

Analytic Techniques for Sorcery Interventions

by Phil Hine

I sometimes think that attempting to influence a situation by sorcery is something akin to acupuncture - hit the right spot, and you will get the desired-for result. The problem is though, that the 'right spot' isn't always immediately obvious, may shift from moment to moment, and isn't likely to be the same spot the next time you try and attempt to do something similar.

There is a natural tendency for magicians, when faced with a situation which seems to merit some kind of sorcerous intervention from us, to act on our fairly immediate impulses. This can result in a situation where we end up 'rushing in' and attempting to alter the situation without knowing as much as we could about it. Since forewarned is often forearmed, I believe that using a range of analytic techniques in order to build up as complete a picture of a situation as possible, is beneficial to acts of results magic - it can mean the difference between 'firing blindly' and an aimed shot at what you want to bring about.

A few years ago, I was approached by a client and asked to attempt to magically favour an individual who was going to court on a number of charges. I was given a basic sketch of the person's situation, and asked to aim for the 'ideal' of all charges being dismissed. Feeling that somehow, I wasn't being told the full story, I asked a friend who was a shit-hot diviner, to do some tarot readings about the situation, in the hope that we might discover some 'hidden variables' in the situation. Out of my friend's readings came a good deal of information, all of which was later verified by my client, and, in my view, made the probability of all charges being 'dismissed' highly unlikely. Subsequently, I aimed for an outcome which I felt to be more reasonable, given the circumstances of the case.

What I am trying to get at here is that situations are often much more complex and less clear-cut than we often give them credit to be, particularly when we start reaching for our wands. I feel that a key to effective sorcery is not so much applying 'magic' into a situation, but at what point you apply leverage, and *how* you apply it.

A mutual friend of myself and Fra. GosaA went into a depression after the break-up of her relationship of some years standing. She stopped going out and seemed to us to have lost much of her self-confidence. We thought it would be beneficial for her to have some new, interesting people in her life, and decided to enchant for this outcome. If someone isn't going out socialising, the likelihood of them meeting 'interesting people' is going to be very slim. Also, if they are feeling emotionally vulnerable and lacking self-confidence, they are unlikely to make the best of any opportunities to make a good impression. So we made our first priority a progressive spell which 'tickled' our target's self-esteem and once a particular level of self-esteem had been developed, the spell began to work in other directions, unfolding into several different variables of the situation at once.

1. USING DIVINATION TECHNIQUES

Divination systems can be extremely useful when preparing to intervene/influence a situation by means of an act of sorcery. The areas where their use is particularly worth considering are:

a) One's own Self-Motivation

It can be very useful to examine one's own motivations to intervene, particularly if other people are involved in the situation - if you're working on behalf of someone, for example. I've occasionally found out, by questioning my own perspective of a situation, through a series of divinations, that my desired-for-outcome has in actuality, blinded me to alternative possibilities - both in terms of what particular approach I was taking to the situation, and over the question of whether it was appropriate for me to get involved in the first place. I remember once receiving an anquished call from an ex-partner who claimed to have received a 'runic curse' through the post from another ex-partner. Being fully immersed in using the Goetia of Solomon at the time, I fired off a batch of demons in the direction of the supposed source of the runic-curse, without stopping to consider the situation in more depth. Of course it turned out that the facts of the situation were not exactly in accord with what I'd been told and the conclusions which I'd leapt to!

b) The Situation/Event

There are numerous ways which divination can expand your information concerning a situation. You can, for instance, use the tarot to scan for 'hidden aspects' and then do subsequent readings on what is turned up. You can discover how different aspects of a situation sometimes relate in non-obvious ways, and also what the probable outcomes of the situation are likely to be in different scenarios. if you're feeling particularly brave you could always ask if your magical intervention is likely to influence the outcome favourably.

c) Personality Profiling

If you have only minimal details about key individuals involved in a situation, you can build up a 'personality profile' using divination systems (natal astrology may well be useful here), which can be used to make projections about an individuals' behaviour, attitudes, etc. This kind of profiling may come in very useful if you are probing for psychological weak spots.

2. OTHER DIRECTLY 'MAGICAL' APPROACHES

Apart from Divination systems such as Tarot, Runes or I Ching, there are other magical techniques which can become sources of analytic discrimination.

Intuition

I have found, over the years, that my sense of Intuition is fairly highly developed, and that I discount it at my peril. However, over-reliance upon one's intuition can be perilous in itself. Having an intuitive feeling about a situation shouldn't become a barrier to considering other perspectives and possibilities. Also, (and like much else of magical practice, this is a personal thing), I like to be able to work out (sometimes with a little bit of hindsight) the 'reason' for the explanation. Your intuition can be trained to work more effectively for you and stepping back from a situation and examining it dispassionately (rather than remaining entangled in it) can be a good start here.

Oracles

You can seek oracles in many forms - from metaprogramming your dreams using sigils or servitors, to speaking with Spirits in vision, or questioning an entity astrally or through a human agent. For

example, Wade Davis gives the example of a Haitian sorceress obtaining guidance in using the appropriate herbs for a healing working via possession by the appropriate loa. I have (admittedly, only rarely) been given 'clues' on how I might conduct a particular working from a spirit familiar, but I wouldn't like to rely solely on such a source.

3. S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

The SWOT acronym stands for:

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

It can be useful to analyse a situation in terms of these 4 points.

Strengths

Here, you look at the Strengths of your position *viz* the outcome - anything present in the situation which will help in manifesting your 'Mission Statement.'

Information you can particularly focus on here includes anything you know/can infer etc about the emotions/behaviours/attitudes of any individuals involved, how timescales may play a role in the situation (i.e. will leaving the situation alone for a month be more effective than working immediately?), how tangential events on the fringe of the situation might be helpful.

Another point to consider is that, given your Mission Statement, what pathways are available for the outcome to manifest along? If you are about to bring about the collapse of a multi-national corporation which is very interested in turning your local sacred site into a car-park, have you pinpointed possible weak areas in its structures which, if slightly 'tipped', could escalate into its downfall? Or, on another scale, if you're enchanting to meet the boy/girl/penguin of your dreams, are you doing anything to enable such a paragon to walk out of your dreams and into your life?

Weaknesses

Under Weaknesses, you should consider anything which 'weakens' the likelihood of the outcome you are working for, coming about. This is a good point to maybe examine your desired-for result and consider whether you may be setting your sights too high, if only initially. Is for example, the *scale* of what you're attempting too large? Is it unfeasible to expect an instant outcome, when the constraints of the situation tend to point in the direction of a slowly progressive outcome? Is it perhaps unreasonable to try and influence another person in a way that is widely at variance with what you know about their personality? It may well be the case that the way you have defined your Mission Statement is in itself a weakness.

Opportunities

Under Opportunities, consider any strategies which can help you fine-tune the enchantment or open an 'opportunity window' for you. Is the target of your displeasure about to go into hospital for a 'minor operation'; is the person you're magically assisting to detox from heroin about to go into a

clinic?; Do you have a material link to the person you're trying to heal or a photograph which might help other people help you in your attempt?

Threats

Here, you consider what possible consequences there might be if your spell goes awry. Also, what might happen if there is a sudden change in the situation which you haven't previously bargained for. You may well find that only very occasionally can you conceive of any possible 'Threat' scenarios, but it does have some bearing for example, on malefic magics. I knew of one magician who seriously considered a death-curse on a relative, but who backed out when he was told that "a quick car-crash" wasn't very likely, but that terminal cancer, given the targets' medical history, was much more likely to yield a successful outcome. The 'Threat' here, was that the sorcerer realised that he could not live with the consequences of giving a relative terminal cancer!

CONCLUSIONS

Whatever techniques you use to 'flesh out' your knowledge of a situation - in order to 'zero in' on a particular point of influence (or several, for that matter) - you may well find that your Mission Statement changes considerably in the light of what you find out. I do find generally, that intelligence-gathering is always useful and that there are comparatively few situations which can't wait a day or so whilst I look into them from different angles. Asking people their advice is sometimes useful, as is playing 'devil's advocate' to yourself, if there is no one else who can do it for you. I have noticed that there is a tendency amongst occultists (as much as anyone else) to fall into a very black/white viewpoint of a situation in which they 'know best' (because they are a magician, of course). It's a common human tendency to simplify everyone else's situation other than our own, so I feel it is particularly important to approach every potential sorcery intervention as a complex, unique situation. After all, if someone out there was poised to start magically re-arranging *your* lifestyle for you, you'd want them to get it right, wouldn't you?

SUMMARY POINTS

- Think Before You Enchant!
- Ask Questions
- Gather Intelligence
- Analyse the situation from different angles/perspectives
- Reformulate your Mission Statement if necessary
- Seek Clarity
- Then Act.

Notes

It is also worth bearing in mind how a situation can dictate or indicate the particular nature of a sorcery intervention (i.e. does one use a simple sigil or involve a god in the proceedings) - but I feel this is a discussion for another time.