

There are some interesting vampire connections as well as the Tal'mahe'ra have a sort of secret language called "Ghemalish," which they believe to be the language spoken in enoch. According to the Wiki, the Enochian used by the OoH is based on a "phonetic transliteration" that was leaked somehow to the OoH

What do you consider the cornerstone of so many beliefs that words and language are in some way magical?

LANGUAGE MAGIC

The language philosopher J. L. Austin developed a theory of language use, described in his 1955 lectures published as *How to Do Things with Words*, whereby there can be an unmediated causal relationship between saying something—in normal, everyday speech—and something else happening; in other words, the linguistic act itself, what Austin calls a “performative utterance”, is the instantiation of a separate, not strictly linguistic, act. A classic example is sanctifying a marriage with the phrase “I now pronounce you...” etc., the verbal expression of which transforms the legal, social, and—depending on one’s beliefs—possibly metaphysical status of the persons so addressed.

Consensus Reality

An essential part of Austin's theory is a definition of the conditions under which a performative utterance can successfully perform its intended function, a key element of which is the assertion that inter-subjective reality is constructed by prior linguistic acts among the participants in a given discourse—in the wedding example, for instance, the marrying parties must to some extent accept the premise of the whole wedding scenario, as well as the legitimate authority of the person officiating to actually make happen what they want to happen, all of which is mediated through social institutions that are themselves constructed and maintained by chains of interdependent language acts stretching back into infinity; so speech—any language use—does not simply describe or respond to a neutral, *a priori* state of reality, but rather reality is constructed, reinforced, and challenged with every new act of communication.

So language is powerful but not powerful ex nihilo.

This feels like how chiminage with Spirits or Umbral Protocol works whereby a mage has a back and forth with a spirit commands, cajoles, or otherwise more reminds a Umbrood of a promise that they made unless we're using Spirit 4 to compel them.

Implications

And if the agreed-upon parameters of inter-subjective reality are defined through discourse, it's not surprising that many instances of language directed toward supernatural entities make explicit reference to the identities of the interlocutors and the purpose of the communication; in order to meaningfully relate these supra-mundane powers to the magician, to the object of the magical act, and to the rest of the mundane world, it's necessary to verbally construct a setting where all these things both exist and are present to one another through the conversation itself. In using magic, people are essentially seeking to expand their network of possible social relationships to include non-human agents (Horníčková 1998: 246), so it's only sensible that we would introduce ourselves and explain why we're getting in touch.

Supra-mundane is a term that I don't see too much.

This makes sense as to how an animist or other paradigm that has a wider definition of "person" than most people works. "I am this person, you are that person, it is your role or interest to do something". The role of the hearth spirit is make a home warm so a call to action is simply reminding it of its nature.

And the kinds of operative contexts which magical language has been used to construct are often very mundane. The rhetorical constructions within many medieval Chinese talismans, for example, take the form of commands to the spirits, often simulating the language of official government decrees, as might be issued to bureaucratic functionaries or military officers. Likewise, Aramaic incantation bowls often framed the adjurations to the demons they intend to rebuke as legal formulae, some identical to those which would have been found in contemporary divorce documents; in each case the clauses delineating the spell's purpose are made magically binding in the same way that the language of human laws is made legally binding: by the authority of undersigned witnesses—albeit the appeals for justification found in spells are often made to gods or spirits, rather than government officials.

What does a Chinese talisman look like?

I like this as a way to use Entropy 4 to create a binding Gaeas or similar. The contract that is agreed to between two parties is being witnessed by some set of magickal functionaries to that witness and then implement the contract. If I fail to protect my Chantry, the spirits of the Celestial Bureaucracy or the Umbral Hierarchy will exact some sort of toll as is their job. The contract was written in a way to invoke them.

Then there's a whole genre of magical charms that scholars call *historiolae*, which are essentially little magical stories that impel action on the part of a spirit, a person, or even some natural phenomenon, essentially by invoking the precedent of a parallel scenario in the past (either historical or mythical) where some powerful individual acted in a similar manner with a good result. This is a form of verbal magic that naturally lends itself to Mage practices associated with cultures bearing strong oral traditions, since in the real world those are precisely the cultures that developed this kind of charm.

If you ever did a youtube series, I'd want it to be called Historiola.

So to copy this into Mage, I am an angel magick practitioner and I wish to deliver harm unto a vampire very far away (Forces 3, Correspondence 3, Prime 3). So I use Practice of Angelic Summoning and Instrument of Stories to convince a minion of Raguel angel of justice to deliver a blow until a vampire in a distant city. The minion asks why and I tell the story of how god cursed Cain and all of his decedents. This angel is living high and that he should cast the Cainite down.

So, from a Mage—the game—perspective, we basically have a linguistically-constructed Consensus, perpetually created and re-created by every meaningful semiotic act, with every single person a powerful willworker speaking change into being—this could either be a particular spin on the Virtual Adepts' idea of mass Ascension, a nightmare of metaphysical Dynamism run amok, or maybe both, but it's certainly a solid basis for a paradigm that would fit

equally well among the VAs, Hermetics, NWO, and probably many others, with a little creative interpretation.

I like the idea that there's a group of Newspeak NWO agents who believe that if language can be perfectly taught and used, a just society by necessity will come out of the other end. At least by their definition of just. But let's spell out the Paradigm and break it into tenets.

Something like:

- 1) Reality is created by the expression of signs and symbols to other agents in reality*
- 2) Language is the most flexible of those tools*
- 3) By manipulating and harnessing language, one can change reality*

This would get a little meta but I like the idea that one doesn't so much fire a lightning bolt at someone so much as create a linguistic construct where someone believes they were hit by lightning which they then act out functionally causing themselves harm as the convulse and their nerves go nuts.

There are kind of some extensions to this paradigm as to start it presumes that magick would only work on people. "Other Agents in reality" is real flexible.

There's also the idea that it's not just the communicative property of a language that's magick but that the words themselves kind of contain some intrinsic power. What does it mean to say that a language can manipulate reality directly?

PRIMAL LANGUAGE

The classic example in strictly magical discourse of a "primateval language" informing reality itself is probably Enochian, a language and alphabet recorded by John Dee and Edward Kelly in the late 1500s, which, according to the angels they spoke to—Dee tells us—is the true language of creation spoken in the Garden of Eden, and which Adam used to name all earthly beings.

Of course, Dee and Kelly's practices were informed by a phenomenon which has been observed among many of the religious traditions that base their dogma upon a textual corpus—using 'text' here in the broadest sense to include any form of precisely circumscribed, codified discourse; so, the Hebrew Torah, the Muslim Quran, but also the Vedas of Hinduism which were originally transmitted orally—which is the inclination to postulate that text, and hence necessarily the language in which it has been received, as eternal and preexisting any other noetic or material reality.

The Vedas are often described as *apauruṣeya*, which basically means 'not authored by any mortal', whether that means created by Brahma, or simply reflecting eternal truth, in either case transmitted to human beings by divine revelation. Sanskrit, in turn, is regarded as the most accurate, refined form in which that primordial sonic reality can be recorded, memorized, and transmitted.

This kind of reminds me of some of Meh from Summerian belief where there are the decrees made by god on how the cosmos works.

Orthodox Judaism holds the Torah to be the unmediated creation of God Himself, and to function as something like a blueprint for the subsequent construction of the cosmos and temporality. Also, in the Talmudic period (so, the first 2–5 centuries CE), Jewish mystical

thought produced a book called the *Sefer Yetzirah*, or Book of Formation, which analyzes how the letters of the Hebrew alphabet served as building blocks which the deity combined and iterated in order to make everything else.

Ok so we have the idea that certain collections of words are uniquely powerful having been forged by the divine. This can range from “this is our memory of it” to the “these received words in this order and maybe in this language is a divine thing”. This gives us an avenue for magick. A holy text may be viewed as a conduit literally. A mage who believes that the Bahai Kitáb-i-Iqán is a conduit to the unity of God could use it to step from any copy to any other copy on the face of the planet using Correspondence 3. Likewise a divinely received text could be used to move to the High Umbra via Spirit 3 or 4 again acting itself as a conduit.

Your commentary on Sanskrit makes me think a language mage now needs to master increasingly more seemingly appropriate languages as they advance with say Sanskrit requires for level 3 effects, Enochian for level 4 effects, and some new language they get from the River of Language being used for mastery or archmastery.

How do people view manipulating Primal Language?

Manipulating Primal Language

Perhaps unsurprisingly, when you start suggesting that a language, which human beings have access to, constitutes the very stuff of reality itself, it's a very short leap to trying to figure out how to use that stuff to do the same kinds of things a god does—hence, magic.

For instance, the methodology outlined in Ahmad Al-Bunī's 13th-century talismanic manual, the *Shams al-Ma'ārif*, invokes the powers of Allah through the alphabetic analysis of His names in Arabic and the theosophical correspondences of those letters, while situating this essentially linguistic contemplative-mystical procedure within a cosmological and ritual framework drawn from Hellenistic astrology. And if that doesn't sound like something a Batini or Hermetic might do, I don't know what does.

For the Batini, few things to which mortals have access can more directly grasp a facet of the divine unity than the very letters of the name of God; and a Hermetic might not even be an adherent of any faith, but the idea of a primordial rubric for reality that can be decoded from patterns within the fallen cosmos doesn't just fit the Hermetic paradigm, it IS the Hermetic paradigm. Even if no mortal tongue is *literally* the foundational language, maybe it holds just enough of an echo of that ineffability that it can still channel the power of creation. The same goes for a data-fundamentalist VA, just substitute binary for Hebrew.

I like the idea of a punk magician using a cut up a holy text to kind of create a magickal ransom note.

When you say name of god, do you have an idea of like how long a name might be.

I think for a little more variety we look to modify and re-arrange maybe not just the name of God but we posit that God has hidden names and each ties to a sphere and each is possibly dozens or hundreds of characters long. To do a Life 3 effect, I need to find the anagram of God's title as say sustainer and preserver and figure out which letter combination is the one that results in me being healed. I like this

because it gives a natural explanation of failure and paradox. I didn't pick the right name or I picked one that did something I didn't want it to.

What other practices are there for language?

PRACTICE AND FOCUS

Words as Ritual

It's been suggested (Lehrich 2003: 167-8) that ritual action, in the way that it resists contingency and disorder—its reproducibility—is most productively understood as a form of written communication; and I would argue, conversely, that the magical efficacy of writing can best be understood in terms of ritual action. If a ritual is conceptually a script of actions—fixed, coherent, timeless, and thus reproducible—then a concrete piece of writing, which has those same qualities, is no less a potential locus of ritual power. The modular nature of written language makes it an ideal medium through which individuals can project, capture in an objectified, concrete form, and manipulate their own desires and fears—which is to say, transform their personal reality in just the way that religious or magical ritual can, and in a very basic and universal sense, perform magic.

This is precisely what's entailed by the modern Chaos Magick practice of sigils (an early form of which the English artist Austin Osman Spare innovated in the early 20th century); a wish or an outcome is encoded into an abstract figure, often literally a compressed form of that wish's alphabetical representation, then the practitioner—typically through some method of meditation or autohypnosis—erases all awareness of that wish from their consciousness in order for it to begin operating autonomously via the unconscious mind, whether conceived of as individual or collective. Alternatively, one of the most pervasive forms of text-based magic in every culture which has produced such things simply involves transposing the act of prayer from an oral to a written medium—carrying slips of paper with Psalms or other supplications from sacred texts as amulets, for instance.

The inherent modularity of language makes it an almost infinitely flexible medium of description, which means written language used to circumscribe, structure, define, or contain qualities, states of being, or possibly even entities—as with spirit-compelling talismans or demon-trapping incantation bowls—can be a very versatile resource for constructing talismanic objects.

The drive to instantiate becomes strong and the power of words symbolically to put something out there.

This is something we see in some Bahai and mystic Islamic practices as well as I think some of the fiberwork traditions of crafting a word into a talisman. My Matter 2 shirt that grants me protection or a small cloth with "luck" sewn into it to get green lights grants me simple magicks. The Three Sovereigns corpus of Dao-ism believed that talismans could grant insight into the nature of a thing to command it.

Another variant we run into is the idea that the production of the sound itself is what empowers the magick. That you hit some sort of cosmic resonance and that words are just a guide like how a drummer may explain a syncopation with a phrase like 3 over 2 being "pass the god damn butter". What differentiates the sound from the text?

The two different modes of signification we see in the distinction between magical text as ritually-empowered object, and magical text as independent source of ritual power in itself, might be compared to Baudrillard's distinction between simulation and simulacrum: the ritually-empowered amulet, in its textual substance, 'copies', and perpetually reproduces, a ritual, whereas the magical writing-as-ritual has no antecedent, and it's the act of inscribing it that *is* the magical act. Likewise, the *onomata barbara* (barbarous names), the vowel liturgies, and the *voces magicae* of the Greco-Egyptian magical papyri, whether or not they in fact represent any precisely translatable semantic content—though some of them were notionally held to be the names of foreign gods—may draw their power from the very nature of the sounds they produce or correspond to. This was actually a tenet of early real-world Hermetic thought—the Neoplatonic theurgist Iamblichus (3rd–4th centuries CE) argued in his treatise “On the Mysteries of the Egyptians” (often referred to by its Latin title *De Mysteriis*) that “the very quality of the sounds...of the Egyptian words contains in itself the force of the things said.” This is not unlike Enochian, which, besides allowing one to converse with angels in their own language, is also imputed the power to summon and compel them, along with the cosmological forces to which they correspond. Similarly, the 9th-century Arab philosopher Al-Kindi in his *De Radiis* (“On Rays”)—which is largely concerned with establishing a physical theory of astrological influences, and of action at a distance more generally—says that spoken words, like all other physical things, produce rays of influence, and their effects are largely a matter of natural harmony between the signifying word and what it signifies, however their particular effects are also informed to some degree by the intention of the speaker. This is essentially the understanding that was still being adduced by Agrippa in his “Three Books of Occult Philosophy” some 700 years later.

We also see this in the beliefs in the resonance based magic of the Thalhun. The language of the Hui:xa was a way to create the sounds that were important.

I feel Baudrillard would always be a basis for a neat paradigm.

This seems to get more at words as instruments. Words are a powerful synecdoche for the phenomenon. The word “lightning” is a sufficiently powerful symbol of lightning that my focusing on it over the course of an hour I can force the word to accord with my thought of lightning-ness.

How do you view programming as a function of language? I go back and forth as to whether or not this is ridiculous or genius. Like to me they feel like a special case of language as they're generally not used for an arbitrary expression of ideas. Like, one generally doesn't communicate love via Python, but at the same time like a programming language can describe an arbitrary state of the world by creating a representation of it which makes it feel like language but much more precise and potentially tedious.

-Very much a special case of language-use; in that one is basically defining and assembling the interacting elements of a reality (albeit a very circumscribed one, contained within the computer itself...unless you're a mage) according to the linguistic rules of the code language itself, it's not so different from the cases of natural language use we've discussed.

Are there any interesting examples of “true names”, unique identifiers whose knowledge grants control, in real world magical traditions?

-Although they aren't often called out as such, medieval grimoires are full of demonic and angelic names; often a handful of synonymous epithets will be invoked when addressing a particular being, especially those of an astral nature, frequently drawn from several different languages, perhaps in the hope that at least one of them will get the individual's attention. Demons in particular are sometimes assigned pictographic sigils which act as a sort of shorthand signature, and the possession of which grants very corporal and coercive control over them.

-Then of course there are the 'barbarous names' we've mentioned from the Greco-Egyptian magical papyri, which *were* often understood to be the true, secret names of various gods.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_name

Does sign language in any way differ in terms of magical power or are there magical or primal sign languages that you know of?

I don't think it does fundamentally differ from any other language in its potential to translate a semantic code into a magical tool. While I'm not familiar with any explicitly magical sign languages, we could speculate that something like the system of mudras, or ritual signs, found in traditions like Hinduism and Buddhism, could serve as a magical semiotic focus, condensing the intention behind a complex effect within a subtle gesture.

We also have the idea in Demon that before the Fall there was the One Language which eventually shattered at Babel, and modern attempts to teach it don't end well by demons. Why can't humans speak it?

Short answer: God makes the rules! More nuanced answer: If it was anything like John Dee's Enochian, which notionally amounted to the same thing, actually speaking it could have lots of unintended consequences, so keeping it out of mortal mouths may be a kind of cosmic safety precaution.

It may be the case that the occult physics of the one language no longer exist. Attempts to speak it end poorly like how code in one language may not compile to a program in another. It may be the case that only the awakened can hold the true words and attempts by others to do it ends poorly which presumes that those who spoke the one language were all mages or something similar.

Words are a method of embodiment so powerful there's a high umbral realm of worlds. Certain archmastery acts can only be done by owning that word.

In the beginning there was the word, the word word isn't translated.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*

Inloes (trans.), *The Sun of Knowledge: Shams al Ma'arif*

Whitby (ed.), *John Dee's Actions with Spirits*, and Casaubon (ed.) *A True and Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Years Between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits*

Secondary Sources

Austin, J. L. 1962. *How to Do Things With Words*. Oxford University Press.

Bell, C. 2009. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. Oxford University Press.

Copp, P. 2014. *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*. Columbia University Press.

Frankfurter, D. 1994. The Magic of Writing and the Writing of Magic: the Power of the Word in Egyptian and Greek Traditions. *Helios* 21: 189-221.

Frankfurter, D. 1995. Narrating Power. In *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*: 457-476. Meyer, M. W. and Mirecki, P. A. (eds.). Brill.

Geller, M. J. 2005. Tablets and Magic Bowls. In *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*: 53-72. Shaked, S. (ed.). Brill.

Horníčková, K. 1998. The Power of the Word and the Power of the Image: Towards an Anthropological Interpretation of Byzantine Magic Amulets. *Byzantinoslavica: Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines* 59: 239-246.

Keane, W. 1997. Religious Language. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26: 47-71.

Leach, E. R. 1966. Ritualization in Man in Relation to Conceptual and Social Development. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B* 251: 403-408.

Lehrich, C. 2003. *The Language of Demons and Angels: Cornelius Agrippa's Occult Philosophy*. Brill.

Mendes, E. 2015. Ancient Magic and Modern Accessories: A Re-Examination of the Omamori Phenomenon. *The Hilltop Review* 7: 152-167.

Michel, S. 2005. (Re)interpreting Magical Gems, Ancient and Modern. In *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*: 141-170. Shaked, S. (ed.). Brill.

Robson, J. 2008. Signs of Power: Talismanic Writing in Chinese Buddhism. *History of Religions* 48: 130-169.

Al-Saleh, Y. 2014. "Licit Magic": The Touch and Sight of Islamic Talismanic Scrolls. PhD dissertation, Harvard University.

Schaefer, K. R. 2006. *Enigmatic Charms: Medieval Arabic Block Printed Amulets in American and European Libraries and Museums*. Brill.

Shaked, S. 2005. Form and Purpose in Aramaic Spells: Some Jewish Themes. In *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*: 1-30. Shaked, S. (ed.). Brill.

Sigrist, M. 2005. Magic and Human Reason. In *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*: 295-316. Shaked, S. (ed.). Brill.

Skemer, D. C. 2006. *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages*. Penn State University Press.

Swartz, M. D. 2005. Understanding Ritual in Jewish Magic: Perspectives From the Genizah and Related Sources. In *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*: 233-253. Shaked,

S. (ed.). Brill.

Tambiah, S. J. 1968. The Magical Power of Words. Man 3: 175-208.

https://www.academia.edu/17878037/Magic_of_Words_The_Pragmatics_of_Signification_in_Popular_Talismanic_Practices

The incantation bowl https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incantation_bowl

Example Talisman <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulu>

Enochian <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enochian>

Episode Discord for this level, will be up for a year

-<https://discord.com/channels/603604758397321227/987370011540729888>

Chaos Magick episode

Jewish Mysticism Discussion episode