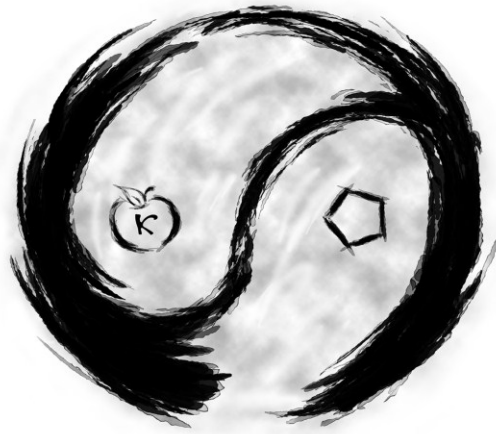


Chao Te Ching



by Cramulus and LMNO

Paperback available here:

<http://www.lulu.com/product/paperback/the-chao-te-ching/18759432>

The
Chao
Te
Ching

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<http://cramulus.us>

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Dedication

LMNO dedicates this to JHMIII

Cramulus dedicates this to Hung Mung and the Crazy Lady

Acknowledgments

We'd like to thank the PrincipiaDiscordia.com community for their collaboration and feedback. Special thanks to Burns, Cain, Faust, Honey, Hoopla, Kai, Lies, Ratatosk, Requia, Roaring Biscuit, Telarus, and Triple Zero.

Cast of Characters



Apparent Order



Apparent Disorder



Pure Chaos

Preface

The Chao Te Ching was conceived at a tea party which took place on Mount Olympus' Limbo Peak. An ancient Chinese Chaosopher named Lao Tzu had been riding his bike through the mountains of the afterlife and somehow ended up crashing into Eris, the Greek Goddess of Chaos, Confusion, Discord, Bureaucracy, and Aftermath. Lao Tzu was supposed to meet Confucius, who had just gotten the first season of "Lost" on DVD. Instead, he decided to hang out with this crazy Greek chick.

The two of them talked for days. They had very similar ideas but approached them in different ways. Lao Tzu preferred to observe the universe through quiet contemplation, whereas Eris enjoyed tossing golden apples, watching everybody's colors come out as they scrambled for them. But they both believed the universe was essentially a pretty cool place.

"It's difficult to talk about things as big as Every Thing," said Lao Tzu as he sipped his tea. "But one thing I think we can agree on: Everything goes with the flow, baby!"

"Yeah," said Eris, "But if everything is part of that flow, even going against it is part of it."

"But what is there to go against?" asked the wrinkly fruit of a man.

"Against? I go *through*," she said, "I just like playing games of sense and nonsense. Right now I'm playing Hopscotch to Aftermath. But the less that's said of that, the better... I think people might be *reading* this discussion." They both looked around, paranoid.

Meanwhile, on Earth, two spags called Cramulus and Alphapance were meditating on what it would be like if Eris hooked up with Lao Tzu. They had skeeved themselves out with the imagery of this hot Greek Goddess grinding on some desiccated old dude and decided never to discuss it again. But they couldn't. They just kept talking about it and obsessing over it until they had to write it down. They were originally planning on publishing the manuscript as an erotic novel, but luckily Eris appeared in a flash of noise and simultaneously slapped both of them in the face.

"You stupid spags," spake Eris, "Lao Tzu and I have been trying to inspire you for *days*, but you're too busy making dick jokes to notice." Then, much to Cramulus and Alphapance's disappointment, she transformed their wretched manuscript into *the Chao Te Ching*.

"What is this garbage?" asked Cramulus as he flipped through it, "And what the hell is a *wise spag*?"

"A spag is a fool, you spags," said Eris, "Somebody that don't know cats from cones. A *wise spag* is a spag that knows just what a spag he is."

"Stop saying spag," said Alphapance, "please."

Eris slapped him again. Then she vanished in a cloud of synthpop.

"Okay, that was uncalled for," said Alphapance as he rubbed his cheek. "We're going to have to rewrite this ourselves."

"Hah! We're going to totally bung it up!" laughed Cramulus.

And they did.

A NOT-AT-ALL FUNNY FOREWARD TO THE CHAO TE CHING

BY DOKTOR ALPHAPANCE

Regardless of the origins, the Chao te Ching is considered by those who wrote it to be an important contribution to Discordian thought. It distills and updates basic principles, as well as sets down current extrapolations and reinterpretations of such, based upon present-day contexts and socio-economic-political realities.

First, a brief history of Discordianism: It was conceived as both a parody religion and a light-hearted philosophy in the late 1950's, mostly as a reaction to the rigid cultural norms found in America at that time. As such, it claimed that disorder was as important in life as order, and for someone to embrace the latter without the former was foolish. To further tweak their noses at the establishment, the authors chose the minor Greek deity "Eris" as their anthropomorphized symbol of worship. A collection of collage, satire, and metaphysics under the name Principia Discordia, originally produced and distributed by hand, was eventually released as a publication in 1970. [Note: a more complete, if somewhat pedestrian, summary can be found on Wikipedia.]

Skip ahead forty years.

Currently, the idea of Discordianism still exists, and has expanded as various adherents adopt and adapt the vague and often ill-defined concepts found in the original book into new outlooks on consensus reality-which brings us to the Chao te Ching.

The manner in which this book you are holding was written as an adaptation (a "riff", if you will) of a stylistic aspect found in the Principia Discordia, namely a syntax which parodies Biblical verse; clearly, the authors

of the Chao te Ching wished to use the structure of the Taoist classic the Tao te Ching as a literary framework as a way to present Discordian ideas in a new context. In using a classic text such as this, the authors were presented with a number of challenges. While the austere poetry of the original proved to be a boon when parsing down typically verbose philosophical rants about the nature of reality and authority, Taoism often presents the universe in two distinct parts, Yin and Yang. Discordians, on the other hand, do not usually hold to such strict duality, often calling even their own definitions into question. This issue is dealt with through recursive lines and chapters in the Chao te Ching that contradict previous chapters, often to the point of explicitly pointing out said contradictions.

In addition, the authors have apparently coined new terms and metaphors not found in the Principia Discordia. Not wanting the book to be an encyclopedia, they can only allude to concepts like The Barstool, The Black Iron Prison, and The Machine™. While the passages add up to fairly concise explanations, it can only be assumed that the authors intend for the curious to hunt down and explore further texts which describe such concepts in more depth.

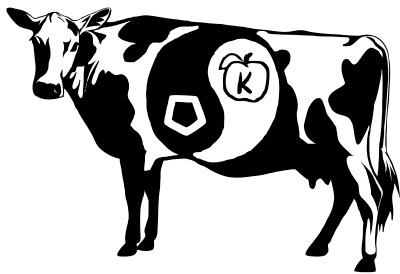
But all of this avoids the main question: Why was the Chao te Ching written? What purpose can it serve? In short, it provides a perspective that may be unfamiliar to the casual reader, or perhaps clarification if all they have heard of Discordianism is that it's, "a philosophy inside a joke inside a religion inside of another joke." Most Discordians wouldn't even go so far as saying the Chao te Ching is a way to live your life – they want you to make up your own mind. In fact, this entire work has been filed under a Non-Commercial Share Alike license, which lets the reader create their own translation of the Chao te Ching without fear of copyright violation. The authors actively encourage new translations, in order to keep Discordia alive and vibrant rather than unchanging and stagnant.

See, I told you this wouldn't be funny.

The
Chao
Te
Ching

mu

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1

The Universe that can be described is not the real Universe;
The name that can be given is not an accurate name.
Nameless, it is the source of Order and Disorder;
Named... Well, we pretty much covered that, yeah?

Whoever is Disordered, sees that patterns do not exist.
Whoever is Ordered, sees every pattern.
These two are the same,
but what is produced has names;
They both may be called Illusion.
From the comic to the tragic,
this is the door to the essence of all life.

2

When the people of the world all know Order as Order,
there arises the recognition of Disorder.

When they know there is such a thing as Illusion,
there arises the idea of Reality.

Therefore Order and Disorder produce each other,
Reality and Illusion trick each other,
Authority and Freedom define each other,
Love and Hate fuck each other.

So the wise spags look for balance,
and stick their wrench into the Machine™.

They organize, but they do not Order.
They break apart, but they do not Disorder.
They act, but they Keep Their Fucking Mouths Shut.
And so are able to act again.

3

If you put value
in subjective Bullshit,
lesser spags will treat it
like objective Truth.

Therefore the wise spags lead
by knowing their Prison
and staying pragmatic.
Like hitting someone with a Barstool
to prove that it actually exists,
call people on their Bullshit
so there will be no narcissism to exploit.
By understanding your Cell, you will understand others'.

4

This is Chaos: it is everything, including itself.

All of Starbuck's Pebbles come from it.

It confuses Order, it arranges Disorder.

It multiplies its opposite, it positively negates.

Lying below life, lining the world.

The origin of all patterns.

It has existed before we observed it.

Ok, that last one's not quite accurate.

You can't really observe Chaos, just the consequences.

5

Life is unfair, wear a helmet.

The wise spag wears a helmet, but also drops hammers.

Anything could be a punchline.

Even the wise spag gets punched.

Chaos never ends!

Even its vacuum has a presence.

To struggle against it

is like pissing in the wind.

6

Chaos is beyond division,
but some only see what they choose.

The old texts say,
"If you think this is just a ha-ha,
then go read it again."

And yet, some demand only humor
as if Eris were a petty amusement.
They liken the serious to the Grey,
and then wonder why their world collapses so easily.

Sometimes Eris uses Order.
Sometimes She uses Disorder.
Sometimes She works through you.
Sometimes the joke's on you.

7

The Universe outside your Prison Cell
has gone on before you, and goes on after you.
It is as unfeeling and uncaring about itself as a Barstool in
midflight:
Even if you have convinced yourself it consists mainly of
empty space,
you should probably still duck.

So the wise spags look outside their own brains
and grasp the surrounding minds.
They see the bars of their Black Iron Prison
and so are able to see around them.
Because isn't the other way
tantamount to masturbation?

8

The best are like the Chao;
It balances the Order and the Disorder.
The escalation of Disorder,
and the imposition of Order;
Each adds to the other.

As they live,
and as they travel,
they see the world as others would see Illusion.
Be the Illusion Eristic,
or be it Aneristic,
they strive to complete the balance.
It's not their fault that the Aneristic has no sense of humor.

Write the longest, wisest essay
and no one will have time to read it.
Temper the truth to its very sharpest,
and you will cut both friend and foe.

The Ancients do not want you to read their books.
They want you to ride their bikes.

Who wants to ride a five thousand year old bike?

You can get better advice from cats
than from parodies of ancient wisdom.

10

Can you laugh so hard
that it sounds like screaming?

Can you snicker like a jaded fogey
while giggling like a newborn baby?

Can you look with eyes that will actually see?

Can you lead people without dominating them?

Can you understand, without using your mind?

To create and destroy
with no sense of self,
to act without obligation,
to lead without tyranny...

Well, it sometimes hurts to try.

But you should try anyway.

11

The Mandelbrot grows in infinite complexity
based on the empty space at its center.

Knowledge is built on facts:
A scaffolding to support ignorance.

The lines in a coloring book give the page form
but crayons give it life,
not staying constrained inside the lines,
nor reducing the pattern to scribbles.

We stick apart and stay baffled,
yet keep coming back
to the very same thing.

The lens of the first microscope revealed fractillian ignorance.

Shaped words, unraveled meanings,
interpret, corrupt, adapt or construe.
We knew all along
words don't count.

See what exists, use what does not.

12

What is Seen distracts from what Is Not;
What is Heard diverts from what Can Not;
What is Believed subverts what Should Not.
The Cell walls we have built
comfort us into ignorance.

But the wise spag does not confuse the meal with the menu,
nor the map with the territory;
Both are approximations.

13

Having and not having
both create frustration.

"Possessing" always comes served with a golden apple.

Being "The Prettiest One" cultivates pride and makes others ugly.

Not being "The Prettiest One" cultivates envy and leads to war.

Expand your definition of Self to include the Universe;
This way you can have it all with nothing to lose.

14

We cannot see it, for it blinds us.

We cannot hear it, for it deafens us.

We do not know it exists, for we have built it.

When not seen, we forget it is there.

When not remembered, it binds our choices.

Because it is unnoticed, it is inescapable.

There is neither shape nor form,

but it is as immovable as Iron.

Fight it, and there shall be no victory.

Run from it, and you shall die tired.

So the wise spag moves it,

brick by brick,

and sees a new sunrise every day.

15

The wise spags understand Chaos,
in that it cannot be understood.
Because of that, they must use metaphors,
which are piss-poor ways of communicating.
Surfing the waves of Chaos;
Attempting a jailbreak;
Preparing for aftermath;
Changing their filters;
Making their own luck.

Who can make sense of two contradicting Illusions?
Do you know
your ass from your elbow?
Seeing through the spin, a direction becomes clear.
Adapting to the situation, the goals are realized.
Amending the theory, understanding grows.
In this way, the wise spag is not troubled.
Can you still be moved to wonder,
or are you too cynical?

16

Forget about everything and be cool.

When your work is over, everything returns to the cool, the quiet, the chill.

To return to slack is relaxing;

You realize where you're going.

To know where you're going is to know eternity.

To know eternity you must find slack.

To act with no knowledge of slack

is to bumble and court disaster.

Whoever can find slack anywhere

is open to everything.

To be open to everything is to be impartial,

a well-rounded renaissance.

If laughter is your slack, then laugh.

If rage is your slack, then rage.

If you can get slack from a stone, then get stoned.

If you can get slack from anywhere, then you can go everywhere.

The mind may lose it.

The body may die.

Return to the slack.

17

People who are asleep want Authority to make decisions.
They want an Authority they agree with.
They do not want to be told "no,"
they do not want to be given responsibility.

Authority lacks trust, and will not be trusted.
The wise spag accomplishes their task
and keeps their mouth shut,
so as not to get caught.

18

When Chaos is forgotten,
the Illusions of Order and Disorder arise.
When the Black Iron Prison is ignored,
Objectivity and Subjectivity become entwined.
When the people surrender their responsibilities to Authority,
Religion and Politics marry.
When people Think for Themselves,
the Revolution is born.

19

Abandon blind faith and pseudointellectual bullshit,
the people will benefit.

Abandon absolute morality,
the people won't try to kill the Other.

Abandon intellectual copyright,
and there will be nothing to steal.

People will always be distracted by their imagination:
Religion; Territory; Morals; Politics.

20

Abandon Reality, and Illusions end.

Stop worrying so much about the world.

How much difference is there between True and False?

How much difference is there between Order and Disorder?

Why should you care about what Most People care about?

Is what people Believe really to be believed?

Not fucking likely!

The people know from Right and Wrong

as if they can see the Universe.

I am unsure, and seek more information.

The people of the world know Sacred from Sinful,
punishing and praising throughout the day.

I raise a challenge with "I don't know,"
and lay down to sleep undisturbed.

Cool as the other side of the pillow,
expressionless as a newborn babe.

People will over-think a problem,
then reach a firm conclusion
and move on to the next shiny object.

I keep my thoughts alive
and tucked in my head,
waiting for the next Observation.

Most people try to see the pattern in the Chaos,
I try to see the Chaos in the patterns.
Most people try to force Purpose into their life,
I ride the waves of Chaos where it takes me.

21

The wise spags try keeping their minds
at one with the Chao;
That is why they are able to think for themselves.

But if the Chao is ineffable,
How can their mind be at one with it?
Because they don't whine about minutiae.
How can this help a spag think for themselves?
Because they can choose immeasurable points of view,
not just Authority's version.

Life is real, and has the power of Creation.
From the moment we are born,
we Create the patterns of Illusion
from which we ever after try and free ourselves.
How do I know of these Illusions?
By observing Chaos.

22

Newton's Third Law is no Illusion:
Each thing contains its opposite.
In Order, there is Disorder.
In Hate, there is Love.
Every human houses a monkey.
Each Machine™ has its self-destruct switch.
Revolutions have Reactionaries as offspring.

So the wise spags stay on their toes,
and avoid labels.
Does not the old saying,
"Think outside the box"
imply that a box exists in the first place?
There is no box.

23

The Machine™ is built by our behaviors;

Our unconscious desires,

our conscious schemes.

Built by the expectations we create through our expectations,

the action we create through our actions,

the jobs we create with our jobs,

the world we create with our world.

But as a traffic jam does not last all morning,

nor a bad day lasts a lifetime,

a good mood is often fleeting,

and fortune does not always smile.

The Machine™ contains more than is apparent.

24

The Grayface believes in Order.

The Anarchist believes in Disorder.

The General sees war.

The Celebrity sees themselves.

The Bureaucrat seeks control.

The Leader acts like a bully on the playground.

The Scientist and the Priest believe in the model.

All these things are balanced in Chaos,

and so do not succeed.

Therefore the followers of Eris like to poke them with sticks.

25

There is Something that exists,
beyond the Illusions of Order and Disorder.
It is all things, and unknowable in full.
We only see small parts of It,
but are convinced what we see is the entire Universe.

For lack of a better name, I call It "Chaos".
At dinner parties, I claim It is everything Possible and Impossible.
When asked why not call It "god",
I point out that their head is too fucking small.

Because we create the Illusions in which we live,
we are more creative than Chaos.
Because we believe in the Illusions we create,
our heads are too fucking small.
In this way, we reflect our creations.

26

Serious is the root of hilarious.
Laughter can be very serious.

The wise spag laughs all day
without the need for jokes,
and does not walk away
when the Truth is not funny.

Every Marx brother needs a Zeppo.

...Zeppo? You know, the straight man?
Oh, I swear, you kids today.
I mean, really.

A good mindfuck leaves no reasons;
A good saboteur leaves no evidence;
A good artist leaves new questions;
A good barstool removes much idle speculation;
The perfect prison cell looks like the environment;
A nice tie opens many doors.

So a wise spag knows how to blend in,
and takes their freedom once inside.
They understand the people around them,
and know how to get things done.
This is called "Tweaking the Machine™".

Those who proclaim their individuality by following rebels
are still grey, though their fingernails be black.
Such things bring my palms to my face.

The Machine™ cannot be stopped.
But you can gradually redesign it
part by part,
party by party.

28

The news anchor is a comedian
who delivers grim stand-up with a straight face.

Some reel back in terror.

Some are numb.

Some laugh through the horror;

This makes them poor victims.

To tell a bad joke
with a straight face,
one must master seriousness.

To live in a bad joke
with a straight face
one must master humor.

The Discordian wears many masks.

29

Those that would take over the world
and bend it to their will,
will get bent.

The world is full of would-be superheroes
and would-be supervillains.
Maybe the world would be better off without them.

Some lead, and some follow;
Some shout, and some whisper;
Some cry, and some laugh;
Some win, some fail.
The wise spags keep their head down
and let the cannon fodder do their jobs.

30

If you're going to do some Covert Ops in the name of
Discordia,
keep your head down, and Keep Your Fucking Mouth Shut.
A mowhawk is as good as a target during Police Action.

The wise spags toss a wrench into the Machine™,
and then walk away.
They strike against Authority, but don't put it on the Internet.
They subvert the paradigm, but don't stick around to watch.
They mindfuck the people, but don't pat themselves on the
back.

If two people know a thing, it is not a secret.
Getting away with it means staying away from it.

31

Being rigid makes a person easy to oppress;
The wise spags use the creative trip left,
or the destructive trip right,
and stay flexible.

Rules disguise suspicion;
So be suspicious about them.
The wise spags will break them
without drawing attention
and will be rewarded with sovereignty,
if being free is their intent.

When freedom is in danger,
there should be no rest.
Those who oppose the freedom of others are not evil,
but have caged themselves.
Wise spags speak of a jail break,
and lead by example
by rattling their own chains.

They enter the idiot asylum
with care and consideration
as if crossing a battlefield
or tiptoeing through a slumber party.

The symphony of rattling chains
is neither noise nor music.
It is the sound of the Chao
and those who hear it.

32

Chaos cannot be labeled,
because it contains all labels.
Therefore, all definitions are incomplete.
It's Gödel's, all the way down.

Order and Disorder unite,
and Illusion slips into Chaos.
When people create language, labels begin.
With labels, one should know when to stop.
Knowing when to stop, the wise spags see the Illusion;
And are free to create as they choose.

33

Those who question others are wise.

Those who questions themselves are enlightened.

Those who revolt against the masses seek attention.

Those who revolt against their own biases are brave.

Those who accept through faith are blind.

Those who reject the unproven are foolish.

34

Chaos embraces the Illusions of Order and Disorder.

It contains all things,
even that which is not there.

It does not judge,
it has no subjectivity.

It has no meta,
for even thoughts outside Chaos
are found within Chaos.

If all things that change are within it,
then it does not change;
Because there is no Other.

I know, you're thinking that this
is all one big, fat
intentional contradiction.

Fair enough;
But sometimes only a paradox
can explain what's going on.

35

The wise spag treats every day like a day off,
but still gets things done.

Everyone seeks the one who balances the Chao
because within it lives every possibility.

But even that is an incomplete map,
so beware of believing it to be the territory.

The Cabbage on the street may be starving,
but the Chao on the menu will never taste like hamburger.

Jump to conclusions,
fall flat on your face.

36

Movement creates territory.
When you know where you are,
you know what to defend.

The maps in your head
are extensions of yourself.
You should pay attention
when your ideas get in someone's face.

People are frightened of new ideas
because they feel invaded.
They must protect their territory.

The wise spags know their maps
can only be changed by themselves;
Knowing this, they are not frightened
by the unknown.
Well, they shouldn't be frightened,
but we're all still monkeys in the end.

We create with the body,
but amend with the mind.

37

Every spag has limitations.

Some are in the body.

Some are in the mind.

Limitations in the body are difficult to change.

Limitations in the mind are easier to change (but not by much).

Yet some people will live their entire lives
without ever encountering a stray thought.

These people do not know they are in Prison.

So the wise spags know their limitations,
and how to change them.

They are still in the Black Iron Prison,
yet can see through the bars
and attempt another jailbreak.

38

The sacred Chao includes both Order and Disorder.

In the same way, the Self includes
the inside and the outside.

To emphasize the inside
is to pollute the outside with a grid.

To emphasize the outside
is to lose your center.

While it's fun to toy with both,
forgetting that they go together
plants the seed of a cabbage.

Therefore when doubt is lost,
Absolutism is born.

When Absolutism encounters dissent,
Authority arises.

When Authority arises,
Freedom is lost.

When Freedom is lost,
the wise spags create their own rules.

Doubt allows people to see around corners,
and to peer above walls.

Therefore the wise spags never know,
and so are boundless.

39

Every spag's mind
is a better artist than they can ever know.
For every conclusion they make,
supporting facts rise to the surface.
Each certainty has its own gravity
that attracts the Illusions of Order.

If you can think it, you can prove it.
This is how we turn Order and Disorder
into fractals of Illusion.

When spags try to order the Chao,
the sky becomes dirty, dingy;
Words are angry & sterile.

Words reduce the Chao;
A confused mind cannot grasp it
and cannot drop it, either.

40

Incomprehensible Totality is the nature of Chaos.
The absence of Illusion is the state of Chaos.
All spags in the world create their own Illusions,
and then spend the rest of their lives bound by them.

For the record, "Incomprehensible Totality"
is fairly incomprehensible.

41

Some hear about Discordia, and plot against the Machine™.

Some hear about Discordia, and think about it at great length.

Some hear about Discordia, and decide it means they should get high and doodle.

If it weren't for those spags, Discordia wouldn't be as interesting as it is.

Order appears calming and sensible.

Disorder appears unsettling and unstable.

Doubt appears ignorant.

Certainty appears true.

Aggression appears confident.

Mirth appears uncaring.

Horror appears powerless.

All these are lies.

Uncertainty reveals itself as a narrow footbridge,
but with its heart in Chaos, the path is clear.

42

Chaos is One;
Order and Disorder are Two;
The Two produce Confusion, which is Three;
And Confusion produced everything else.

All things contain Order and Disorder,
depending on how you look at it.

People hate when someone is being an asshole,
but their leaders are all assholes.

Sometimes, things that fall apart are helpful.

What others teach, I teach as well:

"And this, too, shall pass."

That's the first thing you need to know.

43

When discussing "Reality,"
the Professor and the Poet
speak loftily about how things are figments.
Matter is made up mostly of empty space;
We only perceive sensations;
Everything could be a hallucination.

The wise spags heft a barstool,
feel solid wood in their hands,
and with a simple application of $F=ma$
refute their arguments.

44

Order or Disorder, which do you prefer?
Creation or Destruction, which do you choose?
Those who chase one are led to the other.
Those who embrace both
are free to choose which is more effective.
The only thing is, can you be sure
which is which?

45

The greatest mindfuck seems normal;

Only later does it infect the mind.

The best argument seems specious,

but a flaw cannot be found.

The greatest Order seems random.

The greatest Disorder appears stable.

Just as the Zen master's staff strikes to cease thought,

The Barstool crashes through castles built on clouds.

What "works" in the real world is correct.

46

When people understand Chaos,
they live their lives as they please.
When people misunderstand Chaos,
the Machine™ grinds them into grist.

The greatest cause of Disorder is Order.
The greatest motivator of Order is Disorder.
Whoever can embrace both will see for miles.

47

You can't view the Universe
without one map or another.

Glimpses outside your Cell
are obscured by the bars.

The more you insist you are not in Prison,
the less you will understand what restricts you.

Therefore the wise spags wander through the world in doubt,
and constantly ask for directions.

48

If Order and Disorder are illusions,
then turning one into the other
is simple as changing your mind.*

But we tense our muscles, furrow our brows
and plug away at life.

Meanwhile, our Lady laughs at the silly Cabbages
trying too hard to be spontaneous.

*Please note that changing your mind is not simple.

49

The wise have more than two options.

They see beyond True and False;

They recognize a Maybe.

This is what is meant by, "there is no box".

They understand that a spag who does not see their Cell
is eternally trapped by it.

This is the freedom of limitations.

The wise spags see more of the Universe
by understanding how little of it they see.

50

Coming to an argument,
the ways to win seem clear;
The ways to lose look distant,
but the losses come swiftly.

How did this happen?
Because the mind held one side too strongly.

It's said that those who are curious
explore myriad aspects of life without judgment
and in arguments are not affected by fallacy.
They can identify the pitfalls
and recognize valid points,
all while staying true to their goal.

How is this possible?
By seeing all possibilities as valid.
Whether or not they are probable
is an entirely different matter.

51

If you want to be serious,
don't take yourself seriously.
Be open to change,
and bold enough to be the butt of the joke.

When you walk with total certainty,
your head high
like a cosmic schmuck,
you are vulnerable to the old banana peel shtick.

When a schmuck slips,
their face becomes red with embarrassment.
Eris showed them what they did not perceive.
And, be honest, it was funny.

52

The unity of the Chao shattered into everything else.
Those who understand Chaos can understand the rest.
That which can be understood can be useful.

Embrace doubt, reserve judgment,
and knowledge will flow like water.
Come to solid conclusions, have unwavering Faith,
and nothing will make sense.

Admitting ignorance is wise;
Declaring stupidity is clever.
Look for the gaps, seek them out,
and then you'll know what needs filling.
This is Thinking for Yourself.

53

Even those who partially understand
admit they do not know everything.
What is unknown is vast,
but people enjoy blinding themselves.

When Authority bangs the podium,
the people say, "my country, right or wrong."
When the holy man thumps his scripture,
the people embrace Faith over Facts.
So some people revel
in their abandonment of responsibility.
They have given up their humanity.
This is fucking stupid.

54

Our society is firmly held and steered
by deeply ingrained and arbitrary rules.
Those who choose to play a different game
are usually trampled underfoot,
unless they appear to be playing along.

To belong to the group,
you must follow their rules.
To follow their rules,
you must abandon responsibility.
When you abandon responsibility,
you destroy the Self.

Therefore the wise spags choose responsibly,
and seek out new groups.
They know which rules are their own,
which come from others,
and how to navigate between them.

55

Those who understand Chaos can pierce any illusion.
Disorder does not trouble them.
Order does not placate them.
They see around the bars of their Cell,
and always look just a little bit further.
They can freely create, knowing no boundaries,
but color inside the lines when they must.
They can wear ideas like masks, but remove them at will,
and are not bound by chains of Faith.
To know Chaos is to always be in doubt.
To know doubt is to always seek an answer.

To try and force Truth is dangerous.
To decide you're right before getting the facts is foolish;
The first errant bit of evidence will cause a collapse.
Whatever is monolithic will fall.

56

Those that create, also destroy.

Those who destroy, also create.

Study the sixteen forms
of Order, Creation, Disorder, and Destruction.

These are all lies.

Those believing them can do anything.

Those who disbelieve are fools.

Do you believe that?

Authority rules through miscommunication.

Wars are waged by pandering to fears.

The world can be won by joining opposites:

Tell people what they want to hear, and they will follow.

Make them think like apes, and they will act like monkeys.

Relieve them of their responsibilities, they will call you wise.

Show them what they fear, they will call you just.

Therefore, the wise spags say,

"Pay no attention to the speeches of Authority,

but listen instead to what the audience is hearing.

And if at all possible,

try to be the one making the speech."

58

When Authority imposes Order, people become angry.
When Authority allows Freedom, people become nervous.
To allow for mistakes means accepting mistakes;
To enforce Order ensures future punishment.
The people want Freedom, but at others' expense.
The people want Order, but only to justify their actions.
Therefore the wise spags disrupt Order,
and organize Freedom,
and freely create their Illusions.

59

Status gives power,
but power inhibits communication.
Seek information from opposing sides.
Listen to the will of the people,
but also to the well-informed.
Talk to people who disagree;
Those who would undermine you
are a part of what you do.

Do not keep things concealed,
and do never resort to,
"Because I said so."
The people may be foolish,
but they are not fools.
These are social laws of motion,
the thermodynamics of discourse.

Eventually, those that try to impose Order
become mired in disarray.
Action creates resistance.
It's not personal,
it's hilarious.

60

A good leader is like an orchestra conductor.
He is given a set of rules that the people should follow.
By flapping his arms, he tries organize them.
The more careful and precise he is,
the more harmonious the performance.
However, a good leader knows
that it is the individual differences
working together, yet independent,
that create the rich texture.
And so Order and Disorder combine
to create beauty.

61

A successful cabal is like a dust cloud,
arriving from nowhere,
ungraspable,
and fading into nothingness.

The tallest blade of grass gets cut,
while the crab grass creeps unharmed.

Keep your head down.

Keep your fucking mouth shut.

Thus by concentrating on goals
without playing ego games,
much can be accomplished.

If all you want to do

is brag about how cool you are,

you might want learn to play the guitar, instead.

62

Chaos is contained in all things.
It hides in the Illusions of Order and Disorder.
Solid walls can break.
Scattered stones can tell a story.
Why should we choose one over the other?

So when Authority tightens its fists
one must learn to slip through the fingers.
When the Philosopher rambles,
hit him with a barstool from this universe.

How do the wise spags embrace Chaos?
They do not favor Order or Disorder.
Both Order and Disorder are windows.
Behind them lies Chaos.

63

Don't impose Order.

Don't escalate Disorder.

Unless the situation demands it, of course.

Learn to sabotage the Machine™ without getting caught.

Walk through the crowd unnoticed,

while slipping firecrackers into their pockets.

Become the faceless walking Glitch

who makes everyone's day just a little bit stranger.

The wise spags don't seek recognition,

and so leave a wake behind them wherever they go.

Being an attention whore

is like a magnet for batons

when the riots start.

64

Organized things cause Disorder.
Disorganized things cry for Order.
The colorful and flashy get noticed.
The wary and wise wear camouflage.
A mindfuck of epic proportions
only happens when no one notices the set-up.
Most games are won
when using misdirection.

Let other people
wave their flags and storm the riot shields.
You're not playing that game;
Those game rules were written by Authority.
There is no way you can win at that.

Therefore the wise spags learn all the rules,
and then write different games.
They create the Illusion
that best fits their situation,
and doing so, win.

65

The wise spags have learned not to trust Absolutes.

Even in the darkest night, there is light.

Even at noon, there are shadows.

Those who think in terms of Either/Or are dangerous;

They cannot see Chaos.

Knowing Chaos means seeing the Illusions.

Seeing the Illusions means understanding the choices.

Understanding the choices means you are not trapped
in trite cliches about duality.

Because Order and Disorder do not exist
but are only self-created Illusions,
it is futile to rage and wail against them.
Save your rage for worthier goals,
and create more useful Illusions.
Change the way you see the world,
and the world will change for you
(but do not think the world has changed;
It is unwise to put faith in Illusions).

Chaos is quick to dispel fanatics.

When you have no certainty
you cannot remain willfully blind.

Uncertainty has a momentum of its own.
It gives rise to curiosity,
which brings about questions,
which births uncertainty.

Certainty un-tempered by doubt,
direction without freedom,
carelessness without humor:
These things are heavy like Greyface's luggage.

Fuck what you "know" about Chaos.

68

The best comedian is not funny.

The best philosopher is an idiot.

The best employer doesn't crack the whip.

The best winner is a loser.

This is known as the power of not striving.

Universe isn't sweaty,

why should you be?

Someone who looks like an enemy
will be treated like an enemy.

An idea that confronts
is an idea that will be rejected.

Be subtle, and use your opponent's language;
But not their rules.

Slip by their natural defenses,
and plant seeds of doubt and confusion.

A slowly growing tree will shatter a sidewalk
and the concrete will not notice,
because it was always there.

There are better ways to change someone's mind
than by screaming at them.

70

These teachings are stupid.

Especially this chapter. It's probably the dumbest one.

71

It is wise to admit ignorance.

Those that claim to know everything will fail.

Those who are willing to accept new information
adapt to their situation.

Because they are willing to acknowledge failure,
they will not fail. Usually.

72

When people openly disobey Authority,
another Authority will descend.

The wise spags go around, not against.

When people lack a sense of awe
they cannot see what's awesome.

Do not restrict people's freedoms,
or their bodies, or their minds.

If you act like a tyrant, you will be treated like a tyrant.

Therefore the wise spag acts, but is not an actor.

73

Those who embrace Disorder will breed Order.

Those who embrace Order will breed Disorder.

Both of these ways are foolish.

Why would you embrace Illusion,
and deny one half of the Universe?

Wise spags find the patterns,

and invent new game rules to trip up the Machine™.

They change the world,

not through Ideology,

but by finding the Hidden Middle.

They straddle the shifting line between True and False,

and embrace the whole Universe.

74

When you realize that change is the only constant
there is nothing left to fight.

Drop ambition and expectation
and death will have nothing real to kill;

On the other hand, you will end up
with nothing real.

When you let the pieces fall where they may,
someone else will pick them up.

75

People are not free following Authority,
because Authority only gives people
the Freedoms they are allowed;
The people do not take it for themselves.

Authority makes myriad rules
because people do not follow them.
This is why we are all criminals.

People do not care about responsibility
because they gave it to Authority.
Authority does not care about people
because they are not responsible.
Only those who accept responsibility
and seize their freedoms
can change their stars.

76

When born, we are close to Chaos.
We simply experience, we have no names.
Growing up, we learn how to make patterns
and we are taught about Order and Disorder.
Believing this to be reality,
our minds and bodies become rigid,
rather than flexible.
And so are easy to break.

Chaos is made up of all things.
This is why it makes no distinctions.
People are less than all things,
so they see differences and put them in boxes.

Because they are people,
they lie to themselves
from the moment they open their eyes.

Who are free from the chains of Illusion?
Not even the wise spags, although they try.
So the wise spags create their own Illusions,
and do not admit perfect clarity.
They know better than anyone else,
the power of Illusion to blind the eye
and deafen the ear.

78

Those that impose Order
soon find that they have increased Disorder.
Those that escalate Disorder
build the walls of Order in response.
Those that laugh at these Illusions
can overcome anything.
Laughter cannot win wars, but it can win hearts.
It can soften the rigid.
It will make you drop your baggage.
It can unite, it can multiply, it can do long division.

A healthy body ebbs and flows with emotions.

Only the sick are inflexible.

Joy and hate must be experienced, and then let go.

If you do not shit your hate, you will die.

Who can live, retaining a colon full of hate?

If you hold on to joy for too long,

it will stagnate and fester.

Life craves the new,

regardless of its content.

Only the dead cease changing.

80

In a place where information is suppressed
and curiosity stifled,
the people will be uncaring, unwise, and not free.
They will rely on tradition as their guides;
They will not make observations,
or try new things,
or experiment,
or play.
They will be suspicious of outsiders
just as they are with new ideas.
Their minds will be as stagnant
as the pond where they dump their garbage.
They are surely as dead as they can be,
though they still draw breath.

81

Words are not experiences.
Experiences have no words.

Reading about Laughter
is not the same as laughing.

These Orderly letters only approximate
the spinning Chaos of life.

The Disorder around you
has yet to find a pattern.

Now get out there
and make something happen.

