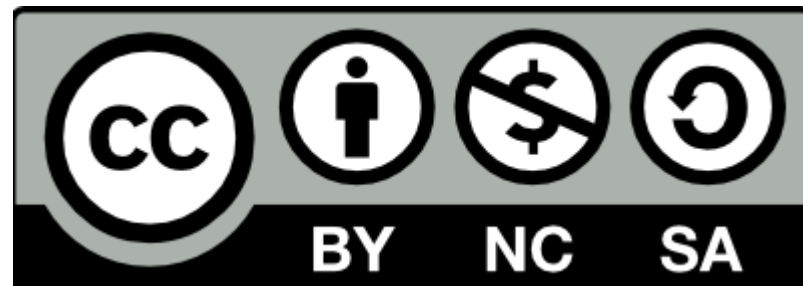


Introduction to ritual writing

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Workshop References

Pagan Deism: Three Views:

<http://proteuscoven.com/triangle.htm>

The four centres of Paganism:

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/allergicpagan/2012/12/23/the-role-of-faith-and-hubris-in-p>

Writing rituals for all the centres of Paganism:

<http://www.mudandmagic.com/responsible-to-the-centres/>

Research for the mushroom ritual:

<http://www.mudandmagic.com/mushrooms-for-mabon/>

The Mushroom Mabon ritual script:

<http://www.mudandmagic.com/small-group-sabbat-rituals/mabon-mushrooms/>

Why are you doing a ritual?

What is the goal of the ritual?

What is the primary focus of this ritual: deities/spirits, community, inner work, or nature?

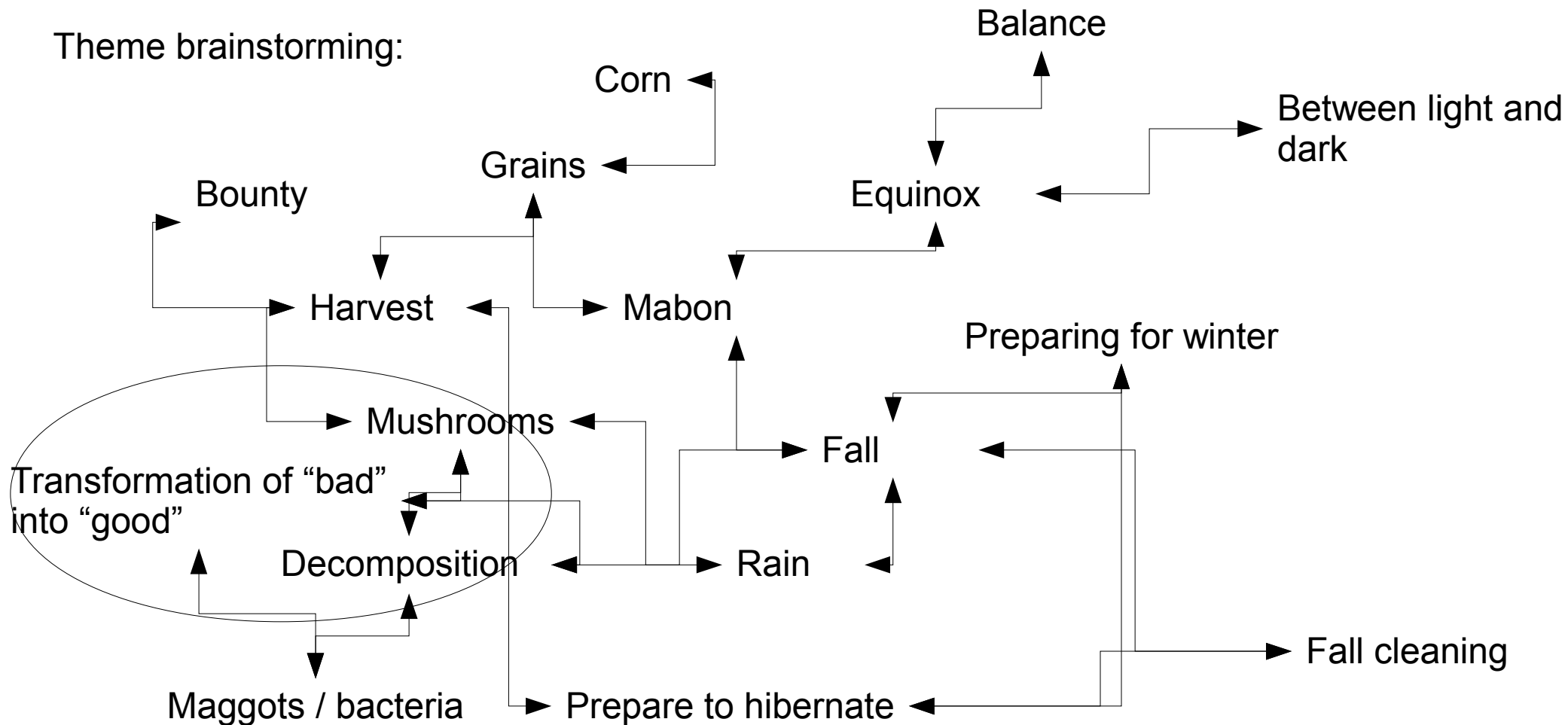
Theme brainstorming:

Why are you doing a ritual? *Mabon ritual*

What is the goal of the ritual? *To connect participants to what is happening on the earth during this season*

What is the primary focus of this ritual: deities/spirits, community, inner work, or nature?

Theme brainstorming:



Theme:

Brainstorming around the theme:

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The five senses:

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-
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-
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Research links:

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Theme: *Decomposition*

Brainstorming around the theme:

- Mushrooms, bacteria, and other things involved in decomposition are often thought of as dirty, but they are necessary to the cycle of life.
- Our waste is their food, and from it they create soil to hold new life.
- Classic meditation is to dump negative energy into the earth, but we could instead offer it to the decomposing entities.
- What would we grow in the resulting soil?

The five senses:

- Images of damp soil, mushrooms, underground, darkness, moisture, fallen trees, soft and rotting wood, the crawly things under rocks or rotting logs.
- Smells of rain, damp dirt, manure, must/damp, rotting wood, forests in the autumn, fermenting things.
- Tastes of mushrooms, beer, fermented foods and drinks.
- Sounds of rain falling, water dripping as in a cave.
- Feels of damp, cool, moist earth, rain-slicked rock, moss.

Research links:

Theme: *Mushrooms*

Brainstorming around the theme:

- Associated with fairies, magic, immortality, "food of the Gods".
- The ultimate recyclers. Without them we'd be several feet deep in dead plants.
- Fungi are more closely related to animals than to plants.
- Fungi are both above and below the ground; they are between plants and animals, being truly neither; and the fungi family includes yeasts, used in baking bread, which is more traditionally associated with Mabon and the harvest
- Fungi take what is corrupt and, through their mysterious underground processes, they turn it into fertility again. They break down the dead and make space for life.
- "mycophobia": an irrational fear of fungi

The five senses:

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Research links:

- <http://blog.oup.com/2012/02/mushroom-meaning-life/>
- <http://www.fungi.com/blog/items/facts-about-mushrooms.html>
- <http://greenplanetparadise.com/574/miracle-mushrooms-can-save-the-world>
- <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2009/11/paul-stamets-mushroom?page=1>
- <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/strange-but-true-largest-organism-is-fungus/>

Theme: *Turning Bad into Good*

Brainstorming around the theme:

- Bacteria, mushrooms, and maggots and other bugs are often looked upon as gross, dirty, unwanted, but they actually turn waste into something usable.
- As Pagans, we don't want to shy away from the dark, from death, from the harder parts of life – we know that all of these parts are part of the great cycle.
- We cannot have life without death: soil is made of death, decomposed and digested by critters and creepy crawly things, and from it comes our food.
- Metaphorically, maybe we can make our bad qualities work for us?
- There's no such thing as "bad" in nature; waste products aren't bad, bugs aren't bad, germs aren't bad... they are all needed, and therefore good, in the right context.
- We all have things in ourselves that aren't helping us – habits and belief systems that waste our energy. Can we compost or recycle those?

The five senses:

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Research links:

- <http://witchesandpagans.com/pagan-studies-blogs/magical-transformations/how-i-m-working-with-bacteria-an-example-of-non>

Activity brainstorming – what activities suit the theme(s)?

Imagery/metaphor brainstorming:

Activity brainstorming – what activities suit the theme(s)?

- Digging in soil / burying things.
- Meditation
- ~~Something to do with rotting wood?~~
- Eating mushrooms
- Trance induction
- Guided meditation to go underground
- Cave related activity
- Turning compost
- Mushroom hunt
- Rainstick

Imagery/metaphor brainstorming:

- Shared roots / mycelium
- One person's trash is another person's treasure
- Underground / hidden: what is buried, what we don't want to look at
- Why we fear/hate the decomposers
- Creepy crawlies
- Wet, dark, soil.
- Decomposing what is unwanted or corrupt and creating new life out of it
- Recycling
- Rain feeding us
- Nourished by waste
- All life comes from something decomposing / from waste

What atmosphere are you looking to create?

How will you engage each of the senses in the ritual?

Sight:

Hearing:

Taste:

Touch:

Smell:

What do you want participants to feel or experience during the centre portion of the ritual?

What atmosphere are you looking to create?

A safe atmosphere where people feel comfortable sharing something personal and engaging in trance work together. Quiet, dark, serious. Feeling of being gathered around a camp fire in the dark, or safe in a cave during a rain storm.

How will you engage each of the senses in the ritual?

Sight: Green and brown decorations; maybe a mushroom log?

Hearing: Rainstick? Banana Slug String Band's "Singing in Our Garden" CD during the food and drink (after the serious stuff is done)

Taste: Mushroom pate

Touch: Holding hands; focus on connection to ground during meditation

Smell: Dish of moist soil or slightly decomposed wood?

What do you want participants to feel or experience during the centre/working portion of the ritual?

Very relaxed / light trance; safe enough to speak out loud about what they want to decompose. Able to enter a deeper trance together; feeling united and connected to each other. Engaged in the story of giving something to be decomposed in a safe space created by the participants together.

How will you cleanse the space and participants?

How will you cast the Circle / create sacred space?

What elements, quarter calls, or other spirits will you call?

What deities will you invoke?

What food and drink will you offer?

What tools or materials do you need?

How will you cleanse the space and participants?

Asperging with collected rain water.

How will you cast the Circle / create sacred space?

Silver Spiral tradition, but using a rainstick instead of a singing bowl.

What elements, quarter calls, or other spirits will you call?

Elements, focusing on their outside, autumn qualities: rain, soil, sunshine, wind.

What deities will you invoke?

Deities of damp, rotting, decomposing things... but in a good way!

What food and drink will you offer?

Mushroom themed food. Pure water.

What tools or materials do you need?

The usual, plus a bowl of rain water, a small branch for asperging, a rainstick, and Banana Slug String Band's CD and a player for the music.

Cautions: What do you need to warn for or be aware of when doing this ritual?

What do you need to remember to include in the opening speech or elsewhere?

How will you know if this ritual has succeeded?

Cautions: What do you need to warn for or be aware of when doing this ritual?

Is anyone scared of mushrooms?

Is anyone allergic to mushrooms?

Give option for people who don't want to say something very private out loud.

Make sure people know that chanting for trance is supposed to be long and “boring”.

What do you need to remember to include in the opening speech or elsewhere?

How to leave the ritual if you need to.

How to opt out of any activities.

The expectations for the trance section (how to do it; what to expect during it).

What to do if you don't want to speak out loud.

How people will know when to stop chanting.

How will you know if this ritual has succeeded?

People will share something emotional or real during that portion.

People will express that they felt connected during the meditation and trance portions.

People will come out of the trance looking content or as though they feel lighter.

Ritual Writing Checklist

- Is the ritual appropriate for the number of people expected?
- Is the ritual appropriate for the space where it will be taking place?
- Are there any "dead zones" or long wait times in the ritual?
- Are all types of Pagan beliefs accommodated (or at least not offended)?
- Does the ritual encourage participation from everyone?
- Does the ritual allow everyone to participate, including those with mobility challenges, allergies, trouble hearing or seeing, etc.?
- Does every part of the ritual contribute to the theme and make sense together?

Pre-Ritual Checklist

- Do I have all the materials and tools I need and in the right places?
- Do my participants (or at least my fellow ritual leaders) know which way is North?
- Does everyone who needs to know sure of which quarter we are calling first and the order of activities?
- Do enough people know the chants or the responses to a call-and-respond to get everyone else involved?
- Have I explained alternatives to any physical activities and made sure everyone knows the ingredients of everything to be consumed?
- Have I made sure everyone knows how to leave if they need to, how to opt out and opt back into activities, and what is expected of them during the ritual?
- Have I set up the atmosphere I want to create and am I modelling the behaviour I want to see?