application of this technique is highly individual and needs to be explored on your own.

When the celebrants feel that they are coming out of the possession they should use the "Laughter of Azathoth". This is a completely mindless and chaotic sort of laughter that can serve as a transition between states. ("banishing by laughter") This laughter must be the same in feel as the laughter of the insane. There should be no "reason" for it or behind it. After the using "Laughter of Azathoth" the celebrants should lay or sit on the ground with their eyes closed and allow whatever experiences that come to happen.

When the magician orgasms (or feels the act complete) she or he also uses the "Laughter of Azathoth" and lays on the ground to be swept away by whatever visions come.)

When the group feels the rite complete they should close thus:

All: Ia! Nyarlathotep lord of the Ghouls. We rejoice in the success of this Rite of Chaos that you have given us. We thank you for watching over this rite.

(no special closing other than a short and simple one like that above should be used as it would tend to create a separation between the Rite and "normal" life.)

Obviously the most important element of this rite is timing. The formal rite should begin about 40 minutes after the entheogens (if such are used) have been ritually taken. The period of Glossolalia and dancing should last at least 15-20 minutes but can last much longer. It is especially important to allow enough time for this stage. Even if a celebrant feels her or himself possessed by a ghoul she or he should keep

dancing allowing the state to intensify and the ghoulish hunger to grow. It is also important to take enough time for the magician to enter a strong state of fear/paranoia. During the feast the Ghouls should make a lot of body contact with one-another and the magician (thus breaking a cultural taboo). The feast should be long enough to create a lost or egoless feeling in the magician. However, it should not be so long that it numbs the participants. The final stage in which the participants lay on the ground in an ecstatic state again should not be so long as to create a separation from the rest of the rite. Judging the correct amount of time is something that can only come with practice.

A review of Intent: This rite is intended as a form of shamanic initiation in which the magician confronts her or his animalistic drives integrates them as well as penetrating the boundaries of cultural taboo. This forces the magician to see the artificial nature of her or his ego limits and cultural programming. In this rite the magician dies and the ego and cultural programming is devoured. The shaman-magician is reborn in an expanded less constrained form. According to Mr. Hine one of the undercurrents of a rite of this sort is "the idea of relinquishing control to others and facing one's own taboos and desires in a way that cannot be dodged or evaded."

Ethics, Legality and the Rite of the Ghoul

This rite should only be (and indeed CAN only be) carried out by people who profoundly trust and like one-another. Because this rite involves only consenting and informed adults and does not involve the harming of either people or animals I feel that its use is ethical. However, because of the nature of this rite I feel that it is very dangerous. All participants should be made aware of the high risk of psychological damage. The author strongly suggests that readers refrain from using illegal entheogens. The use of legal entheogens must be an individual choice. The author strongly recommends that you do not do this rite on a physical level. Fairly good results can often be obtained by performing this rite on an "astral" trip or in a lucid dreaming type format. In conclusion the author feels that this rite can (and always should) be done on the physical plane in a ethical and legal fashion. However, because of the danger inherent in this rite the author does not recommend that it be physically enacted.

Notes

1) This "ultimate time" is derived from Turner and Langford's controversial decoding of Dr. John Dee's Liber Logaeth. This is said, in Liber Logaeth, to be the time in which man can most easily gain access to the realm of Azathoth and therefore Nyarlathotep. The Altar of the Great Old Ones and the Incense of Zkauba are also derived from this decoding of Liber Logaeth

2) Drumming at 3-7 cycles per second causes a phenomenon known as sonic-driving or Neuro-entrainment. This produces a "shamanic state of consciousness" in which the magician can work.

3) entheogen can be used by all participants to increase the intensity of this rite. There is a long history of use of entheogens in magick and shamanism. The use of legal entheogens is not without risk and should be considered carefully.

4) The portion of the opening in quotes has been adapted from the "excerpts from the ritual books of the order" in "The Hermetic Order of the Silver Twilight" by Marc Hutchison

Best Regards

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