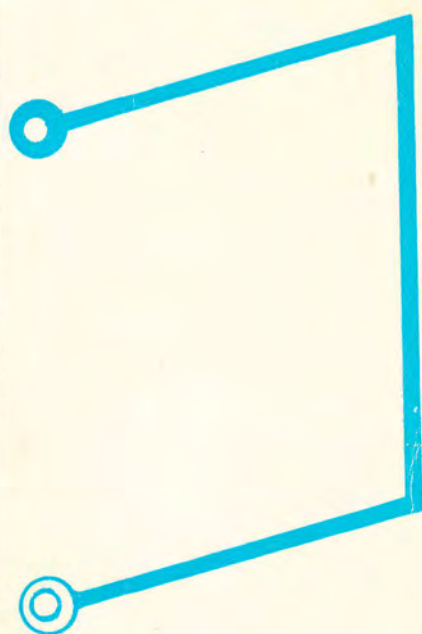
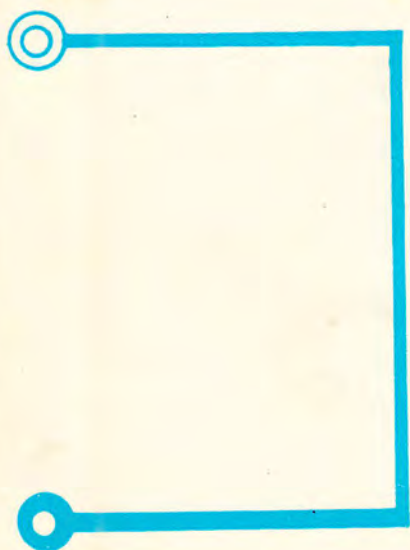


The Occult

Gareth Knight



Gareth Knight

The Occult

KAHN & AVERILL, LONDON

CONTENTS

First published in 1975 by Stanmore Press Ltd
under their associated imprint: Kahn & Averill
Copyright © 1975 Gareth Knight

This book may not be reproduced, in whole or
in part, without permission. Application with
regard to any use of any part of this volume
should be addressed to the publishers.

Printed in Great Britain by
Biddles Ltd Guildford Surrey

ISBN 0 900707 37 2

Part One The Occult in historical perspective

1	Fact or Fiction?	9
2	Functions, Elements & Archetypes	14
3	Old Gods and Starry Symbols	20
4	Hermes and the Pagan Mysteries	24
5	Freud, Jung and the Scientific Method	30
6	Natural and Celestial Magic	33
7	Group Minds and Mass Media	37
8	Visions of the Millenium	43
9	The Rise of Technology	49
10	The Past One Hundred Years	53

Part Two An Occult Glossary with recommended reading 57

PART ONE
The Occult in historical perspective

1 FACT OR FICTION?

An Overview of the occult

It is not easy to make a rational approach to the occult. This is because it is neither an easy nor an entirely rational subject, and it also covers a large and diverse field.

Its sheer size makes a short study of it as difficult as a short study of "science" or of "religion". In fact it is basically a study of both, of "science" *and* "religion", though not science and religion in their ordinary sense. Occultism is very largely the study of *rejected* science and religion.

Now why should we study a subject that has been rejected in the course of time by the accepted establishment of learning? There are in fact good reasons for this, and not all concerned with the academic pursuit of useless or outworn knowledge. The question is whether the subject-matter of occultism has been rejected for the right reasons!

The "world view" of any civilisation changes as it progresses in time and at any particular stage certain beliefs may seem to be disproved, or perhaps unproven, and of so little practical import as not to merit further investigation. In very religiously oriented phases of civilisation they may even be classed as "forbidden" knowledge. For instance, what science has rejected as a false worldview of the heavens astronomically, may yet be an important line of study of the inner structure of the soul of man, which in pre-technological days had been projected forth from his own psyche in speculation about the unknown. Similarly, what may have been rejected as heretical or impious by religious authority may in fact be an important area, not of religion but of science. Was Renaissance magic a psychological therapy before its time rather than a superstitious throwback to ancient times?

Other areas of the occult may quite deservedly have been rejected from scientific or religious established thinking, and yet thrive in the popular consciousness. There must even here be a reason for such beliefs to continue, be they so apparently trivial as belief in bad luck through breaking a mirror or spilling salt. Some apparent chimera of fancy strikes a chord of recognition deep in the human heart. The occult researcher does not dismiss such things out of hand. He pursues them sympathetically.

There is, of course, a largely subjective element in all such studies. And indeed another definition of the occult might well be the study of the subjective as if it were objective. Philosophically it may not be readily apparent, but this would also hold if one defined it as a study of the objective as if it were subjective.

An example of the kind of difficulty we face can be culled from literature, the long story, or short novel, of Henry James entitled *The Turn of the Screw*.

On the face of it this most spine-chilling of ghost stories, which unlike many literary attempts in this genre, is completely "authentic" as far as its descriptions of paranormal phenomena go, tells the story of a young lady who is appointed to be governess of two children at a deserted mansion, in the company only of an illiterate housekeeper. Whilst there she begins to discover, to her horror, a subtle and curiously adult perversity in her two young charges, and then to be aware of two psychically observable "horrors" about the place. One is the "presence" of a former gardener, Peter Quint, and the other the former governess of the children. It transpires that Quint, a creature of low morals and appetites, had been killed in suspicious circumstances, probably by persons who had good cause to hate him, and the governess, Miss Jessel, who was his lover, had committed suicide. The horrifying realisation that gradually breaks in upon the new governess is that these two creatures are "earthbound" spirits, hanging about the place, striving to enter the consciousness and possess the souls and bodies of the two young children, a boy and a girl, so that they can eventually continue their illicit love through them in a bizarre and incestuous relationship. Events, such as the otherwise innocent boy being expelled from school, seem to point toward the certainty of all this and eventually, in desperation, the governess tries to extort confessions of guilt and remorse from the children in an attempt to exorcise the evil influence. In the climax of this the boy dies of shock.

It is not exactly a pleasant story when conceived as a ghost story, but it takes on more disturbing meanings if viewed from other perspectives. Suppose, for example, we do not take the governess's diagnosis of the

situation at face value? Suppose Peter Quint and Miss Jessel are not ghosts but her own hallucinations? Suppose it is *she* who is sick — not only projecting a totally unlikely innocence upon her young charges, but also endowing them with the evil of her own repressed sexual fantasies? Is any apparently secretive and conspiratorial behaviour in the children all her own imagination? Or, yet worse, is it the natural behaviour of two children who find themselves under the control of a neurotic and increasingly morbid woman? Are we in fact seeing insanity through the eyes of the insane?

There is not space to pursue this line of enquiry here, and yet more interpretations may be put upon the story as the Norton Critical Edition of *The Turn of the Screw* elaborates. But it serves as an illustration of the difficulties we are faced with in an investigation of the occult — at any level. We can never be entirely sure of the validity of the facts we are dealing with — or their proper perspective — because of the shifting boundary of the subjective and objective that exist as we try to push knowledge and experience beyond the fairly well-defined categories of the physical.

Many approaches to the occult are indeed more fictional than real. The easy target of the unbalanced psychic has been well portrayed by Noel Coward in *Madame Arcady* in *Blithe Spirit*, but there is also a field of fiction relating to the occult as there is, in science-fiction, a field of fiction relating to physical science. In both genres some writers and stories are more "authentic" than others. The fault of most occult fiction authors who are not "authentic" is that in their search for fictional effectiveness they portray physical and interior sensations as if they were physical. This, in fact, is bad craftsmanship as well as a misrepresentation of the facts. The horrors of a physical obsession, for example, a crumbling of the structures of personality, is more terrifying than the physical apperception of clanking chains and hollow groans.

Again, the fictional tends to concentrate upon the sensational and the perverse. Obsession, which we have already been pressed into mentioning twice, is a rare pathology. There is, in fact, much spiritual good and psychological health that can be obtained from the proper study of the occult.

Unfortunately it is the sensational and the perverse that make the best headlines and sell the most paperbacks. And one cannot fail to censure the type of popular novelist who profitably writes it all up from a sensational angle and then utters portentous moral warnings about its dangers. Such a dual approach is almost certain to attract the morbid curiosity of the immature and unbalanced toward the worst

elements of the subject.

This attitude rubs off on the churches also. There is an increasing number of clerical exorcists of one kind or another whose approach to the subject is biased and even childish in its lack of knowledge. This is understandable when one realises the consequences for those immature and unbalanced people whose morbid curiosity has been excited by popular novels, films and newspaper treatments. They are inclined to undertake ill-understood experimentation in a hole-and-corner manner from the most dubious of motives, and then to go clamouring to the church if they fall into real or imagined difficulties. This is bound to bring about a jaundiced view of the occult generally in the eyes of those who are habitually approached for such aid.

There are indeed certain traditional attitudes in both evangelical and catholic churches that condemn the whole subject out of hand on theological grounds. This is a pity for there are areas opening up today where there is opportunity for scientific insights into the structure of the human psyche that strengthen and confirm the traditional standpoint of certain areas of mystical theology. There is an opportunity for an approach and dialogue of a number of disciplines that have not communicated one with another before. Their common meeting-ground is in matters hitherto rejected but now in need of re-assessment — that is, by our definition, the occult.

If psychiatrists and theologians, in particular, can meet together on this common ground, without bringing too many of their own prejudices with them, the resultant insights might well have repercussions in areas far beyond these disciplines, into the social fabric and scientific attitudes toward the whole world about us; in new attitudes to mankind's responsibilities to itself, collectively and individually, and in its responsibilities to the planet it lives upon and those who share it — whether physically or psychically.

It is not too bizarre today to affirm perhaps that the explosion of an atomic bomb might have effects on the psychological and inner structure of the planet, as well as on the constituents of its physical husk. This would have sounded fantastic a few years ago. To some it may still do so. But to those who have paid some attention to the kind of synthesising mind among us today, such as that of Teilhard de Chardin, it may not appear so strange. Teilhard was a scientist, mystic and theologian, looking at things anew. There is yet more to discover from the non-physical and rejected side of science — in the heresies of science and religion.

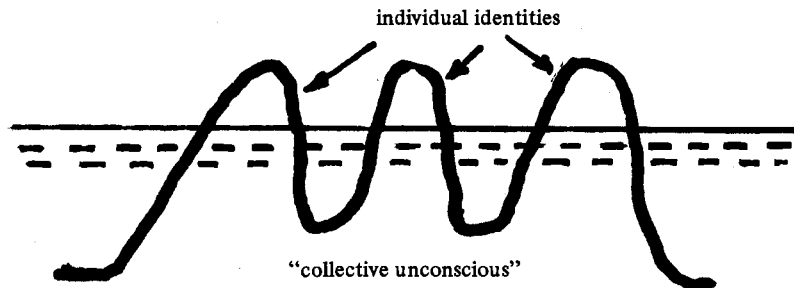
This is what we intend to investigate in this book. The comprehensive nature of the subject — it is "behind" *everything* — makes it difficult

to find a starting point. Therefore our treatment is twofold. First, a somewhat discursive tour around some of the main strands and features of the subject, and then an alphabetical glossary of a number of the specialisations within it.

2 FUNCTIONS, ELEMENTS & ARCHETYPES

A psychology of the occult

The psychologist C.G. Jung has come closest to confirming some of the traditional occult views — although most Jungian analysts would hesitate to be bracketed with the occult. Similarly most occult teachers would be reluctant to explain all their beliefs or experiences in the light of analytical psychology. But there is common ground, because Jung sees man as being not an island, but having links with all other humans and even with all life itself.



Jung posits a personal unconscious and a collective unconscious which can be expressed diagrammatically as a kind of sub-marine mountain range. The islands are our individual conscious identities but there is an individual unconsciousness under the surface, and deep down in the rock strata a common unconsciousness which has a life of its own and in which we all participate at a deep level. The collective unconscious also has its layers giving an unconscious identity between members of one family, tribe, nation, species.

The unconscious, being by definition unconscious, is at something of a disadvantage — for how can we be conscious of it? Jung thinks it makes itself evident by various kinds of uncontrolled upwellings into consciousness — images, emotions, attitudes, prejudices and so on.

Here there is some difference from the Freudian point of view which tends to see the *subconscious* (the term they prefer) as the repository for repressed desires and taboos — particularly of a sexual nature.

Jung however takes a more positive view in saying that the personal unconscious is not merely a dustbin of rejected consciousness, but has a deep and wise concern for us. Thus his approach to psychological problems is not so much one of analysis in the Freudian sense — with a view to regurgitating unacceptable experiences or attitudes — but one of integration. That is, taking into consciousness those parts of the unconscious which will make for a more balanced human being.

This view of the role of the unconscious almost as a separate identity, poses some profound questions with regard to other disciplines. For it can verge on religion in the case of those who feel they are guided by a personal God. It can also be applied to primitive ancestor-worship or to spiritualist communication with the departed.

The unconscious has even entered the field of science, at any rate of science before the disciplined application of the scientific method. For when man faces the unknown then he projects theories into it, and these theories — according to Jung — are a projection outward of the structure of man's own psyche.

Thus we find a marked similarity between various ancient beliefs on the structure of the universe, and the 'gods' (or forces or laws, to use modern depersonalised scientific terms) that make it work. There is a tendency for the numbers 3, 4, 7 and 12 to crop up in such cosmologies.

Jung pays particular attention to the number 4 — the quaternio. For this figures much in early theories of the structure of the universe — the belief that there were four elements (Earth, Air, Fire and Water) from various mixtures of which all things are made. This is reflected in the principal states of matter; solid, liquid, gaseous and radiation or heat. But it was also applied to the psychic constitution of man — there being

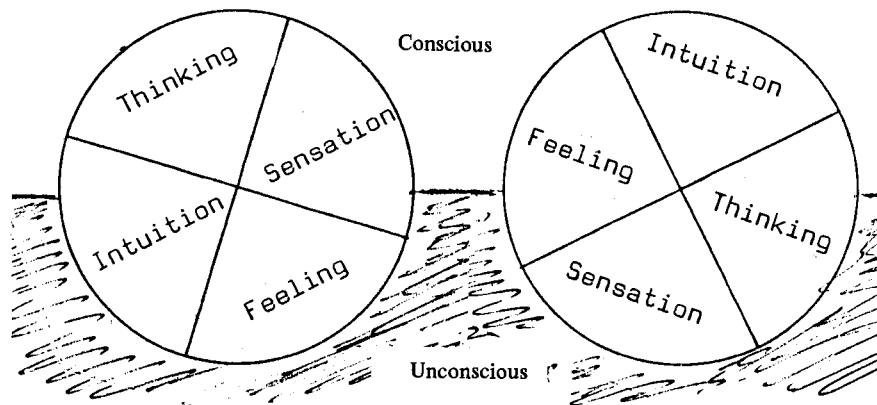
phlegmatic earthy types or emotional watery types, and so on.

Jung has in fact suggested a modern version of this in the psychological sphere by formulating four psychological types. In place of Earth, Water, Air and Fire he posits Sensation, Feeling, Intuition and Intellect. All of us form one or other of these psychological types, though the pure type is rare. Not only this, there appears to be a certain relation between the four functions. Feeling is diametrically opposed to Thinking; Sensation diametrically opposed to Intuition. And of the four functions, half will be conscious and half unconscious. We each partake of all four but we consciously express only one in full, with two of them to a greater or lesser extent unconscious and one fully unconscious. This is best expressed in a diagram of the psyche being like a ball floating in water.

One must go to Jung's original works for a more detailed treatment of this theory, but a brief outline of the characteristics of the functional types is as follows:

The thinking type tends to try to solve everything by a rational approach and thus may appear rather cold and arid, but is subject to occasional up-rushes of feeling which he cannot control.

The feeling type, the polar opposite, assesses things in a feeling way; this is the patriot, the backbone of any society, club, family or nation. Here it is thinking that is repressed, so strange and wild theories may be formulated as a justification for emotional loyalties held.



The sensation type is down-to-earth and practical but liable to uncontrolled up-rushes of woolly idealism or religious enthusiasms.

On the other hand the intuitional type has a facility for living life successfully on hunches but may be subject to strong impulses of sensuality.

This is just the bare bones of the matter. The interested reader can fill in his own assessment of the combination of types.

Another factor is that of the archetypes. These are not easy to describe and tend to have a different role according to the sex of each person. They are ways in which the unconscious part of the psyche expresses itself either through dream, fantasy or projection. One might call them filters or lenses for the unconscious.

Of major importance are the archetypes of the *animus* and *anima*, sometimes called the *contrasexual image*.

The *anima* in man consists of all ideas of the female — not only personal but inherited via the unconscious, and is most readily discernible when it is being projected onto a flesh and blood woman. In this we have the situation of the woman being romantically idealised, being "put on a pedestal". All manner of near-divine qualities are projected onto her by the lover although to any objective observer she may be no more attractive than a hat rack. And this in effect is what she is — a convenient peg on which to hang an *anima* projection.

It is possible not only for the *anima* to be projected but also for a man to be possessed by it — which is perhaps more commonplace and less far-reaching in its possible effects. An impatient lover becomes moody, upset, touchy — possessed of all the negative aspects of the "eternal woman". This is the gist of the traditional 'lovers tiff' — amusing to the outsider but very painful to the participants.

There are other archetypes that Jung focuses attention upon for the purpose of his psycho-therapy such as the animus; the persona; the shadow; the wise old man; the miraculous child.

Briefly, the *animus* is the contra-sexual image in woman. It tends to be more like a shadowy group of male advisers. When an animus possession is running it manifests as bossy arbitrary statements thus perpetuating the traditional idea of 'female logic'.

The *persona* is common to all of us and is not so much an archetype in the sense of the others. It is the mask we all assume in our relationships with other people. William Blake seems to be the only person of whom it is recorded that "he never wore a mask" but had the courage and integrity to present his soul naked to the world.

The 'shadow' is a nasty character, being all the things we most detest in ourselves. It can have an ugly face when projected upon other

people, either individually or collectively. This results in the individual 'bête noire', the person we gratuitously detest, or it can be projected onto a whole group, producing racial prejudice or xenophobia. It is somewhat of an educative experience to realise that the diabolical qualities that we project upon others are in fact major characteristics of our own selves that we find difficult to accept.

The 'wise old man' in relation to the occult, we shall return to again, in the concept of 'masters' or 'gurus', whilst the 'miraculous child' is an important religious archetype. Our excursion into analytical psychology has been necessitated by the fact that there is common ground between mystical theology, analytical psychology and occultism, and each one is difficult to explain without reference to the others.

For the moment we shall simply note that the 'wise old man' archetype is a reputed source of great and arcane wisdom, and the 'miraculous child' a source of great wonder and 'new life'. At their more superficial levels they show in the great respect for age in certain societies and in the sentimentality over the young in others.

However, it is not out of purpose to do more than outline the Jungian psychological scheme of things. Our interest lies more in the extensions upon them that take us beyond the psychological consulting-room. We find ourselves taken, in fact, not merely into the spiritualist's seance or the magician's circle, but into the church and cloister, into the hurly-burly of modern life, and to the beliefs of antiquity, both scientific and religious.

3 OLD GODS AND STARRY SYMBOLS

A ground-plan of the occult

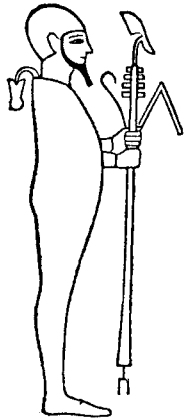
The beliefs of antiquity that primarily concern us are the cults of the ancient pagan gods. Though these may seem, at first glance, to be only of obscure antiquarian interest, they are in fact very much alive and kicking all about us. Some of them may be recognised in the Jungian archetypes. The anima, or femme fatale, has close connections with the Greek goddess Aphrodite, or the Roman Venus, she who rose from the sea (the unconscious depths, if one likes).

But there are many other ancient gods. We find that they represent characteristics of the human soul projected outwards onto the universe, and particularly into the heavens where man has found, in the panorama of the sun, moon and physically visible planets performing their wandering movements before the seemingly spherical backdrop of the fixed stars, a system of 'hooks' upon which to hang the projections of his own interior universe.

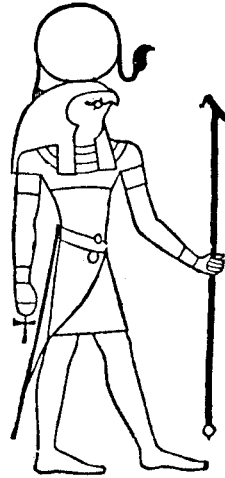
Thus we have, common to almost all mankind, the ten-fold schema of Earth, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Fixed Stars, Prime Movement.

The Earth is associated with the Great Mother, Mother Nature, she who brings forth all organic life as we know it. It is also the Sphere of the Elements, which as Fire, Earth, Air and Water correspond to the psychological functions of Thinking, Sensation, Intuition and Feeling. Her classical god-forms include Demeter and Gea.

The Moon is usually considered as feminine, a three-fold goddess in her three phases of waxing, full and waning. In one aspect she is the dark Hecate of witchcraft and spells; in another the virgin huntress Diana/Artemis, with particular guardianship over pregnancy and the



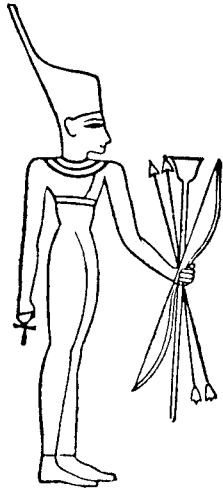
PTAH,
the Creator.



RĀ,
the Sun-god.



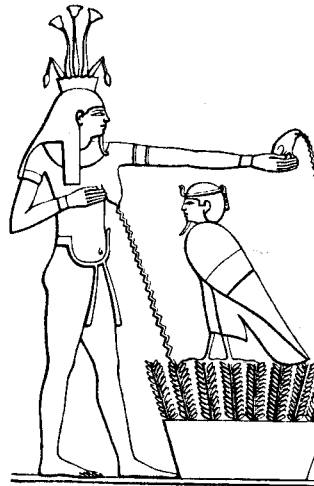
THOTH,
scribe of the gods.



The goddess
NEITH, the Weaver.



The goddess SEKHET,
the Sun-flame.



HĀPI,
the god of the Nile.

Some Egyptian Gods and Goddesses

young. She is also Isis, wandering through the skies looking for her lost lover, Osiris the sun god. The Moon rules over the tides, not only physically in the tides of the sea, but all the inner tides of organic growth and psychic ebb and flow.

Mercury is representative of trade, commerce, trickery, communication, science, magic and indeed all knowledge. In terms of ancient civilisations he is seen as the Roman Mercury, the Greek Hermes, and as the Egyptian Thoth – the ibis-headed scribe of the gods, lord of books and learning.

Venus is connected with love and desire. The counterparts of the Roman Venus are the Greek Aphrodite, and the Babylonian Ishtar, from whose worship and mysteries comes the dance of the seven veils – which in its deeper significance is rather more than an erotic pagan cabaret.

The Sun is of course the major luminary and is representative of Gods of Light. As the swing of the earth and sun bring the seasons of the year, and the more frequent cycle of days and nights, we have also the hero and saviour gods who save their people from death and darkness. Amongst these are the Greek Apollo, the Egyptian Osiris and the Scandinavian Balder the Beautiful.

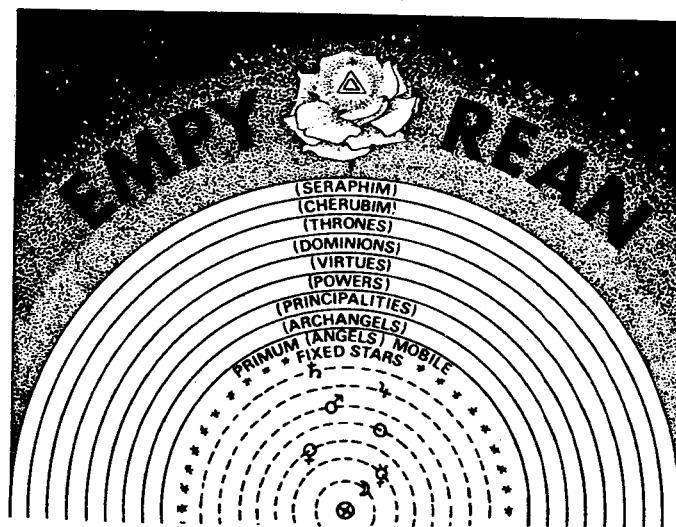
Mars is associated with the disciplining forces of war and restriction; the wrath of the gods. Thor, the Norse thunder-god, can be found here, along with the Roman Mars and the Greek Ares.

Jupiter is more beneficent, indicative of more peaceful and stable conditions, of rule and law. All god-kings sit here, such as the Greek Zeus and his consort Hera. Most of the gods have goddess counterparts.

Saturn is concerned with wisdom, as opposed to the knowledge of Mercury, and has connections with older gods, such as Cronos, the Father of Zeus. One might even put father-gods in connection with Jupiter, grandfather gods with Saturn. There is a traditional linking of these planetary categories according with the ages of man.

Shakespeare speaks of the “music of the spheres”. These spheres are not the planetary spheres in the way that we think of them today but rather the concentric crystalline spheres surrounding the earth upon the surface of which each planet could be found in turn. This stems from the time when planetary orbits were thought to be circular, and around the earth rather than the sun.

When one reached the crystalline sphere of Saturn, there was a further one, of the Fixed Stars. The Fixed Stars are usually characterised by the Zodiac, which is that belt of constellations before which the planets, in their relatively flat associated orbits, appear to pass when viewed from the Earth. The Zodiac is divided into twelve sectors



The Crystalline Spheres

which are the traditional zodiacal signs — Aries the Ram, etc.

The crystalline sphere of the Fixed Stars also turns apparently on an axis more or less equivalent (in our times at least) to Polaris, the Pole Star. Celestial sky-gods such as Uranus can be associated with it, though there is a beautiful image from Celtic mythology which sees it as the turning glass castle of Arianrod.

Finally, beyond all, is the clear sphere which has no luminaries upon it, but which, under the title of *Primum Mobile*, furnishes the source of movement for all the interior spheres.

By means of a classification system such as this we are able to come to grips with the teeming profusions and apparent chaos of the myths and legends of mankind. This is not entirely an exercise in the history of ancient ideas, for the pagan gods, being projections of the human psyche, are still very much with us. They do not have to be psycho-analytically dug for: in the dark recesses of the mind they shout at us from every advertisement hoarding, from the cinema screen, paperback novel and television set.

There we see hero gods, war gods, sex goddesses, acting out their immemorial relationships. Man is still being entertained and preoccupied with the projected contents of his own soul mirrored back to him —

now by electronic media as once by the bard.

It is this whole panorama which is the stock-in-trade of occultism, and it is an area that has, for various historical reasons fallen into undue neglect.

Time was when these projections of the human psyche, of the interior universe, were thought to be actual representations of the outer universe. Medieval man could really believe that the earth was surrounded by crystalline spheres that had to be pushed round by invisible angelic beings.

However, with the scientific development (which has its roots in occultism and magic) it was found that the outer universe did not accord with man's interior projections and preconceptions.

Things were not helped by the church trying forcibly to maintain the *status quo*. Eventually, when scientific truth finally won through, it resulted in the old ideas being discarded as mere superstition. This is a pity, for though they may have made poor physics and astronomy, they make very good psychology and social anthropology, and as committed occultists would maintain, there is even yet more to it than this.

4 HERMES AND THE PAGAN MYSTERIES

The origins of the occult

It will help us to get the whole matter into perspective if we survey the history of the occult, religious and scientific ideas, particularly as they apply to magic, from the time of the Renaissance down to the so-called Enlightenment in the eighteenth century.

Magic is here not a convention in childrens' fairy stories, but a means of operating upon one level of nature by manipulating factors upon another level. The mechanics of this are worked out by the theory of 'correspondences' or 'occult sympathies', the idea being that by working upon symbols one may have an effect upon that which they represent.

There are, of course, different degrees of symbols. Written words upon a page are convenient signs for realities. The symbolism used in the occult arts is however of a deeper kind, that which wells up from the unconscious mind — in other words, the projections of the interior universe of the psyche.

These, or a selection of these, we have already briefly outlined, under the 'planetary' headings.

A Florentine priest, physician and scholar named Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) is a key figure here. It is he who was given the task of translating the Hermetic literature from the Greek. The rediscovery of the riches of the classical world — a rediscovery which was to transform it — had only recently occurred in the medieval world. The first wave of this has been the translation of Roman scripts which led to the tradition of classical humanism.

But the line that more directly concerns us is not the Roman tradition, with its emphasis on literature, style, morals and politics, but the Greek, which had both a more scientific and at the same time more religious bent.

When the Greek texts became available it was Ficino's appointed task to translate them, with particular emphasis on the works of Plato. Before this could be done some other texts came to light which were held to be more important than the works of Plato, and this was the Hermetic literature.

The Hermetic literature was so called because it purported to be written by a high priest of ancient Egypt named Hermes Trismagistus (Hermes Thrice-greatest). It was considered to be highly important because it was believed to be older than the works of Plato, and to be contemporaneous with the writings of Moses in the Old Testament. It was generally thought, in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, that in very ancient times, there had been a golden age of great knowledge, peace and wisdom, an Edenic state, and therefore any manuscript of great antiquity was to be highly regarded. This was particularly so in the case of the Hermes literature because it seemed to foreshadow and prophesy the decline of Egyptian magic and religion, and to foretell the coming of the Christian era, using very similar terms to those in the Gospel of St. John.

In fact this prophetic element was not so remarkable as at first appeared. The Hermes literature was actually of a comparatively late date. And far from being contemporary with the writing of the Old Testament it was in fact written in about the second or third centuries A.D. This was not discovered until the textual researches of Issac Casaubon in 1614 and, until this date, the Hermes literature held a very high place in academic and even religious thought.

Whatever the false assumptions arising from incorrect dating, it was important in its own right for it represented a fusion of Christian thought with the best of the old pagan traditions. It was a belief of more enlightened and liberal Christians that the new religious teachings came, as expressed in the words of Jesus, not to destroy the old law, but to fulfil it. This was held to apply to the old pagan beliefs as well as to the Jewish Old Testament law.

Early church fathers, such as Lactantius, were particularly sympathetic to this idea which avoided the fantastic speculative flights of the parallel gnostic fusion of Christian and pagan beliefs.

There are in fact three streams of thought that can be traced. On one side is the tendency to underrate and even condemn the pagan insights into religion and science. This is broadly the main stream of Christian orthodoxy.

On the other side is the tendency to overplay the pagan contribution which found expression in Gnosticism, a great complex system of thought that simply substituted angelologies for pantheons of gods

and spirits.

The stream that runs between these two is the Hermetic tradition, and it is probable that this too would have succumbed to the pressures of orthodoxy and exclusiveness of the new Christian thought, but for two historical accidents which were based on errors of scholarship.

The first error and accident, which we have already mentioned, is the supposed great antiquity. This lent an authority to the Hermetic tradition and caused it to be respected by all theologians of the period. The other was the particular theological support for it in the work of a writer whom we nowadays refer to as pseudo-Dionysius. He was however, in those days, by no means regarded as pseudo, but taken firmly at face value as being Dionysius the Areopagite, mentioned in the New Testament as being a close companion of St. Paul. In fact the theological writings of Dionysius date from about the same time as the Hermetic writings, and are indeed a product of much the same confluence of ideas.

The Hermetic writings and those of pseudo-Dionysius received the support of theologians as eminent as Thomas Aquinas in spite of the fact that they also formed the basis, in a garbled fashion, for the debased forms of medieval magic.

Some of the atmosphere of the pagan world of the second to third centuries A.D. — a period very important to any survey of the history of occultism — can be gleaned from reading a popular work of the period, *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius. This scurrilous and highly amusing work is written by one who was an initiate of the ancient Mysteries of Isis, and from this book the imaginative reader can get a fine grasp of the spiritual side of pagan religion as well as of its more superstitious and debased side. The pagan mystery tradition sprang up in about the third century B.C. possibly as a result, and certainly stimulated by, the conquests of Alexander the Great.

Alexander, in becoming master of the then known world and using a cosmopolitan army that spread a common language — *koine*, or common Greek — across the face of the world, caused a great synthesising movement in the religions of the time.

Gods and goddesses that had been local to particular isolated city-states, or to tribes or nations, found themselves cheek by jowl with one another, particularly in large cities. They then of course discovered that they had much in common one with another. The reason for this we have already indicated — the gods and goddesses tend to be projections outward of the human interior universe, or psyche.

This had two results. One was that the national sanctions of morality and loyalty that were strengthened by a national or city system of gods

or goddesses tended to be weakened. As a replacement for this one saw the development of the Imperial cult. This is better known to us in its later Roman manifestations of power-drunk emperors, but the first of the Imperial human god-rulers was Alexander. The citizens' first duty was to the Emperor god; after that one could worship as one liked. Naturally this would tend to be the gods of one's fathers. But there was no stigma, apart from pressures of local traditions, in worshipping any gods — and as many as one wished. There was in fact a very considerable degree of religious tolerance, whose extent has probably never subsequently been seen except in small areas and for short periods of time.

There was, however, a deeper spiritual and philosophical element. It became of concern to those who thought a little deeper than the average, that there should be some unifying principle behind the great multiplicity of gods and goddesses. With so many divine contenders where was the One True God of the Universe? Where, and who, was the divine counterpart of the earthly Alexander?

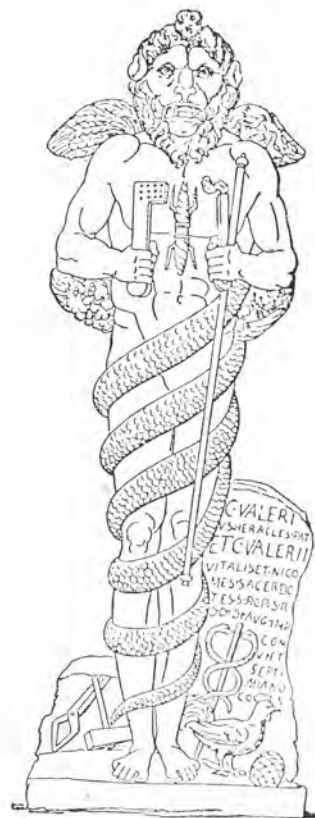
There then developed a synthesising religious philosophy that saw all the gods as but appearance or manifestations of the One God. That which one worshipped in Apollo, was the same Supreme Being whom others worshipped in the form of Horus, or Ishtar.

The pagan mysteries that developed from this trend became great international religious centres, such as that at Eleusis, where the Mysteries of Demeter were celebrated and which retained their secrecy in spite of their immense popularity. There were other Mystery cults, such as those of Isis — about which Apuleius, author of *The Golden Ass* — gave some hints and later there were those of Mithra.

We can, to a fair extent, reconstruct the nature and purpose of these 'Mystery' cults in spite of the vows of secrecy that were imposed, for they embodied psychological knowledge and religious intent that would be regarded as part of the occult today.

The secrecy was not an arbitrary thing but imposed for very good reason. It was necessary, for the work to be effective, that the candidate to the Mysteries enter into an 'Unknown' situation — just as the soul enters the unknown at physical death.

Bound and blindfolded he would shamle his impromptu way through a part in a ritual drama. The other protagonists represented great powers or forces within the soul, in the guise of various pagan gods, according to the type of Mystery being performed. The gist of the drama would be that of death and then joyous rebirth — which the neophyte would either undergo himself or witness in the person of a main character in the drama.



Reproduction of a statue of Mithra found in Ostia

Thus in the Mysteries of Demeter, her daughter Persephone would be seized and carried down to Hades by Pluto while her mother mourned her loss, until eventually she was returned. In the Mysteries of Isis and Osiris, Osiris is murdered by his adversary Set and cut up and dispersed, after which his mourning consort Isis searches for his dismembered body and he is eventually miraculously restored and avenged by his son Horus.

We should say that there is much more to such formal ritual performances than may be apparent in the bald descriptions of them. They are called Mysteries in much the same sense that the Roman Catholic church defines a Mystery today as a truth beyond the reach of reason.

It is very easy to look upon such things in a shallow and cerebral way and to regard them as childish fantasies that try to give some hope of the soul's survival after death. They are in fact much more than this. If the soul is transcendent and immortal (as the majority of the human race, through all time, has felt impelled to believe), then an enactment of imaginative intensity that brings a conscious realisation of that fact is a step toward the truth rather than a delusion. Also there could be more to 'childish fantasy' than may be supposed. According to Coleridge, who some now regard as one of the great seminal thinkers of the past two hundred years, the imagination is one of the great pointers to reality for man; it is his creative part that enables him to survive and progress, the counterpart of the *Fiat Lux* at the creation of the universe.

It is not our task to analyse Coleridge's theory of the imagination, except to say that, from an occult point of view, his high regard for the function of the imagination is borne out. And it is indeed summed up in a traditional saying amongst those concerned with teaching practical occultism: "Fantasy is the ass that carries the ark". In other words, by taking the imagination seriously, beyond the level of mere personal fantasy, it tends to structure itself according to major archetypal patterns. It is this that gives the perennial appeal to the old myths and legends; the appeal of the Round Table of King Arthur and his Knights, for instance; of the High History of the Holy Grail, and so on.

5 FREUD, JUNG AND THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Approaches to the occult

Freud is on record as having said to Jung that he was afraid of the discoveries of psychoanalysis being swamped by a 'black mud' of occultism. One may sympathise with his fears, for any field of investigation that places imagination and intuition to the fore rather than intellect and sense perception, is obviously open to considerable abuse and distortion from much uncorroborated fantasy — and there are considerably more asses that do not carry 'arks' than those that do! The lunatic fringe of occultism — which has always been a colourful and vociferous one — is perpetual witness of this danger.

However, one does not always best solve problems by ignoring them and it is to Jung's credit that he found it necessary to go his own way. Abandoning Freud's conceptions, he accepted the fantasies of the unconscious as he found them, without imposing somewhat rigid sexual theories upon them. He maintained that the fantasies, either of dream or of the waking imagination, could very often be pointers to a re-integration of the conscious personality, and that they have an objective reality of their own.

Here we come across an old and major problem of philosophy and epistemology. Where does the subjective end and the objective begin? It is difficult enough to define in terms of the *physical* senses and perceptions. Those difficulties are likely to be exacerbated, to say the least, by trying to define the subjective and objective limits of 'inner' perceptions and senses that use organs of perception other than the physical.

Jung was aware of this problem and indeed speaks quite forcefully of the 'objectivity' of the unconscious. In his autobiography,

'*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*', he cites the case of 'Philemon'. Philemon was a fantasy character he first met in a dream — a horned but human figure with kingfisher wings. Shortly after this vivid dream he found a dead kingfisher on a country walk — a somewhat rare and highly coincidental event.

Philemon then began turning up with considerable force in his waking thoughts and conversing in a philosophical way that was completely 'other' than Jung's own ideas and thought processes. At one point the pressure came upon him to write much of this material down, and while this pressure was building up his house started to manifest symptoms of 'haunting'. There was a heavy brooding atmosphere, doors slammed, bells rang, his daughter saw an apparition. Everything cleared when the book was written.

Whatever the gnostic ideas of 'Philemon', these events were crucial in Jung's career. He felt that but for the 'earthing' provided by his work, his wife and family, he might well have lost his reason at this time and his whole life's work stems from this critical period. He came to look upon 'Philemon' as a discarnate guru, or spiritual teacher — a concept relatively common in the Orient but little recognised (save in somewhat colourful and uncritical forms) in the West.

We might mention here that approaches to the occult can be on various levels and take on various forms. The theory of coincidence (as, for example, with the kingfisher) is expanded upon by Jung in *Synchronicity — An Acausal Connecting Principle*, a small book written in collaboration with the mathematician C.W. Pauli. Other occult investigators might have concentrated upon the dreaming of the future aspect. Any who care to read *Experiment With Time* by W.J. Dunne may themselves undertake the experiment and see if they too dream consistently of the future.

At another level there are those who would have been keener to investigate the bells, raps and apparitions that Jung experienced — with recording apparatus and all the paraphernalia of scientific psychical research. But such approaches — of the intellect and the senses — are only scratching at the surface of deep areas of experience that do not succumb to investigations of this type. Unless we are prepared to accept the validity of, and train the percepts of the imagination and intuition, nothing will be achieved in the pursuit of occult studies.

It may be felt that the occult tradition has done little to benefit the human race. In fact the whole of our scientific method started as a 'new attitude of mind that manifested itself first in Renaissance magic and which came more and more to the fore until it is taken for granted in our own day. It is that of regarding man as a *manipulator* of the

universe around him and not as an observer.

The medieval view had been the clerically-dominated one of regarding man as a part of God's creation, in which he suffered the results of a Fall from Grace as described in the Old Testament. It followed that he had but to accept the situation with as good a face as possible, at the same time striving for moral virtue in the light of Divine Grace. As the torch of learning, throughout the Dark Ages had been carried in the West by the Church it is not unnatural that such a view should have prevailed.

Getting oneself right with the creator was considered of higher importance than tinkering with parts of the Creation in order to make it a more comfortable place to live in. To get on good terms with the landlord and hope for a transfer to a better place was the existential philosophy of the times. It is possible that we today, at the tail-end of the scientific revolution, have gone too far the other way and spend so much time and effort in successfully improving our planetary accommodation that we have rather forgotten about God, or the landlord.

This may account for the fact that, in spite of all our undoubted improvements of human living conditions, the benefits of such are still unfairly spread throughout the world. We are also in danger of exhausting the mineral heritage of the earth and polluting ourselves into extinction. The current re-awakening interest in the 'inner worlds', the occult and new forms of religion and a concern for the ecological environment, may show an increasing realisation that somewhere along the line, in recent centuries, we took a wrong turning, and that wrong turning may have been the separation of science and technology from a religious context.

6 NATURAL AND CELESTIAL MAGIC

A methodology of the occult

When Ficino started to investigate "natural magic", the structure of the universe as he saw it had already been defined by scholastic philosophy. Through a tradition of such great systematic thinkers as Thomas Aquinas, a poet of the genius of Dante could present it in poetic art. Ficino was a keen student of Dante and we would do well to examine just what they actually believed, for it has a considerable effect on much that has followed.

Ficino, as translator for Cosimo de Medici, had the task of translating the Hermetic literature from the Greek, and this was considered so important that it took precedence even over the works of Plato. We have already mentioned some of the reasons for this high regard.

There had always been a debased kind of Hermeticism: an illiterate mass of witchcraft, old folk remedies and some of it no doubt good folk medicine but also containing much superstition, barbarous beliefs and practices. Ficino felt that his work of translation would help restore such fallen and debased ideas to their true pinnacle as a high form of human knowledge.

Ficino was a doctor, as well as priest and translator, and his magical ideas took shape as part of a medical treatise. What he advocated would be rated harmless enough today, perhaps even psychologically beneficial, but he had to be careful not to offend ecclesiastical prejudices.

He advocated the use of colour and sound as a way of counterbalancing any tendency to mental imbalance. This was in the context of the planetary classification of man's psychology and environment. Thus if a scholar had a tendency to melancholia, Ficino would say he was suffering, (by the over-application of his type of work) from a

surfeit of influences pertaining to Saturn. To counteract this, Ficino advocated that he deliberately surround himself periodically with the influences of less melancholic and 'studious' celestial bodies, such as Venus or the Sun.

This could be achieved by wandering in the fields on sunny days or when the morning or evening star was in the sky, picking flowers attributed to Sol or Venus, or one could set up an artificial environment in a private room.

In this room one would have lamps representing the various planets and arranged according to one's needs, together with appropriate flowers, decorations and colours. Then one would play and sing suitable planetary hymns, the words taken from the traditional pagan Orphic Hymns, which Ficino had translated. The melodies were also composed upon certain symbolic conventions appropriate to the planets.

Ficino was at great pains to point out that this was *natural* magic, that it simply made use of the correspondences between various natural forces, and thus had no area of conflict with the claims of religion. To support his views in case he should be charged with heresy, he also marshalled the evidence of Aquinas, Lantantius and any who had written favourably of the Hermes literature, including the pseudo-Dionysius.

His caution paid off in that he was not so charged; but there were others, less inhibited, who rushed into the gateway that he had opened. One of the most important of these was Pico della Mirandola, a brilliant Renaissance mind, who had studied systematically all the known philosophies. He proposed, at the age of twenty-four, a synthesis of them, which he offered to defend in public debate, in Rome.

Pico was a student of Hebrew, and had studied the 'secret wisdom' of the Jews, who led a pariah existence as part of, but not accepted the Christian world of the times.

They had an oral mystical/magical tradition that was compiled and written down by Moses de Leon in 1305. This compilation was called the *Zohar*, or "*Book of Splendour*", and together with an early work called the "*Book of Formation*", or *Sepher Yetzirah*, is the key work in this system. The system is called the *Qabalah*, from the Hebrew word QBL ("to receive") as the teaching was traditionally conveyed from mouth to ear. The Qabalistic teaching had many leaders and developers, such as Abraham Abulafia, but it is not our purpose to trace its descent through purely Jewish traditions but to discuss its effect upon the Christian world of the time.

The Jewish stream, important though it may have been to Jewry, did not have an important impact on Western Europe, though its Christianised off-shoots did — if in a somewhat different form from the original Jewish version.

The contribution that Pico della Mirandola made to the natural magic of Ficino was to introduce two further levels to its scope. Whereas Ficino was content with the planetary or celestial correspondences that could be drawn up and worked upon in relation to natural objects, Pico, from the Qabalah, introduced angelic correspondences to all the planets and stars, and beyond that, correspondences to Aspects of God Himself. Naturally this was not taken lightly by the ecclesiastical authorities.

Today Ficino's magic could be looked upon as efficacious upon a psychological level. There are two sides to it; the ceremonial and the talismanic.

Given a course of meditation and study that fixes in the mind associative connections between various planetary symbols and colours, sounds, objects, emotions, and so on, it could be conceded that further meditation in surroundings that accentuate the one object of existence that is generally attributed to that planet, would concentrate the mind, to a higher degree than normal, and that this could possibly have an out-of-the-ordinary effect upon consciousness. We have, of recent years, received reports of experiments in complete sensory deprivation in connection with space research; what we have in Ficino's magic is a sensory *concentration* upon one particular range of experience.

As an example of the traditional magical field of correspondences, or sympathies, let us take the planet Jupiter. An application of Ficino's magic would concentrate upon the colour deep blue; the principle of mercy, rulership and magnanimity; the amethyst or sapphire; the olive; the shamrock; the centaur; cedar perfume or incense; the wand, sceptre or shepherd's crook; any solid geometric figure but principally the tetrahedron, or pyramid; the equal-armed cross; tin; the zodiacal sign Sagittarius; the image of a crowned and throned king; the number four; the digestive system; gout; and so on. A little examination will show that these are not completely arbitrary choices but follow upon a basic traditional number and colour symbolism.

Such attributions are not rightly fixed, but nor are they completely arbitrary. There is a level in the mind that tends to sort out the relatedness and relevance of objects used as symbols so that there is, an agreement between one magical symbol and another.

From a catalogue such as we have made in relation to Jupiter it can easily be imagined that a ceremonial ritual with surrounding symbolic

furnishings could be made, and that this would ably concentrate the mind in a particular direction. One could even go to less trouble and expense and simply sit in a quiet and darkened room and meditate upon such symbols, or perhaps just have one such symbol or small collection of symbols before one.

7 GROUP MINDS AND MASS MEDIA

The social impact of the occult

It is generally considered, from the experience of those who have practical knowledge of occultism, that effects upon the mind are greatly increased when there is more than one person present. Some go so far as to posit a kind of square rule, or geometric progression as to the psychological power generated. That is, two people generate four times the effect of one, three people nine times, and so on. We would not quantify it so precisely, as obviously much will depend upon the subjective condition of those present, but there would seem to be an optimum practical working number between about seven and thirteen. To have less means that personal factors still obtrude in the working of the whole, whereas to have more makes the situation somewhat less flexible and controllable — even psychologically 'stodgy'. It is not easy to describe the conditions but experience soon gives the idea.

In this we are moving into the psychology of the group, which ranges from the pioneering "*Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*" by Trotter, to the considerable corpus of work on the group mind by Jung.

There is a popular tradition in occult circles that Hitler and his associates were steeped in occultism of a dubious kind — what would popularly be called "Black Magic". Be this as it may, certainly a pioneer of the psychological manipulation of masses was Dr. Joseph Goebels. The dramatic scenic effects of the Nuremberg rally and the semi-mystical aura deliberately developed about the banners, the party symbols and the Fuhrer indicates that we are close to the principles of Ficino's 'natural magic' if a perversion of them.

Goebels also realised that such methods could be extended to the

media of radio and film. Indeed, in the cinema, with a group of people sitting in relative quiet and darkness, their attention fixed on a bright screen upon which images are flashed, we have a device which would have overjoyed Ficino and the other Renaissance magicians as a magical instrument of great power.

We would do well to ponder to what extent we are affecting ourselves psychologically by such performances (an extension of what were once very aptly called 'magic lantern' shows); and particularly in the light of what we have already said about how the deep movements and externalised structure of the soul — the gods of old — are the very stuff of popular entertainment. Some war and even cowboy films could hardly be better constructed rituals of Mars, and some other types of film leave few aspects of the Cult of Aphrodite unexplored. International female stars have clearly taken on the attributes of the goddess. The larger-than-life eccentricity that has become a tradition of the movie industry has some relation to an expansion or inflation of the psyche that is due to focussed mob adulation. One may call this an aspect of psychology, but it is also within the province of magic as properly understood.

Magic, according to the definition of one modern exponent, Dion Fortune, is the art of causing changes in consciousness in accordance with will.

This is as ordinary or extraordinary as one likes to make it. It can simply be a changing of mood by appropriate music, symbols, colours or lights — either in oneself or others. This may seem relatively harmless, and even pointless, but it is but a jumping-off point to other states of consciousness. Instilling fear, and belief that some unknown force will be actively working against the life or property of the victim is in the province of the darker aspects of sorcery or witchcraft. This is no 'mere superstition' to the primitive mind — African natives can be actually killed by it. There were real grounds for the anti-witch hysteria in Western Europe. Deplorable though the savagery of much 'witch-hunting' may have been there is another side to it — the genuine fears of a type of evil or wonder-working against which there was no known defence.

The piercing of a wax doll with pins or nails, or the unravelling of a piece of red wool as its "life thread" — almost always with the knowledge of the intended victim — may seem as childish games to our modern minds, but the motivation is the same as the use of actual physical weapons. The fears and phobias of one's own childhood may bring the realisation that the stuff of 'childish games' is in fact not to be lightly dismissed.

In discussing witchcraft we should distinguish between the traditional

use of the term as the craft of the weak, "bent", or wicked, and its use nowadays by the neo-pagan movement, who, following a false etymology, equate it with the craft of "the wise".

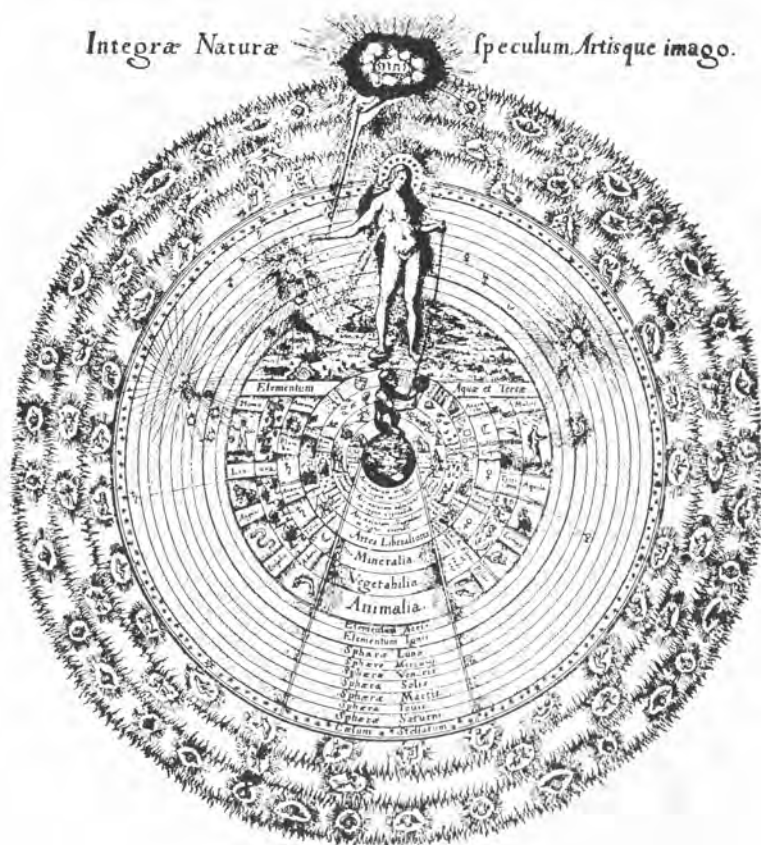
Today's neo-pagan movement is more a religious than an occult phenomenon, and is a possible reaction against an institutionalised Christian church, on the one hand, and an institutionalised urban society on the other. It is a generally laudable "back to nature" movement reviving old folklore and legends, and seeking religious experience in Nature. Though theologically it may be pantheism rather than theism, and though it may have some strange off-shoots and manifestations (as do most religious movements), it is a celebration of the Old Religion — pre-Christian Western paganism — rather than witchcraft, even if many of its adherents, particularly those with a penchant for publicity, do call themselves witches.

But to return to the general psychology of magic, we may see that a genuine belief in the *deeper* powers possible by seemingly simple psychological methods can well bring about the possibility of deeper and wider-ranging effects than a mere temporary change of mood.

There is no doubt that Ficino felt more effect from the appropriate planetary colours and symbols than we might do, firstly because he had formed, by intellectual effort, a connection between them, and secondly because he firmly *believed* it as a fact of nature. Such intellectual connections may be discovered by us moderns if we are prepared to research into the lore of ancient times. But belief does not come so easily. We live in disbelieving times, with faith more in our own technological cleverness than in any deeper side to existence or to a Creator of it all. Whether we need to learn the lesson of Daedalus and Icarus, the clever technological father whose son was killed by flying too near the Sun on man-made wings, time will tell. There are nowadays forebodings about where the scientific method is leading us that would have been unthinkable a generation ago when all seemed progress and light. A re-stimulation of interest in matters occult might well be a healthy reaction to neglected deeper instincts. It appears as an escapist abrogation of intellect and responsibility only to those who are too thoroughly steeped in the pre-conceptions of our own age.

We start to strike the deeper issues with the addition, by Pico della Mirandola, of Qabalistic Magic to the Natural Magic of Marsilio Ficino. This led to a magical formulation of a three-tier universe exemplified by the division of the study of Magical Philosophy into three branches, one above the other. These were Theology, Mathematics and Physics.

The study of Theology is not only that of man's knowledge of God as traditionally understood in academic theology, but also the way that

*Integræ Natura**Speculum Artisque imago.*

The Three-Tier Universe

The Physical World of the Elements upon which mineral, vegetable and animal life proliferate, symbolised by the ape, is joined to the Heavenly World of God and the angels by the intermediate Celestial or Astral World of the crystalline planetary spheres, a world of fructifying imagination symbolised by the naked female form of the Soul of the World. From the 17th century Rosicrucian writer Robert Fludd.

God continues to act within the Universe through the ministrations and powers of celestial beings or spirits.

The study of Mathematics is not just the rationalistic study it is today but an attempt to define the archetypal principles behind form, and the 'inner' laws that govern actions and events in the world.

The study of Physics is not simply a branch of physical science as it is today, but a study of the occult sympathies with all other aspects of nature, and bearing in mind the inner mathematical and theological linkages.

None of this would cut much ice in our current academic disciplines but it should not be dismissed out of hand for that — there are reasonable grounds for asserting that our technological civilisation has not solved all the problems of the universe. We need to examine just what we may have rejected for inadequate reasons during the past three or four hundred years.

Although in the general conspectus our academic traditions and standards are high, there are still limitations and blind spots caused by political and social pressures, and even by fashion. An academic needs to be brave to investigate an area that seems to be out of the general run of "respectable" research. There has also been, until recently, an extremely limiting degree of specialisation. From all this it is possible for certain matters to have dropped from academic concern, not necessarily because they have been disproved or discredited, but because they have been forgotten or neglected.

When truths are neglected they tend to spring up in all kinds of 'unofficial' forms, whether in the scientific or religious field. They are usually seized upon by the unstable and the unqualified; 'dropped out' subjects tend naturally to attract 'dropped out' people, and this serves further to alienate 'official' opinion and standards.

We are not saying that all the 'dropped out' subjects are worthy of reclamation or are repositories of great truths, any more than 'dropped out' people are all shining intellects rising above their age. But just as one can have the occasional brilliant intellect, who is unable to fit into the preconceptions of his own generation, so, we submit, is it possible to have the subject-area which is a vein of great worth, but discredited because it does not fit into current preconceptions.

Occultism, in one sense, is a great refuse-heap of rejected knowledge and speculation that will not stay rejected, and therefore much of it bears re-examination, from time to time, in the light of new insights and understandings. Such new insights have been gained in subject-areas as diverse as mystical theology, psycho-analysis, mathematics, arche-

ology, psychology, pharmacology, social anthropology and even the physical sciences.

It is progress in the physical sciences and in technology that has greatly improved our lot over the last three hundred years. At the same time we should not let this very success blind us to other possibilities.

We can, in the light of modern historical scholarship (such as Frances Yates' *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, "*The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*" etc.), see how some of this rejection of 'occult' subjects came about.

Originally the 'magical' impulse was very much the same as the 'scientific'. It was the declared aim of Trithemius of Sponheim, for example, to build a vast communications system across the known world, only that he advocated angelic and physical means whereas we have now done the same thing by technology. Whilst giving all due credit to the development of telecommunications we should not at the same time entirely discredit the angelic and the psychical.

There was indeed no easy dividing-line between what we now regard as occult subjects and the physical sciences. Great thinkers and scientists of the past (Elias Ashmole, Roger Bacon, Giordano Bruno, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Halley and even Isaac Newton) easily encompassed both.

8 VISIONS OF THE MILLENNIUM

The power behind the occult

Before we had this great technological upsurge as a panacea for all ills, mankind's discontent with his lot tended to be expressed in religious terms. Things were bad and uncomfortable, they always *had* been bad and uncomfortable, and things always *were* going to be bad and uncomfortable. The only real hope was the End of the World, or, failing that, the Dawning of a New Age.

This kind of eschatological hope had, oddly enough, like the religious traditions of Europe, come originally from the Jews. Since the great days of the Kingdom of David (about 1000 B.C.) there had always been the hope of the Messiah who would come and institute a world order, a new age of justice and harmony, a kind of New Eden. To the practical Jewish mind, which has the characteristic of being very down-to-earth at the same time as being capable of high metaphysical flights, this meant just that: a real physical world order and nothing unworldly or symbolic about it. This found concrete expression in the revolt of Judas Maccabeus, and by no means the last one either, although better known to the Gentile world because of its Biblical context.

Professor Norman Cohn has delineated many of the popular religious movements of the Middle Ages, and shown the connections between millenial hopes and heresies and the first stirrings of a proletarian social and political movement. (*vide "The Pursuit of the Millennium"*). This religious revolutionary fervour surfaces again and again until its eventual secularisation in the eighteenth-century, culminating in the French and American Revolutions.

One of the great Christian Millenial movements foresaw the end of

the world, or at any rate the start of a New Age, in 1260. This even had the acknowledgement of the Popes of the time, partly because of the quite convincing case put for it by Joachim de Floris, a Calabrian visionary, who, by calculations based on Biblical chronology divided the history of the world up into an Age of the Father, an Age of the Son, and an Age of the Holy Spirit. The first age had been under the fear of God and the Old Law of the Old Testament; the second under the love of God and pertaining to the New Testament and the foundation and rise of Christianity; while the third age, yet to come, would be under the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who would overturn the corruption of the current world, bring all to judgement and renew all things.

We find ourselves here in a great complex of tangled threads of hopes and traditions. The discontent with the church bubbled and rumbled on until its open dissolution into separate parts when the Protestant churches broke away from Rome at the time of the Reformation. The beginnings of this can be seen in the thirteenth century when the whole of Germany was placed under an interdict. When the church officially withdrew from all its religious functions such as baptism, marriages, burials — no light sanction in those days — it left the way open for monks and friars, and even laymen and self-appointed preachers and prophets, to preach to the people, usually in a way very critical of the clerical hierarchy.

In those mass movements and the religious and occult factors that were implied in them, we have the phenomenon of the first Crusade, perhaps the first great demonstration of an international movement, at any rate in the West.

There were many political and social reasons for there to be a wide popular response to the preaching for the Crusade by Pope Urban II in 1095. The Pope himself found it a great opportunity to exert influence in the East. The Great Schism between the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox church centred in Byzantium, had but comparatively recently occurred in 1054. The encroachment of Turkish miscreant hordes upon the great Christian city of the East which eventually forced the Emperor Michael Comnenis to appeal to Rome for aid, must have seemed almost like divine intervention and vindication for the Papacy.

The popular response to his preaching for a Crusade was overwhelming. The Norman aristocracy found it appealing because through their system of primogeniture a father's property went to his eldest son which meant that there was a whole class of land-hungry younger sons. These welcomed the chance to hew out some lands for themselves

in the East.

As for the ordinary people, their response was even more enthusiastic and stemmed largely from the poor conditions in which they lived. But there was a great deal more to their enthusiasm than a desire for emigration and the saving of Jerusalem from the miscreant became invested with a charismatic glow. This seems strange, for Jerusalem had been in the hands of the Turks for centuries, having fallen to the Caliph Omar in the early days of Islamic expansion in 638.

The whole thing became a religious and millennial quest, with the Turks seen as demonic agents and the Crusaders as the blessed Elect who would save the city of God from evil and usher in an age of a New Jerusalem. Popular preachers, such as Peter the Hermit, appeared and incited the common people to go on the great holy war of divine liberation. The Church encouraged volunteers for the Crusades by giving protection to the property of all who went and by promising them forgiveness of sins and a sure place in Heaven should they fall in battle in the Divine cause.

The effects grew out of hand. A great rabble began moving towards the East, the People's Crusade, a full year before a properly equipped military expedition, comprised of knights and soldiers, could be got under way.

The beginnings of this popular movement was not edifying. They persecuted Jews on the way, as part of this Christian mission, and mistaking Bulgarian Christians for heathens massacred them too. The Emperor of Byzantium, when he saw this vast rabble assembling at his gates, pillaging and looting to sustain themselves, transported them across the Bosphorus in short order, where, soon afterward, they were massacred by the Turks. Those few who escaped death were taken into slavery, never to be seen again.

The Crusades are very important in any survey of the occult in the West. Firstly because they represent, particularly in their beginnings, a great popular movement motivated by 'inner' or non-physical considerations, however much political or social conditions might be contributory factors. This is the first great international "New Age" movement, manifesting an inner urge of the soul, being projected outwards onto physical circumstances. This shows two things: firstly, the great power of such inner urges, the source of the projections; secondly the disaster that can ensue when action, based on these projections, does not take full account of the physical realities of the situation.

The other important fact about the Crusades is that they allowed a major influx of ideas into Europe. When the Islamic religion was founded the Arabs had been a backward people in a forgotten corner

of the known world. In the seventh century, with a new religion to give impetus to their concurrent expansionist political impulse, they had swept on to conquer lands as far as the Pyrenees in the West and India and China in the East. As an 'ignorant' but intelligent race they had absorbed all the ideas and sciences they encountered and built up a great body of learning while Europe was still encumbered by scholastic theological speculation.

Algebra, for instance, is an Arabic word, and we owe much of our mathematics to them, particularly the concept of zero. They were also responsible for the science of *Alchemy*, which, leaving aside any occult or spiritual associations, was the foundation of the chemical sciences of today.

Although there was already some cultural interchange through the channels of trade, the confrontation that the Crusades brought about made for a deeper and more fruitful exchange, even if some of the fruits were strange ones. This was aided by the practice of holding knights and nobles for ransom rather than killing them or selling them into bondage. Some were thus kept in Arab custody for years and learned much of the Arabic culture.

On the occult and religious side this led to a number of movements that profoundly affected Western culture. Amongst them were the cult of Courtly Love, the guilds of 'free masons' who were responsible for the sudden in-rush of the Gothic style of architecture, the military-religious chivalry of the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller and the Holy Grail legends.

Courtly Love has close connections with England for the Queen of the Troubadour Minstrelsy was Eleanor of Aquitaine, the remarkable mother of Kings Richard I and John. She married first the King of France and then Henry Plantagenet, who became Henry II.

It is difficult to trace its origins. William of Poitiers, the first recorded Troubadour, died in 1137, and Richard I was connected with the movement, at least in legend, by Blondel seeking his imprisoned master by playing and singing beneath prison towers throughout all Europe.

Ostensibly it was simply a courtly convention in which young men composed verse and song praising their lady-love in superlative terms, placing her on a romantic pedestal and descanting about the agony of unrequited or forbidden love. The loved one was never one's spouse, nor ever became so, and thus there was an adulterous ambience about it all.

But it would be a mistake to consider it to be simply a movement of moral laxity. There were some rigid rules and conventions in which this troubadour passion expressed itself and was received. This ranged

from 'looking', to the ultimate 'the giving of thanks', which could be a euphemism for physical union, and there were generally seven grades or stages of approach to the beloved, which probably held occult connotations.

The adoration of a lady and an approach to her by seven stages suggests that behind Courtly Love was a goddess cult that presumably came from the Near East as a result of the Crusades. There is a close parallel with the seven stages of Sufi mysticism, and though that mysticism is turned toward Allah, the divine love poems of the Sufi mystics are couched in terms that are as erotic as the 'Song of Songs' in the Bible.

Contemporary with this movement was the concern of the church with heresy. Also, in the period from about 1100 to 1300, we see a considerable increase in the regard held for the Blessed Virgin Mary, as a possible counter to any heretical tendency towards a Queen Venus. This period saw the foundation of the Dominican Order, who, besides being teachers, have been dubbed 'hunters of heresy'; also the beginning of the Inquisition. One Crusade during this period was directed not at the Infidel Moor but at the region of Albi in the South of France, where a dualistic heresy had sprung up. The Knights Templar, one of the two main orders of warrior monks who had been formed soon after the First Crusade, ostensibly to keep open the pilgrim routes, were steeped in secret rites and traditions of their own and were finally dissolved for alleged heresy. There were, as always, politically expedient reasons for so doing, but nonetheless there was something astir that certainly disturbed the religious orthodoxy of the times.

We may get some hint of it by the Order's close association with the Temple of Solomon at Jerusalem, from which, indeed, they derived their name. There is also the fact that the ritual and secret teachings of Freemasonry are based upon the measurements of Solomon's Temple, which is described with considerable numerological and symbolical exactitude in the Old Testament. To this we may ally the sudden upspringing of Gothic Architecture by the 'free masons' and it has even been suggested that the money for such projects — and the number of huge gothic structures throughout France, even at the most unprepossessing places — came from alchemical gold, fantastic though this may sound. Whatever one may choose to believe or disbelieve in the fascinating web of conjecture that has grown up about this period, we may plainly claim that this is the stuff of occultism.

Occultism we have defined as rejected science and religion. There is much that is hidden and rejected here, including a rejected or lost

technology. And the canon, based on the Pythagorean 'Golden Mean, by which Gothic architecture was developed, is worthy of some examination, bringing to the subject areas of rejected (or occult) design and rejected (or occult) mathematics. They may have been rejected for good reason. On the other hand they may not. Occult enquiry simply asks of modern man an open-minded attitude to such things and a possible reopening of closed files – and minds.

9 THE RISE OF TECHNOLOGY

The decline of the occult

The first blow in prestige received by the Hermetic Tradition (which is the backbone of the Western occult tradition) was from the textual criticism of Isaac Casaubon who proved that the Hermetic literature was not of vast antiquity but from the first few centuries A.D. Thus, what had seemed miraculously prophetic in them was in fact but a record of that which was past. Similarly, on the theological front, was the true dating of the works alleged to be by Dionysius the Areopagite.

The church authorities lost little time in degrading the Hermetic Tradition and all that went with it. But in spite of this there was a role that Hermeticism played as a buffer between the contending forces of the Reformation. The skein of events and opinions is a very tangled one, yet the occult plays an important role in the whole history of the Reformation and the development of the scientific method.

We have noted that it was the 'occult' attitude of mind that saw man as an enquiring investigator of nature and initiated the scientific method. This is, in a way, an origin of the Faust legend. Was man seeking forbidden knowledge? Was this attitude of mind a sort of re-enactment of the disaster of the disobedience in the Garden of Eden? The medieval mind would have thought so. The awakening magical mind saw it rather as a step forward in the dignity and cosmic significance of man. One of Pico della Mirandola's great theses was on *The Dignity of Man*.

The developing confrontation between the Reformation and Counter-Reformation saw a body of liberal thinkers, including such names as Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Thomas More, becoming students of a philosophical religious Hermeticism that sought a middle way between

the conflicting forces.

In her study, *"The Rosicrucian Enlightenment"*, Frances Yates gives evidence for the later practical development of this movement in the attempt to make the state of Bohemia into a buffer between the contending religious forces of Western Europe, split so devastatingly between Protestant and Catholic. This was the political basis of the Rosicrucian Manifestos of the early seventeenth-century that made such an impact in their day. Briefly they announced the existence of a secret brotherhood of magical adepts who sought to bring peace and wisdom to the world.

The state of Bohemia had a drastically short existence and fell into ruins and the Rosicrucian movement continued as an intellectual rather than a political movement. Its main protagonists in the later seventeenth-century were Robert Fludd and the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher, who represent the last flowering of the occult approach to knowledge before it disappears underground, not to re-appear significantly until our own day.

The intellectual event of real importance in the later seventeenth-century was the formation of the Royal Society, when the scientific investigation of nature received royal patronage. Even so, it met with severe criticism and religious pressures and for this reason the Royal Society sought not to espouse any field of study that might lead to a confrontation with religious authority.

Something of the passions of the time may be gleaned from the actions of Edward VI's commissioners who burned mathematical books from the libraries of the University of Oxford on the grounds that they were papist and magical. If this was the attitude towards mathematics, what was likely to be the attitude to alchemy, astrology and other occult sciences? Yet these now disreputable and neglected sciences were certainly of considerable interest to scientists such as Newton, Elias Ashmole and Kepler.

But the political and religious expediency of not jeopardising the reputation of science by avoidable confrontation with religion, plus the practical results of a growing technology were sufficient for the occult arts and sciences, because of their religious ambience and inexactitude in the physical sense, to go into a decline and to follow an underground course through most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

At the end of the eighteenth century there was an attempted resurgence with the work of Thomas Taylor who was a stalwart defender of ancient philosophy and science and who translated the works of Plato, Proclus and other ancients into the vernacular. He had a considerable effect upon the romantic poets of the early nineteenth

century: Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and upon Emerson and the New England Transcendentalists in the United States. The movement was essentially literary rather than scientific, but one of high distinction whose significance has not yet been fully realised except by scholars such as Kathleen Raine.

We still live in times uncongenial to a full or sympathetic appraisal of these matters. This phase has lasted for three to four hundred years but at last does show signs of swinging back to a more balanced position. We are learning that the scientific method is not all — though many inexact subjective sciences, from sociology to psychology, try to restrict themselves entirely to it. But though statistical methods and the behaviour of rats in mazes or salivating dogs may bring a certain degree of knowledge at its own level, it misses so much.

The position has been well summed up by Thomas Taylor in his introduction to *'Theoretic Arithmetic'* (a book on the occult mathematical philosophy of Pythagorus) and what he states can be applied to sciences other than mathematics:

"In consequence of the oblivion indeed, into which genuine philosophy has fallen, through the abolition of her schools, the mathematical disciplines have been rather studied with a view to the wants and conveniences of the merely animal life, than to the good of intellect in which our very being and felicity consist. For the whole attention of those who have applied to the mathematics, has been directed to the oboli, and not to the steps of ascent; and thus their views have been grovelling, they have crept where they should have soared. Hence, too, the greatest eye of the soul has been blinded and buried, though as Plato elegantly observes, it is purified and resuscitated by the proper study of these sciences, and is better work saving than ten thousand corporeal eyes, since truth becomes visible through this alone.

The observation particularly applies to Theoretic Arithmetic, the study of which has been almost totally neglected, for it has been superseded by practical arithmetic, which though eminently subservient to vulgar utility, and indispensably necessary in the shop and counting house, yet is by no means calculated to purify, invigorate, and enlighten the mind, to elevate it from a sensible to an intellectual life, and thus promote the most real and exalted good of man."

On the purely magical front, after the seventeenth century, little happened on the surface, apart from the publication of a magical work called *The Magus* by Francis Barrett in 1801. There was however a growing awareness of it in post-Revolutionary France and came to a literary flowering in the works of Alphonse Louis Constant under the Hebraicised name of Eliphas Levi. His works, *The History of Magic*

and *Transcendental Magic*, despite some factual shortcomings are still highly thought of by practitioners today.

There is certainly evidence of various secret or semi-secret organisations throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in the British Isles and the European continent, centering around various forms of freemasonry, although most freemasonry today appears to be little more than a friendly society structured around various occult ritual forms and philosophies that most of its members do not understand. In the eighteenth century, the Comte de St. Germain, be he charlatan or great spiritual adept — and there is evidence for either assessment — certainly created a vogue for a form of “Egyptian Freemasonry.” Eliphas Levi and Francis Barratt were both obviously but the visible tip of a considerable iceberg in both France and Britain. Lord Lytton, known best for his novels such as *Zanoni*, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, and so on, was also, as some of his fiction shows a member of an active occult organisation.

10 THE PAST ONE HUNDRED YEARS

The resurgence of the occult

It was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century that the assumed materialism of the previous two hundred years gave way to major inroads by occultism. This manifested itself in two ways; the Theosophical Society under the principal impetus of Madame Blavatsky and the less organisationally successful, but now almost legendary, Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

Madame Blavatsky was originally known as a spiritualist medium, and in spite of the paucity of overt activity in nineteenth century occultism we should not forget the spiritualist movement which commenced in America in 1848, along with a number of other religious sects that sprang up with frontier America such as the Mormons, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Jehovah's Witnesses and others. Though, apart from Christian Science (a form of ‘New Thought’ which considers ill-health to be all in the mind, and an illusion), none of these religious organisations were specifically occult.

Spiritualism is reputed to have begun with the Fox sisters hearing rapping noises which developed into communication with the dead. This led to a tremendous craze for table turning, table tapping, automatic writing and other now well-known activities of spiritualist mediums for allegedly contacting the departed, and the formation of a movement which included Queen Victoria and excited the attention and enthusiasm of a number of scientists and literati of the day, from Conan Doyle to Sir Oliver Lodge. The movement still exists, with churches throughout many countries, and the Society for Psychical Research was founded largely in response to the challenge to science that the movement made.

Madame Blavatsky differed from most spiritualist mediums by the quality and volume of her occult communications. In place of personal family messages from a deceased relative to the still incarnate bereaved, which is the staple ingredient of spiritualist communication, she claimed to have made contact with a body of superior beings who were world teachers. In the first instance they made their presence known through written communications (the famous *Mahatma Letters*) that were delivered by various occult means, such as teleportation.

She also developed a body of teaching, received clairvoyantly from the same sources, which she reported in two large works, *'Isis Unveiled'* and *'The Secret Doctrine'*. The teaching is a vast cosmology purporting to give a history of the world, the universe and the cosmos, and is based on the philosophical religious tenets of Buddhism and Hinduism, with a seasoning from nineteenth-century scientific beliefs. It sees everything as a series of cycles within cycles going on for all time in a great chain of cosmic evolution, with human beings of the present having evolved from an animal condition on a previous planet and from a vegetable and mineral existence before that.

The Theosophical Society, from being a body concerned with investigating spiritualist and occult phenomena, became the vehicle for the dissemination and development of these teachings. In this it was highly successful, partly because, with the decay of nineteenth-century ecclesiastical credibility, the time was ripe for it, and partly because of the quality and enthusiasm of those who followed Madame Blavatsky, especially the former campaigning atheist and freethinker, and champion of trade unionism and social reform, Annie Besant.

Much of the impetus was lost in the 1920's when the attempt to hail their young protege Krishnamurti as a World Teacher for the modern age, almost in place of Christianity, was repudiated by Krishnamurti himself. It should be said, however, Krishnamurti has developed a reputation as a spiritual teacher, though certainly not on the cosmic scale as was Theosophically claimed.

On the other hand the "Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn" developed from the indigenous underground streams of Western occult societies and offered a system of occult initiation which was based on Masonic and Rosicrucian traditions together with a large body of occult lore gleaned from the British Museum and other major libraries by S.L. McGregor Mathers, who became the driving force of the society — though also deriving his authority, like Madame Blavatsky, from 'Secret Chiefs'.

The Order attracted a number of celebrated adherents of whom the most famous was the poet W.B. Yeats. It began to disintegrate as an

organisation fairly soon however, and never achieved the coherence of the Theosophical Society, though the quality of its work must be rated highly in view of the number of occult groups that sprang from its *disjecta membra*.

One such was Aleister Crowley, probably the best known publicly, because of his penchant for outrageous behaviour (or pretending to it), which led to him being the first victim of a modern press campaign, when Horatio Bottomley's *John Bull* described him as "the wickedest man in the world". Crowley enjoyed this type of situation and exacerbated it by provocative attitudes in his books and general behaviour. Although no plaster saint, he is rightly respected by many serious occultists today because of his researches into the subject of magic. He was a great pioneer into psychic and psychedelic states of consciousness, fearlessly and indeed amorally so when it came to the effect upon consciousness of sex and drugs — though the principle guineapig was himself and he ended his days as a drug addict. He regrettably besmirched occultism by some of his actions and attitudes but his work remains a force, on the one hand in a technical sense for other practioners working in the field and on the other, in groups of students who try to continue in his footsteps. He is not a master who can be followed easily or without risk.

Other Golden Dawn initiates were Paul Case, who specialised in the Tarot, and whose organisation, The Builders of the Adytum still exists; Israel Regardie, who published most of the Golden Dawn rituals and teachings; A. E. Waite, one of the few occult writers and editors respected in academic circles, and who designed one of the best sets of modern Tarot cards and had his own group; and Dion Fortune whose *Mystical Qabalah* was a major achievement in plain commonsense occult exegesis, and whose own group produced, in turn, the occult writer W. E. Butler and your present author, Gareth Knight, both organisers of practical courses.

It could be said that the Golden Dawn failed, but only if success or failure is rated in terms of organisational coherence. It was in its time but a facet of Western occult groups, albeit a major one in a movement which seems to continue and to spread, not by throwing up a large multinational organisation but by the sowing of seeds to form small organisations and groups dispersed in place and time.

Another major stream of occultism stems from the Russian teacher Gurdjieff and his advocate Ouspensky. This line too has little evidence of organisational coherence but has a powerful tradition and although producing its own teaching, often tends to use other existing systems.

The Theosophical Society, whilst remaining a force in itself, at the

same time acted as a springboard for two other major organisations — the Lucis Trust and the Anthroposophical Society.

The Lucis Trust centres about the monumental work of Alice A. Bailey whose large books contain mostly the teachings of 'The Tibetan', allegedly one of the original Theosophical Society Masters, albeit a minor one in the Blavatsky days. Generally the works take the basic Theosophical teaching into greater technical detail and thus do not make easy reading, but there are many who live their lives by them. There is considerable emphasis on a world view of things and support for such organisations as the United Nations. A Christian element also takes some prominence, if not in a very orthodox sense for the main assumptions still being Buddhist and Hindu. It gives an air of universalism even if some major distinctions are blurred.

The Anthroposophical movement stems from Rudolf Steiner, originally a Theosophist, whose work in "spiritual science", particularly in the fields of education, medicine, art and agriculture have excited serious attention beyond the ambit of esoteric *officianados*. Although there is room to doubt some of the intuitional and unsupported teachings of Steiner (as in other great intuitives from Swedenborg to Blake or Boehme), there is much serious intellectual work done in sustaining research into currently unfashionable areas of theoretical knowledge. These include work on Goethe's theory of colour, which has been abandoned by science in favour of Newton's ideas. Also the constructions of projective geometry, a branch of mathematics which has much in common with artistic perspective and building and which flowered almost as part of the romantic movement in the nineteenth century. Although open to derision from those who may find it easier or more expedient to follow contemporary scientific trends, the Anthroposophical movement performs a valuable and classic occult function in keeping open avenues of study that have gone out of fashion but which might yet return one day to a position of importance.

Occultism generally has seen a great resurgence over the last twenty years. There is a certain cyclic pattern in its popularity — occultism is as subject to fashion as art or science. It is, we submit, a valid part of human activity.

What we hope may happen is that the current resurgence will be sufficient to reach a level whereby the relevance between various disparate disciplines may be seen, in the light of occult insights, to have much relevance one to the other.

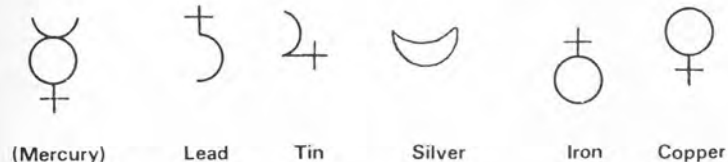
PART TWO

An Occult Glossary with recommended reading

ALCHEMY originated with the Arabs, as its prefix 'al' implies, though they probably got it from China in the first instance. Writers on the history of science generally regard it as a primitive form of chemistry, and to a large extent, in its laboratory experiments, it certainly was. A number of elements and important components were first isolated by alchemists at a time when chemistry and alchemy went hand in hand.

The psychologist Jung has, however, investigated a whole new approach to the subject. He sees it as a 'projection' of the alchemist's inner desires, his soul or psychological processes, onto a physical experiment. Thus in psychological terms the distillation process of the first solution of the mysterious 'prima materia' or First Matter, is the stirring of the 'unconscious' into some kind of integrating or spiritual activity.

In this Jung follows a lead given by a pioneering work of Mrs. Atwood, *A Suggestive Enquiry into the Hermetic Mystery*. But Jung's voluminous and erudite researches into the subject of alchemy have unearthed a number of interesting alchemical diagrams and theories, whether one wishes to take his psychological interpretations at face value or not. (e.g. *Psychology and Alchemy*, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, *Alchemical Studies*, etc.).



Another modern writer, Titus Burkhardt (in *Alchemy*) interprets the alchemical process as a psycho/spiritual one, seeing the stages of the process as exemplified by the traditional symbols for the principle 'alchemical' metals. The whole process is one involving consciousness, symbolised by Mercury, and the action of positive and negative principles, Sulphur and Salt, upon it. From a base state represented by Lead the pure reflective principle of consciousness is raised up through the cross of elemental instinctual consciousness, via the stage of Tin to a pure reflective state of Silver, represented by a double cup-like crescent. The next stage begins with the dawning of a spiritual radiating principle in instinctual consciousness, represented by Iron, which gradually rises to a position of dominance, Copper, and subsequently to full control, a condition symbolised by Gold.

In simple alchemical terms, which are in fact very complex and even confused when one reads original alchemical texts, the process is also described by colours: a black solution (nigredo) proceeding through the greening (viriditas) or organic growth to a white colour (albedo), from whence comes a range of all the colours in quick succession (cauda pavonis or peacock's tail) and a reddening to pure gold.

It should be said that there is rare and isolated (though well testified) evidence of actual gold having been made. But this evidence, flying in the face of modern scientific prejudice and belief, is in what Charles Forte considered to be of the category of the 'damned'. Something which nobody wants to believe. Charles Forte, though dismissed by some as no more than a journalist, is worthy of study as an encyclopaedic researcher and merciless publiciser of events which had no acceptable scientific explanation. (His books include *The Book of the Damned*, *New Lands, Lo!* and *Wild Talents*).



Symbolic Alchemical design

ASTRAL PROJECTION is the experience of being conscious of oneself as a coherent personality outside and apart from one's physical body. Those who have undergone it, assess it to be a major experience as it gives personal evidence of the possibility of survival of bodily death. Though this does not necessarily follow in terms of logic, it is certainly felt to be valid by those with first-hand information, something not, however, conspicuously easy to come by. The principle first-hand account of a series of such experiences is by Sylvan Muldoon, assisted by psychical researcher Hereward Carrington. It is notable that Sylvan Muldoon was seldom in the best of health and also that one projection was caused through shock by a fallen power cable! Following the publication of their book, *The Projection of the Astral Body*, they were able to follow it up with accounts by members of the public who had written in to them with similar experiences.

Other experiential and methodological books include, *Astral Projection* by Yram, (translated from the French), *Astral Projection* by Oliver Fox and *The Art and Practice of Astral Projection* by Ophiel.



The soul in the form of a bird hovering over the mummy

The 'Astral Body' in ancient Egypt

The methods used vary from training oneself to dissociate consciousness in sleep when dreaming, to complex visualisation of oneself as a 'body' outside one's physical body and then transferring consciousness. It is not an easy feat unless one has a particular 'gift' for it. The more recent *Journeys Out of the Body* by the American businessman Robert Monroe, is particularly interesting in that Monroe had no occult interests or inclinations at all, but suddenly found it happening to him. At first he thought he might be going mad and indeed did seek psychiatric help, but received little aid or comprehension.

His experiences confirm various types of projection. One form is close to the physical world with the ability to pass through solid objects and to move at great speed. Others are in being projected to other kinds of worlds, even with a different technology. Some experiences are evidently symbolic in character.

Emotion seems to play an important role in this level of experience and feelings of dislike can cause quite violent upsets and confrontations on 'the astral'. There is also a silver thread or cord usually found linking the physical and projected bodies, and it is felt that this is the thread of vitality which, if it were broken, would result in death. It is thought by some to be referred to in the Bible in the phrase "if ever the silver cord be loosed or the golden bowl [the projected aura] be broken."

Dr. Robert Crookall has spent much time in collecting testimony from those who have experienced such states, and these are recorded in his books, *The Projection of the Astral Body*, etc.

ASTROLOGY as a serious pursuit suffers drastically from its popularity as a superstition. The astrological columns in the popular press are no more than entertainment journalism for it is plainly ludicrous that a short paragraph or two should be able to predict the day's, week's or month's events for one twelfth of the population.

The twelve divisions used by astrological journalists are the sign in the heavens that the Sun happened to appear in at the date of birth. If one knows one's birthday one knows one's Sun sign, and important though the position of the Sun may be in astrology proper, it is but one facet among a great number of others.



17th-century French engraving showing correspondence of the signs of the Zodiac to the human body.

An astrological horoscope is a chart of the sky as seen from the place on the surface of the Earth at the moment of birth. There are thus, besides these two factors of accurate place and time, the positions of the Sun, the Moon and the eight planets. These are calculated in relation to the background of fixed stars (the Zodiac) against which they appear, their position above or below the horizon, (their 'House'), and the angles they may make one with another (their Aspects).

Having mounted such a chart, which calls for a fair degree of astronomical knowledge and arithmetical ability, the task remains of interpreting it into an analysis of character. Although sceptics say that this means that all babies born in the same maternity hospital at the same approximate times are stamped with the same character, those who have had their horoscopes drawn up and interpreted in this fashion, find it a helpful guide. It does not necessarily overthrow all factors of heredity or environment — but critics tend to be as blind and limited as enthusiasts.

There are various extensions from the basic Natal chart. The planetary and other positions can be extended forward in time with the idea of making predictions of future influences, trends or events. Also astrological charts can be made of nations for a political interpretation (Mundane Astrology), or for the birth of an idea (Horary Astrology).

Jeff Mayo's popular book *Teach Yourself Astrology*, is a good exposition by an intelligent practitioner for anyone new to the subject, and the literature of the subject is, in fact, vast. For those whose scientific orthodoxies are too deeply entrenched to stomach a real astrologer on his art, there will be some thought-provoking items in *The Cosmic Clocks* by Michel Gauquelin.

CLAIRVOYANCE comes in many forms and degrees. The most popular is probably that of crystal-gazing, though in fact the true clairvoyant can utilise any object which acts as a focus for concentration. In parts of the world where crystals are hard to come by, a pool of ink in the palm of the hand may be used. Other methods may be seeing 'pictures in the fire', or the contemplation of the tea-leaves in a cup, a spread of playing cards, or even an astrological chart. These matters come, strictly speaking, into our next topic, of Divination, but whilst there are set meanings for card reading, tea-leaf shapes, and stellar configurations, most practitioners would admit to there being a use of some clairvoyant faculty in interpreting complex phenomena.

It might be called a very light form of self-hypnosis, or trance; it is the inducing of a kind of dreaminess, or waking day-dream. Whilst, for most of us, such a process would simply produce subjective phantasies, the gifted clairvoyant would be able to pick up objective states, feelings or psychic conditions.

This is indeed the strength and weakness of clairvoyance, for it may well be picking up the subjective phantasies of the person consulting the clairvoyant. This would be the more so if this person were thinking and feeling very strongly about some particular body or facts or opinions.

Thus it can happen that a person going for advice on financial matters would have been dreaming and brooding over the imagined success of the schemes in question. These thoughts might be picked up by the clairvoyant and relayed back to the enquirer.

Similarly, those who consult clairvoyants for messages from recently deceased relatives have usually been dwelling upon these relatives in their grief so that the clairvoyant may well pick up a 'thought form' rather than a real discarnate communication. Seemingly good evidence for survival after death may thus be presented by the clairvoyant though all that is being proved is an ability for mental telepathy.

It should be said that a good and experienced clairvoyant should know when this kind of thing is happening. But whilst some clairvoyants are particularly gifted and wise in the use of their gifts there are many who are not. It is also a faculty that tends to come and go in a somewhat irrational and unpredictable fashion so that even good clairvoyants have their 'off' days. This is one reason why professional clairvoyance can lead to abuses where the clairvoyant is expected to give results, for a fee, at a specific date and time. Those good enough and honest enough will admit to it when their powers temporarily wane; others less gifted or ethical may be tempted to fake results.

DIVINATION is related to clairvoyance which is used, albeit unconsciously, in most good divination. More emphasis is placed on the mechanics of the operation and these are likely nowadays to take one of several main forms:

- a) **cartomancy**, or card reading, either with ordinary playing cards, or with their more elaborate forerunners, the Tarot cards (q.v.).
- b) the **I Ching**, an ancient Chinese system (q.v.).
- c) **geomancy** (q.v.) a method using marks made in sand.

In olden times there was a host of other 'omancies' ranging from foretelling the future from the flight of birds to examining the twitching entrails of slaughtered animals.

The rationale for the practice has received some support from Jung in his foreword to Wilhelm's translation of the *I Ching* and in his work *Synchronicity – An Acausal Connecting Principle*. Briefly, the idea is that any particular moment in time has its own quality, and therefore to consult a random pattern of conventional symbols cast at a particular time and with a particular intention is a means of gauging the interior or invisible forces at work at that particular time and in that particular context.

Whatever the theory, it seems to work for some people and faith in its working seems to be an important factor – which leads to the corollary that those who disbelieve are unlikely to receive help by such means and thus get proof of its efficacy.

An attitude of faith and belief whilst consulting the oracle, coupled with a healthy and critical scepticism of its results is recommended by most advocates of the system – blind credulity being no more encouraged than outright scepticism.

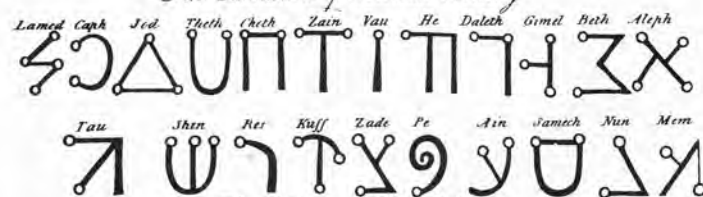
The oracle seems to work best when consulted in an attitude of respect, as if of a wise old counsellor. For the sceptical it will not work but it may lead the credulous a wild and merry dance, playing on their credulity; not necessarily in a malicious sense but by way of teaching them wisdom. As in much of occultism, one tends to get a combination of what one expects and what one deserves.

ENOCHIAN is a complex system of magic and divination that has recently enjoyed a vogue in certain esoteric circles but is little understood and hardly suitable for any occult beginner.

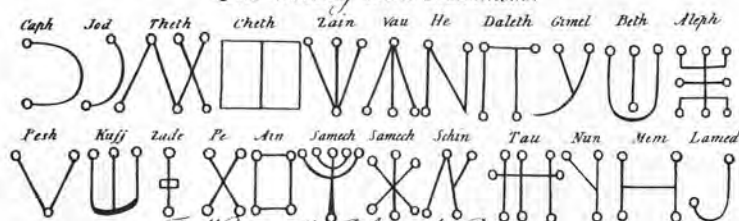
The Mysterious Characters of Letters delivered by Honorous call'd the Thuban Alphabet



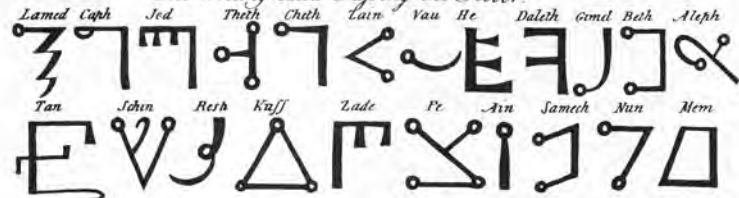
The Characters of Celestial Writing



The Writing call'd Malachim



The Writing call'd Pasing the River



Some magical alphabets

It stems from the work of the Elizabethan magus, Dr. John Dee who, together with a clairvoyant named Edward Kelley, had communication with some spirits, principally through the use of a crystal ball. Kelley would see the spirits in the crystal and in course of time constructed a set of tables of letters to which they would point, Dee writing down the letters so indicated.

In this way, besides the tables of letters, a series of 'Calls' was received, couched in a strange language called 'angelic' or 'Enochian'.

The system was revived by McGregor Mathers and incorporated into the curriculum of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The Knowledge Papers of the Order have gradually become available through various published works, of which the most important is Israel Regardie's *The Golden Dawn* where the basics of the system are described. The magician, Aleister Crowley, also experimented at some length with them and has recorded the results he got in his magical diaries.

Those who follow the work of Crowley or who feel inclined to revive in some degree the work of the Golden Dawn are therefore interested in the system but no one is yet certain exactly who the spirits behind the system are or were, nor whence the language derives, nor to what uses it has been or can be put.

A major principle of occult or magical working is that one knows exactly what one is doing and why one is doing it. That is why responsible magicians insist on students working from first principles.

It would seem that the Enochian system is connected with a particular type of Elemental, rather than angelic being, and such, though not necessarily evil, needs to be approached with some considerable care and skill.

ELEMENTALS are a generic name for various forms of consciousness that cannot be classed as human. They range from 'fairies at the bottom of the garden' to great Nature Spirits of natural locations — hill, wood, dale or river. In the higher reaches they become similar to angels or archangels set over countries, nations and races.

The concepts of such beings is no doubt likely to put a strain upon the credulity of many people today but those who prefer their psychic fauna and flora dressed in scientific terms can approach such ideas via such psychological concepts as 'group minds', 'group souls', or personifications of natural surroundings by projection of aspects of the human personality.

This may be in part, but the seasoned occultist would go



Impression of an elemental

further and credit these beings with an independent and objective existence. At the fairy end of things we have a close association with folk lore, and K.M. Briggs' novel *Hobberdy Dick* is a fine evocation of the type of life and consciousness that is meant by the term 'elemental' at this level. Another interesting work, complete with photographs, is *The Cottingley Fairies* by E.L. Gardner, witnessed by two small girls; also *The Kingdom of the Gods* by Geoffrey Hodson.

Occultists suspect there to be forms of life which are not quite so cosy, and many consider that to humanise forms by which they are visualised is indeed a human projection. However there is some evidence, albeit largely subjective, for the existence of non-human forms of consciousness that are completely 'other' from the human race.

Elementals are traditionally classified by magical writers into four categories, corresponding to the four traditional elements or states of

matter. Salamanders for fire (or radiation), sylphs for air (or gas), undines for water (or liquid), gnomes for earth (or the solid state). Much magical training is taken up with the balancing up of the 'elementals within', or the subjective counterparts of these physical states.

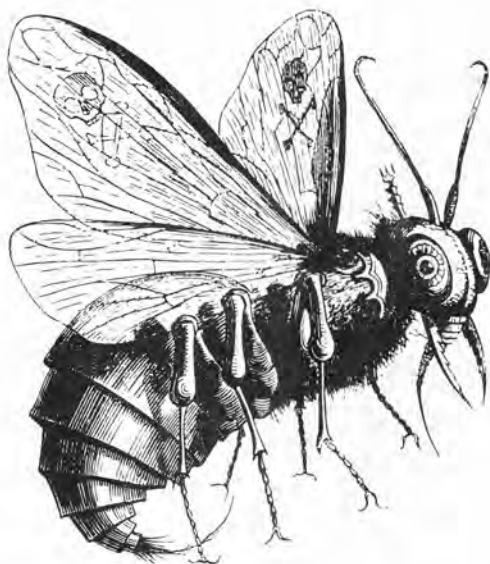
It is suspected however that certain new types of elemental may have come into the Earth's sphere perhaps by way of nuclear fission



Early print of Robin Goodfellow or Puck

causing a gap in the Earth's psychic envelope. How these make their presence felt is largely unknown, though it would seem there may be a certain type that feeds off any human mass hysteria being generated and also forms of pop music. This, with its mechanical beat and hyper-emotion can generate a crude form of power which is then sucked off to be used in unknown elemental ways. Those who have witnessed such phenomena say that there are perceptible occasions in such concerts or happenings, if one is not caught up in the hypnotic spell cast by the music, when a gap in space opens, as it were, and suddenly drains the whole place of emotion — which then starts to build up again.

EXORCISM is the technique of casting out evil spirits. If one does not believe in evil spirits then plainly exorcism must be viewed as a useless and outdated superstition — which must make life much easier for such



Early impression of a demon

evil spirits as may exist. As C.S. Lewis has pointed out in *The Screwtape Letters*, one of the great triumphs of the Devil in our times is his achievement in convincing modern man that he does not exist.

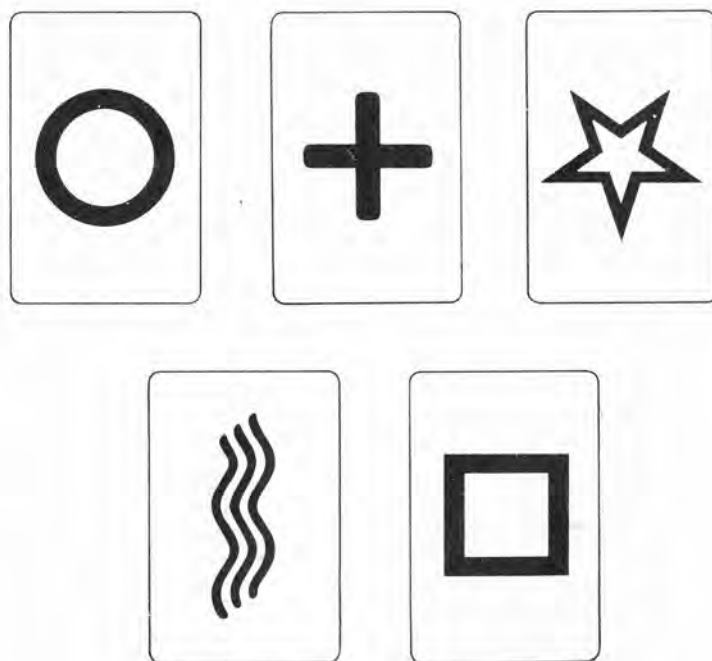
The churches have begun to take a greater interest in exorcism of late although it remains a very specialised vocation amongst a relatively small number of clergy. This is perhaps just as well.

There is much more to exorcism than simply reciting formulae with bell, book, candle and holy water. Those who call in the services of an exorcist seldom seem to realise the complexities involved. It is important to establish all the facets of the case, which may be very involved and difficult to elicit, and a genuine case of possession or overshadowing by evil entities must be distinguished from clinical psychological states, whether they be hysteria or schizophrenia — and of course there may be a combination of such states, possibly of random intermittance.

The Bishop of Exeter's committee on the subject published some findings in a booklet entitled *Exorcism*. Otherwise the literature is patchy, ranging from the anti-occult works of the German pastor Kurt Koch (*Christian Counselling in Occultism* etc.) to more popular if facile books such as *Experiences of a Present-Day Occultist* by Donald Omand. Françoise Strachan's *Casting Out Devils* gives a fairly well-balanced overview of the field. From the occult side there is Dion Fortune's *Psychic Self-Defence*. David Blatty's novel *The Exorcist* gives, in our view, a fine analysis of many of the subjective and spiritual factors involved, even if the film of the book over-emphasised the crude physical and sensational aspects.

ESP stands for Extra Sensory Perception and is a comparatively modern scientific term. Since the Society for Psychical Research set up in the late nineties of the last century, there has always been some scientific interest in the lesser understood powers of the mind, such as telepathy or clairvoyance. Since the last war Dr. Rhine of Duke University has been a major figure in such work with the use of special cards with distinct markings of five different conventional signs.

Subjects in his experiments try to guess the identity of a card being looked at by another person and their degree of success is statistically analysed. It is found that some people score consistently higher than would be expected from the law of averages if pure guesswork were involved. This suggests that they possess some degree of Extra Sensory Perception, sometimes called the *psi* factor. Other subjects seem able to guess accurately cards that are yet to come up (i.e. in the future).



Cards used in ESP experiments

Other areas of scientific investigation have extended a little from statistical analysis of guessing games; some as offshoots from the space programme, in experiments of hallucination experienced through sensory deprivation. This verges more toward the deeper aspects of the occult but there seems a long way to go before those involved in such work realise that "intention" is all-important, for by regarding such experiments as experiments with hallucination, hallucination may be all that the unconscious is likely to produce. Occultism is a shifting subject and tends to produce results according to the questions unconsciously begged by those who approach it — hence the wisdom of the old Mystery adage before the gates of Delphi "Know thyself".

GEOMANCY is a method of Divination (q.v.) in which a conventional set of 16 figures forms the staple pattern. The system is a Western practice that is similar in principle to the Chinese I Ching (q.v.). A geomantic figure consists of four lines of pairs of dots or a simple dot placed one above the other thus:

The traditional way to arrive at one of these figures is by marks made in sand or earth (hence the term 'geo' — earth, 'mantic' — divination), though many modern consultants of the oracle feel that pencil marks on paper are equally valid. A line of dots is made quickly, without counting, in sixteen rows, and then each row is counted to see if it has an odd or even number. If an even number it is summed up by a pair of dots, if odd by a single dot. Thus from the sixteen lines, in accordance with certain rules of transposition, four geomantic figures, one above the other, are obtained. Other methods include selecting a number of pebbles at random from a dish, or throwing dice.

The method is given in full in Israel Regardie's useful little book on the subject *A Practical Guide to Geomantic Divination*.

As in all Divination one's attitude to the oracles is all important, and therefore, as in the I Ching, the taking of some trouble to work with the original elements of sand or earth may well prove worthwhile rather than dashing off figures or readings at random by idly making innumerable marks on paper — so easy and tempting in our "instant" society of consumer convenience.

It is, after all, a psychic and psychological process and therefore some trouble should be taken to cast an impression upon the mind that the results of consulting its inner levels (by whatever means) are important. Divinatory oracles tend to do as they are done by. It may not be easy to understand why this should be so but it is a wise rule of thumb by which to be guided.



Geomantic figures

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT are first spoken of by the Apostle Paul in his letters to the Corinthians, who themselves became over-enthusiastic about the various strange gifts that attended Christian worship in those days. Paul himself spoke in strange tongues (1. Corinthians 14:18).

There is a movement within the Christian church today, called Pentecostalism, that considers that such manifestations should still be a hallmark of Christian conversion and that the lack of them shows that the church has, over the centuries, become institutionalised and moribund. The powers of prophecy, speaking with tongues, healing and other charismatic gifts it considers to be gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity.

Against this there are those who not unnaturally ask if it is not rather just hysteria, sheer emotionalism or even the work of the Devil. In the latter category we tread on dangerous ground for it was on just such an occasion when Jesus was accused of working miracles by the power of the Devil that he turned on his accusers with the solemn warning that the "sin against the Holy Spirit" (that is, attributing its power blasphemously to the Devil), was the only sin that "could not be forgiven".

On the other hand there are no doubt many occasions when such gifts, or the desire for them, can get out of hand, and apart from the early attested experience of St. Paul, there have been many sects and groups within and without the church who have been distinctly cranky about it all.

The question becomes more confused when there are others who profess to do miraculous or supernormal things without the aid of religious conversion — as psychical or occult phenomena attending mediumship, or someone like Uri Gella bending forks, allegedly by the power of thought.

We would submit that there are powers of the human mind and body that are not fully understood or utilised, that they can be sometimes developed by occult training or application, but may also happen spontaneously as a result of a shake-up of the personality due to religious conversion. In the latter case it may seem to be, and indeed is in a sense, evidence of the power of God, but should not be taken as an end in itself or as a *sine qua non* of religious integrity. For those who would enquire further into this complex subject, there is an excellent investigation of the matter called *Did You Receive the Spirit?* by Simon Tugwell O.P.

HEALING can well manifest as a Gift of the Spirit, in which case it is called Spiritual Healing, sometimes Faith Healing, though the two may not be quite the same thing. The gift of healing by laying on of hands, as with other Gifts of the Spirit is, according to some, a gift which the church has neglected or lost, whilst others attempt to revive it.

There are famous religious centres, such as Lourdes, where many thousands go in search of divine cures, and though many are disappointed, and though there is a commercialism and hysteria about such places that are distressing, nonetheless there remains a small but significant percentage of people who are miraculously cured. The church authorities are, if anything, on the side of stringency in admitting any such miraculous occurrence, and they maintain careful medical checks on all alleged cures.

The Roman church does not have a monopoly in such practices, for there is the famous Anglican case of Dorothy Kerins who, as a child, was very near death through a complex of dreadful illnesses but miraculously recovered following a vision of Jesus Christ and after devoted her life to a mission of divine healing.

The best known healer outside the official churches is perhaps Harry Edwards who represents a movement in spiritualist and occult circles to heal by supra-physical means. He believes that he is assisted by deceased physicians and surgeons from 'the other side'. Whatever the factual basis of his claim he certainly does not lack those who seek his ministrations.

There are various other occult, semi-occult and quasi-occult claims to the power of healing, some of which may be true but not admitted by medical science (cf. *Fringe Medicine* by Brian Inglis) and others which may be frankly dangerous and verging on quackery, particularly if they cause a patient to delay seeking proper medical advice. In view of this it is a particularly emotive and complex subject, but a reading of Dr. Leslie Weatherhead's *Psychology, Religion and Healing* can be recommended to anyone seriously approaching the subject.

The **HOLY GRAIL** has never been accurately defined, which perhaps adds to its awe and mystery. An important part of it is the 'Quest' for it, and a quest for something that is not fully known or defined suggests a spiritual search in the soul of man rather than a hunt for any specific physical object. It is sometimes described in terms of a cup, or a dish and at other times of a stone — in some versions as a precious stone, an emerald, that fell from Venus or from Lucifer's crown. Some equate it

with the vessel in which Joseph of Arimathea caught some drops of the blood of Christ, perhaps it is also the Cup of the Last Supper. Others think it to be of pagan origin, originally perhaps a cauldron of plenty, or cornucopia upon which Christian traditions have been overlaid. The Church itself has always tended to hold the Holy Grail tradition rather at arms length as being perhaps somewhat heretical.

The Holy Grail legends first appear in written literature almost simultaneously in the works of several authors between the years 1180 and 1220, and became part and parcel of the Arthurian legends with which they have become inextricably entwined in our minds through the great synthesising work of Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, one of the first books printed by Caxton, in 1485.

The Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, or the Acts of Pilate, is a source for much of the Hoyle Grail legend, with a major protagonist, in Joseph of Arimathea, the character who plays a minor role in the New Testament Gospel stories as the one who sought Pontius Pilate's permission to take possession of the body of Christ, and to bury it in his own sepulchre. If one thinks of it though, the role he played was of supreme importance to the subsequent events of the Resurrection.

In the legends the Grail appears at a Grail Castle that is sought and found by the Grail Seeker. It is carried round in procession by a Grail Maiden, and as it proceeds all fall silent and each person's favourite food appears before them. It is an interesting feature that the Grail appears when all are seated at table.

It is important that the Grail Seeker ask three questions. If he fails to do so he is ejected from the place with great lamentation as having failed the test. Those who have been the Grail winners have been variously named as Galahad, Percivale or Parsifal.

Joseph of Arimathea is also associated with Glastonbury, 'the holiest erthe in England' and tradition has it that he came to England, and there are indeed Grail traditions closely connected with Glastonbury as well as Arthurian lore.

The literature is vast but tends to be idiosyncratic. Everyone seems to have some particular axe to grind but for a general overview *The Grail Legend* by Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz and Geoffrey Ashe's *King Arthur's Avalon* give tolerable psychological and historical approaches respectively. One can then go to the original stories either in Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* or *The High History of the Holy Grail* by Sebastian Evans. Devotees of opera have it all laid out for them in the works of Wagner.

I CHING is a Chinese system of philosophy, wisdom and divination, similar to Geomancy (q.v.) though, because it uses more symbols (64 instead of 16) is capable of a greater degree of flexibility. The symbols used are hexagrams, that is, six lines one above the other which may be solid black lines or broken by a white space in the middle, as in the diagram. Strictly speaking this is formed of two 'trigrams' but those who wish to follow through the detailed symbolism of this ancient Confucian wisdom should consult one of the excellent books now available on the subject; John Blofeld's *The Book of Change*, Diana Ffarington Hook's *The I Ching and You* or the original translation by Richard Wilhelm called *The I Ching or Book of Changes* which contains a foreword by Jung.

The method of selecting the hexagram, which answer one's query, is by a complex selection of yarrow stalks or by tossing three coins. The latter method commends itself to busy Westerners who like to have everything, even oracular wisdom, available on tap with the absolute minimum of time and trouble. However, the more laborious and drawn-out yarrow stalk method may well be the better way in terms of conditioning consciousness to a properly receptive and enquiring attitude of mind.

The meanings of the hexagram are obtained by reference to the cryptic paragraphs in the book. These are by no means easy to understand, which leads the sceptical to say that one reads one's own interpretation into them. In this they may speak truer than they realise, whilst at the same time barring themselves from any real help from the oracle by their own negative attitude.



1. Khien



2. Air



3. Sun



4. Earth



5. Water



6. Moon



7. Fire



8. Khwan

I Ching tri-grams

Many who approach the oracle with respect and faith in its power and wisdom, testify to the help they have gained from it, though with warnings of the errors of becoming too credulous or degrading one's own will and judgement to that of the oracle, which has its own ways of knocking some sense into any foolish questioners.

KARMA is basically an oriental idea that seeks to explain the injustice that is rife in the world. In its crudest form it teaches that a man has reaped the circumstances of his present life from a former earthly existence (hence the theory goes naturally with that of Reincarnation q.v.). This explains why some are wealthy and blessed with good health and good fortune, whilst others live in poverty, ill-health and degradation; the former have earned their fortune by good deeds and the latter are getting what they deserve from former indiscretions. This naturally tends to support conservative political and social attitudes and to ease the conscience of the more favoured, particularly in the face of the appalling conditions in which many live and die in the Orient.

The idea has gained some favour in Western occult circles over the past two or three generations largely through the propagandising efforts of the Theosophical Society, whose occult theories are based on an esoteric approach to Hinduism and Buddhism. Under Western Christian influence it has tended to be modified from its crude "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" level, whereby if X murders Y in one life, Y will kill X in a later life, albeit by accident.

This, in its crude terms, shows a typical Hindu difficulty of being unable to distinguish between forgiveness of sins and condoning them. However just such ideas of Karma may be in an arithmetical sense, it gives ultimately a hideous idea of a Godhead that would work on such a mechanical and inhuman level.

It may well be that a soul that has sinned may wish to make some kind of reparation at one level or another and of its own free will. But divine justice is not measured out in coffee spoons and the sayings of Jesus seem much wiser in such parables as the workers in the vineyard where the spirit of Divine Grace is shown to work to the apparently quixotic pattern of love rather than measurement.

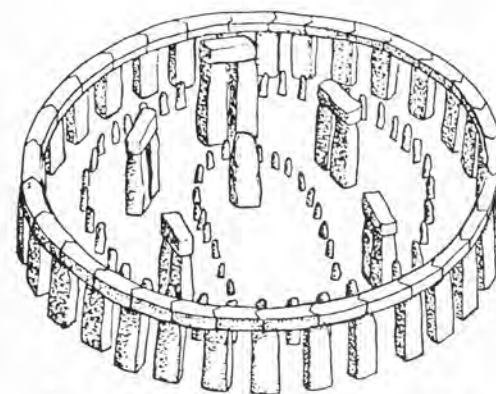
In applying it to the human situation, although parents may give their children an equal amount of care and love, such relationships cannot be measured in man-hours or monetary terms. When such terms are appealed to, as in legal disputes, something has gone badly wrong with the human relationship. It follows from this that if humans

are capable of this quality of relationship — beyond mechanical measure — the relationships of God must be also.

Having said this, there is little doubt that we do tend to reap what we sow by our attitude to life. But this is a more immediate thing than events going from life to life, and acts in a way that may be quite obvious to others but is rarely so to the individual himself, who tends to blame all self-caused adversities onto fate or circumstance. Hence the first injunction of the ancient Mysteries, "Know thyself".

LEY LINES have become a highly popular topic in recent years. The concept rests upon the work of an amateur archaeologist, Alfred Watkins, who evolved a theory from his own fieldwork in the early years of this century. This was finally published in book form as *The Old Straight Track*. Watkins found that many ancient earthworks, many of them now the sites of churches, were built on straight lines, and he postulated that these were the markings of ancient trackways that formed trade routes and that in fact the straight Roman roads were often laid over them.

This theory was later elaborated by occult students because there were so many places of present and ancient worship along these lines.



Stonehenge as it was in the Bronze Age

There are two types of investigation; the psychic, which was able to 'feel' a different psychic atmosphere along these lines and particularly at the centres along it; and the scientific where researchers such as Professor Thorn in *Megalithic Sites of Britain* and Gerald Hawkins in *Stonehenge Decoded* have produced evidence to suggest that the stone circles that mark many of these lines are in fact sophisticated astronomical computers and observatories. This suggests that our ancient forebears were not so ignorant nor primitive as our assumptions of them.

Needless to say the archaeological and historical establishment have tended to shy away from such suggestions and the occult enthusiasts have not helped the pursuit of objective truth by their exaggerated claims and hypotheses presented as facts.

There is some debate on the occult side as to whether such lines are man-made or some sort of natural lines of geo-magnetism. There are traditions that the ancients had some secret source of motive power, perhaps as an aid to building their great earthworks and stone circles which involved considerable transportation and engineering problems. It may be a hint towards this that they seemed so anxious to be able to predict in advance eclipses of the moon. This no doubt had a religious significance but may well not be the whole story. If some form of subtle geo-magnetism was used then it would doubtless be subject to the moon's phases, as are the tides.

Another theory suggests that these lines could have been used physically for navigation purposes, particularly at sea, and that the traditional wooden figurehead at a ship's prow may well be a vestige of a psychic maiden who guided the helmsman of ancient ships in their sometimes incredible intercontinental voyages. The ancient "Brendan the Navigator" is known to have discovered America long before Columbus.

It may well be that the lines are natural power channels that have been reinforced or modified by human means at a time when the race was more physically aware than it is now.

For novel ideas on psychic evolution of consciousness read Owen Barfield's *Saving the Appearances*. For intriguing extensions of the ley line theories there are John Michell's *The View Over Atlantis* and *City of Revelation*. One could include Fulcanelli's *Le Mystere des Cathedres* (text in English) or the reprint of the early *Canon* by William Stirling. Much work along these lines is being sponsored by an organisation called RILKO (Research into Lost Knowledge Organisation).

LOST CONTINENTS follow on naturally from ley-lines in being a kind of occult extension of archaeology, although the amount of conjecture involved would be too much for most archaeologists. The tradition is very strong, though, of a lost continent somewhere in the Atlantic called Atlantis, and even for one before that, probably in the Pacific, called Lemuria, and another called Mu.

Much of the strength of tradition comes on the one hand from

Much of the strength of tradition comes, on the one hand, from occult theory stemming from H.P. Blavatsky's monumental *The Secret Doctrine* and taken up by later writers such as Rudolph Steiner, Alice Bailey, Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, who derive in various degrees from the Theosophical Society's line of thought. On the other hand there is apparently a strong interest in it amongst certain discarnate communicators with whom occult investigators have from time to time been in touch.

Lewis Spence, a prolific occult historian writing between the wars, also added his quota of work upon the subject in *The Problem of Atlantis*, *Atlantis in America*, *A History of Atlantis*, *The Problem of Lemuria*, *Will Europe Follow Atlantis?* etc. The famous clairvoyant Edgar Cayce also left much about Atlantis in his voluminous readings and writings.

Like much in occultism, the legend has a strength of life far beyond what can justifiably be verified by the laws of scientific evidence. The legend is certainly an ancient one stemming from Plato, who in the *Critias* and *Timaeus* recorded Solon's study of the beliefs of the ancient Egyptian priests of his time.

Recent scientific evidence seems to be prepared to accept a Cretan site for a lost island, and from time to time there have been, of course, large slices of land slipping below sea level off Cornwall, Brittany and Wales.

Speculative legend is no doubt helped by the perennial myths in the soul of man of a deluge or catastrophe — from Noah's flood to the destruction of Sodom and Gommorah — and of a former Golden Age or Edenic state. Those who espouse the cause of Lost Continents might well regard such myths and legends as latent memories

MAGIC is a much misunderstood branch of occultism. Its very name from fairy tales of childhood, catches the imagination, and it lends itself to wild stories of adventure by imaginative occult novelists or by journalists trying to drum up something sensational for people to read on the train.

In common parlance it is often preceded by the adjective 'Black', although if one must indulge in these dramatic visual distinctions (it is rather like asking if someone is in Black Business or White Business) it should be recognised that Black Magic is but a relatively rare perversion of White Magic.



Magic Circle

Nor is magic the product of marvels, either by little known scientific principles or by sorcery: it is the art and science of affecting changes in consciousness, by various psychological devices.

In Black Magic such changes in consciousness would tend to be changes in other peoples consciousness to one's own advantage. The more primitive forms of witchcraft (q.v.) aside, this is likely to be with the connivance of those whose consciousness is being changed. The Black Magicians, like the confidence trickster or blackmailer, thrives on the weaknesses and hidden vices of others. In fact blackmail may come readily into his ambit along with sexual depravity, sado-masochism, and drug addiction. Any means of providing "kicks", or an intensity of emotion, will provide a raw power that the skilled magical operator can direct to his own purposes.

In White Magic the changes in consciousness are in the operator's own consciousness but with a sense of responsibility and dedication that makes the work of White Magic a practical form of intercessory prayer.

"Causing changes in consciousness" as a definition needs to be looked at in a wider than ordinary context. It assumes that all created existence has a consciousness behind it, and that various types of consciousness have counterparts and linkages at various levels of existence.

Thus the traditional magician divided the world into various categories according to some convenient mode, such as the seven-fold planetary system or twelve-fold zodiacal system. Having made this 'horizontal' analysis he worked out 'vertical' linkages as well, through inner forms of consciousness, conveniently called celestial, angelic and archangelic, to aspects of supreme Godhead, the idea being that by working at one level effects might be caused at another level if the linkages were right.

This is a practical form of Platonic philosophy which sees ideal forms and forces behind physical existence. The true magician seeks to bring through the ideal forms and forces to a better manifestation of their pristine beauty and goodness. It was traditionally considered to be the highest of sciences though the church tended to disparage it as poaching upon its own territory. Physical science, on the other hand, performing miracles of its own by manipulation of matter itself, tended to pass it by and regard it as superstition.

Magic is likely to have a considerable resurgence as attitudes, both religious and scientific, change in their neglect of this whole range of experience.

MASTERS is a term applied to a type of discarnate being who dispenses teaching or other forms of influence through a physical disciple or group. There are also, some think, masters who are incarnate beings, and there are more imaginative theories about some Masters whose lives are hardly touched by physical limitations, either through their occult powers or because they are superior beings visiting us from outer space (see U.F.O.'s). In the former category the eighteenth-century Count Cagliostro was rumoured to have had a very long life, without any appearance of ageing. The more commonly recognised masters nowadays are those popularised by the Theosophical Society, and there has been much discussion as to whether they are physical or non-physical beings. Those favouring the physical hypothesis have tended to locate them in Tibet, but now that this country is a communist satellite rather than an independent religious oligarchy there is some doubt as to their current whereabouts. Traditionally the Masters have tended to be located in remote inaccessible areas, such as the Himalayas or the Andes — or even the planet Venus. This may well correlate with the fact that they tend to communicate by subjective means, telepathically or clairvoyantly.

The concept of a Master tends to beg the question of there being a process of evolution in consciousness, and if Hindu speculation is accepted, that we are evolving from animals to Gods, then being a Master is a natural next step in the process. For those who do not accept such an hypothesis then the Masters take on a role similar to that of saints in the Christian church — exemplary human beings in one form or another who, by the doctrine of the communion of saints, try to help their fellow-men by acts of intercession.

The only way to judge them is by their fruits, and whilst there is ample evidence of folly and illusory success in communicating with such beings (and the vocal lunatic fringe of occultism is by its nature very prone to claim high contacts and hot-lines to all parts of creation) there are, on the other hand, few serious occult teachers who do not admit, if only privately, that they work in conjunction with a benevolent and beneficial source of direction. Some more mystical or conventionally religious students would regard this as the direct hand of God, others feel it to be the help of other humans, on the whole wiser and more experienced than themselves, who clear the way by all sorts of subtle and apparently coincidental intimations.

There is, in traditional occult parlance, the Great White Lodge or the Church Invisible, Not Made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens. It is a concept that tends to be outside of conventional religious

thought, in these terms at any rate, though the old Rosicrucian term, the House of the Holy Spirit, suggests a common linking principle between occult and religious ideas. Certainly it would be held that all 'white' magicians and occult students work under the jurisdiction of the Planetary Hierarchy of Masters.

MEDITATION means different things to different people, occult meditation being rather different from its use in mysticism (q.v.). Occult meditation has various forms but basically it is a technique of concentrating the mind so that it circles about one key idea or object.

This is a help towards technical proficiency in magical or occult work, which depends upon the ability to visualise clearly for relatively long periods of time. But its main purpose is to bore a shaft in conventional consciousness so that the shell of concrete ideation is pierced and the mind made consciously receptive to the intuitive faculty and what is generally termed the 'higher mind'. It is held that modern psychologists have only half the story in talking of a sub-conscious and that there is a super-conscious too. In other terms, the way of meditation has been called a path from intellect to intuition.

Occult meditation might in fact be considered a training in intuition just as a course in mathematics or the physical sciences might be termed a training in intellect, or a practical application to the arts a training in feeling or emotional sensibilities.

MYSTICISM differs from meditation in that it is a dialogue or colloquy between the soul and God, but because they have superficial resemblances they are often confused. The "Spiritual Exercises" of St. Ignatius are sometimes cited by occultists as examples of occult meditation, in that they consist largely of a visualisation of scenes in the life of Jesus upon which one concentrates intently or feels oneself as "being there". This certainly is a kind of occult meditation but the Ignatian method sees this only as a process of induction to the more important direct colloquy of the soul with God, whereas much occult meditation stops short of this.

Occult meditation tends to be a solitary affair, religious or mystical meditation is a joyful dialogue.

Each has its own important place as long as they are not confused one for the other. The way of mystical meditation might be easier if its adherents used a modicum of occult meditation as a basic training in mind control — this is particularly so in the case of ordinary people in the churches who are on the whole left to their own devices and given no training in such matters. Practitioners of occult meditation on the

other hand should not delude themselves that when they have achieved 'samadhi' or 'nirvana' or 'satori' that these are the heights of inner achievement. In mystical terms these heights of occult meditation are but a preliminary to greater realms of inner experience.

The distinctions are drawn accurately and clearly by R.C. Zaehner in *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane* where at-one-ment with God, at-one-ment with one's own ground of being and at-one-ment with nature are seen to be three different states of consciousness commonly confused as one.

NUMEROLOGY stems from the ancient teachings of Pythagorus and has exercised an ill-understood fascination ever since, rather after the fashion of alchemy or astrology.

It is a conclusion of modern science that God is a mathematician and gone are the old Newtonian picture-concepts of atoms being blobs with hooks-that so logically account for a view of the basics of created matter. Now attempts to explain scientific truth are couched in terms of higher mathematics.

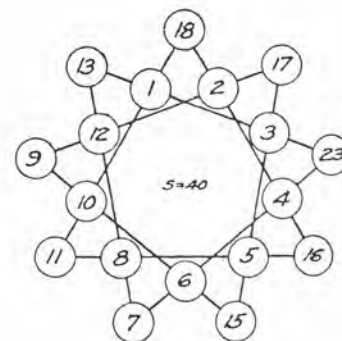
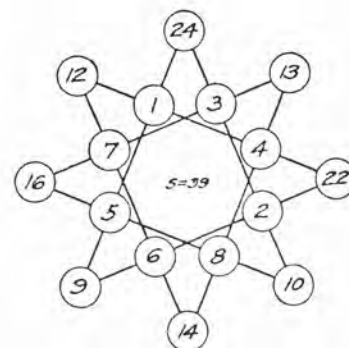
Just as the old alchemical intuition that all substances are at root one substance has proved to have been true, so has it been proved that all existence is based upon number and mathematical law, even if the approach of ancient and modern mathematics are very different. The new may not have disproved the old, it simply looks at things in a different way.

There is, as with many branches of occult learning, a debased popular form of numerology. This simply substitutes numbers for letters in peoples' names and attempts to draw prophetic inferences from them. This stems from the Jewish mysticism of the Qabalah which studies the Old Testament in great detail, analysing words and even letters for inner mystical meanings. As, in Hebrew letters also are used as figures, this led naturally to analysing words numerically and regarding those that added up to the same total to be connected in some way.

In the case of Proper Names in the Bible, the early writers of the text were aware of a symbolism of this kind and altered or invented names accordingly. This is to be seen in the change of Abram's name to Abraham.

This complex coding also carried over to the Greek, and numerological correspondences can be found in the New Testament, particularly in Revelations, with its numerical dimensions for the New

All this is very complex and those with a mind for it can construct or discover infinite ramifications of coding and symbolism, some of



Magic star patterns

which may be valid, some coincidental and some projected there by their own imaginations. *The Canon* by William Stirling, recently re-issued, gives a resumé of certain aspects of numerological symbolism in building; and John Michell, who writes the foreword in the Stirling reprint, has contributed works of his own, such as *City of Revelation* and *View over Atlantis*, which we have already mentioned in the context of Ley lines (q.v.).

There is a lack of literature on the number symbolism of Pythagoras although there have been facsimile reprints of two notable eighteenth-century commentators, Thomas Taylor's *The Theoretic Arithmetic of the Pythagoreans* and Thomas Stanley's *Pythagoras*.

Less in the sphere of number, the archetypal insights available from a study of geometry, and more particularly its lesser known branch of 'projected Geometry', have been ably laid out in *Encounters with the Infinite* by Keller von Astén, and *Projective Geometry* by Olive Whither. It is a legitimate branch of mathematics that has its own mathematical text books and literature and Keith Critchlow's *Order in Space* gives a useful range of archetypal insights in what is really a book on basic design. In this context Claude Bragdon's *Projective Ornament* ought also to be referred to.

By virtue of its abstruse nature, numerology and its various branches seems unable at present to sustain a literature constantly in print. It is to be found mentioned throughout various works on magic and the Qabalah, or else in occasional reprints for collectors or enthusiasts. One important book, *The Greek Cabala* by Frederick Bligh Bond and Thomas Simcox Lea, is in need of a modern re-issue..

PALMISTRY is one of those semi-sciences based on details of the human anatomy that, read analogically, are thought to give indications of character and fortune.

These arts are an attempt to apply in a practical fashion the theory of signature or correspondences; a principle of causation that is 'vertical', between an ideal world of ideas and the physical world, as opposed to the apparent 'horizontal' chain of physical cause and effect.

Whether such practices justify the Platonic theory or misunderstand it or bring it into disrepute, cannot be answered in too glib a fashion. As with most of the so called 'occult arts' much depends upon the practitioner, and the occasional startling accuracy tends to counter-balance the large degree of shallow titillation and general superstition.

Apart from palmistry, (the reading of lines on the hand) there are numerous other like disciplines from phrenology (the examination of bumps on the head) to physiognomy (the telling of character by facial

characteristics). Phrenology has declined after something of a boom in the nineteenth-century; physiognomy went out of fashion very early on, though in practice, rightly or wrongly, everybody uses it instinctively in assessing the people they meet. This may be a drawback to evil-looking friends of humanity and an advantage for personable-looking 'con-men'!

PLANES are part of the theory of much occultism and a very handy device for teaching the general principles that there is much more to life than the physical world. Because of its usefulness this concept is prone to over-simplification and some rather naive ideas result.

In simplest terms man may be seen rather like an onion of consciousness that can be stripped layer by layer. We have the physical body functioning on the physical plane, then the instincts and passions on the second plane, the higher emotions of aesthetic appreciations and ideals on the third plane, the concrete mind on the fourth plane, intuition on the fifth, spiritual and religious faith on the sixth plane and the pure ground of our being, our essential self, on the seventh. There is thus conceived to be an objective world for every level of consciousness.

Various teachers place their own variations upon this general theme. The distortions that arise from this simple approach arise from the fact that neither man nor the creation he inhabits is, in practice, so easily split. Man certainly is very much all of a piece and would lose a considerable amount of his authenticity of being if he were to lose his lower planes and become an etherealised cherubic kind of creature. Christian teaching would see perfect man exemplified by a raised degree of physical vibration or state, as shown by Christ at the Transfiguration and in the Resurrection Body which seems to have been, by its behaviour, rather more solid than a ghost or astral wraith.

This points to the other easy fallacy that the closer one gets to the centre of the onion of consciousness the closer one gets to *real* "being" or holiness and goodness. This is to jettison the great realities of the 'lower' worlds and though it may accord with certain oriental ideas of escaping from the veil of illusion and the cycle of birth and death by eliminating desire, it runs counter to the redemption of desire and the world we know, and seeing it transformed into a 'New Jerusalem'. Whether this is to be achieved by political and social reform or through a religious and moral regeneration is a matter for continued debate. Both materialist and idealist practical philosophies of the West opt for a better world, not a flight from it, as is the Eastern tendency, whether that flight be called 'evolution of consciousness' or 'buddha-hood'.

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH is the scientific investigation of phenomena that cannot be explained by current theories. We have dealt with E.S.P. (q.v.) and the term we now describe is traditionally more concerned with haunted houses, spiritualist mediums and other alleged intercourse with the dead.

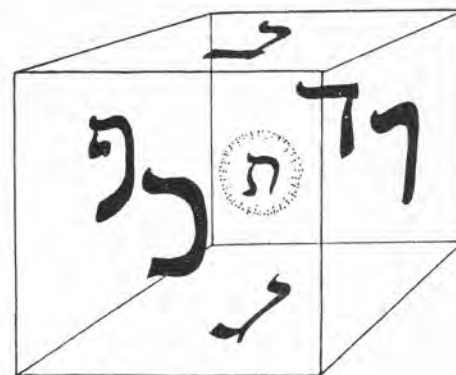
The Society for Psychical Research was formed towards the latter end of the last century and still exists as a large repository of investigations and case-studies of these matters.

Whilst much valuable work has been done, to the occult student this line of research is severely limited by its own standards. This is all to the good as far as scientific integrity, reliability and responsibility are concerned, but if one is to investigate the non-physical by using only physical means then one works under a certain handicap. It is rather as if one tried to be an oceanographer by observing the sea from the land.

There are of course various kinds of psychical researcher, from the austere and rigorous laboratory scientist to the amateur and often feckless 'ghost hunter'. One can only say that "by their fruits shall ye know them" even if this does not help us much to know the ghost.

Hauntings generally seem to divide into fairly specific types. There is, it would seem, a kind of 'photographic' principle whereby a scene from olden time (particularly if associated with strong emotion, such as violent death), is impressed on the locality and can be seen in certain circumstances. Another form, "poltergeist" activity (literally, 'noisy spirit') seems to be caused by an excess of nervous energy at large and often emanates in some fashion from children at puberty or young women. The most common form, hardly to be detected by scientific instruments, is the emotional atmospheres left behind by the departed or caused by their still being 'earth-bound' somehow to the locality. This can involve much mischief and even tragedy which is little suspected by those less sensitive.

QABALAH is the theoretical basis for a large part of modern Western occultism. It is a Jewish system of thought, an important part of which is a diagram called the Tree of Life. This, like other systems of symbolic correspondences, can be used as a practical yardstick of consciousness. It has a peculiar universality in that it can be applied to mystical as well as magical experience, and at various levels of mind. Thus it may be applied in a theological context as an outline of the attributes of God-head; or in a mythological context in comparing, one with another various pagan pantheons of gods and legendary beings; at a magical level it shows the relationships of many and various symbols; at a psychological level it shows a ground-plan of the mind of man, particularly that part commonly known as the collective unconscious.



Qabalistic design: The Cube of Space

The original Jewish Qabalah is based on two ancient books, *The Sepher Yetzirah* (or Book of Formation) and *The Zohar* (or Book of Splendour). These are not easy reading and in fact represent but a tiny part of the later Hebrew literature, which is vast and much of it untranslated.

One of the first and perhaps the best known book on the subject that makes relatively easy reading was Dion Fortune's *The Mystical Qabalah*, and Gareth Knight's *A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism* extends on from this. A few other useful introductory manuals have also been published in recent years, each from slightly differing points of view: *The Ladder of Lights* by W.G. Gray; *The Tree of Life* by Halevi, *The Universal Meaning of the Kabbalah* by Leo Schaya, *Kabbalah* by Charles Ponce and *The Christ, Psychotherapy and Magic* by A.D. Duncan representing a Christian approach.

One should also mention Israel Regardie, whose early work, *A Garden of Pomegranates* ante-dates Dion Fortune by a few years and whose *Middle Pillar* and at a simplified level, *The Art of True Healing* gives practical magical applications.

From a standpoint of serious academic scholarship the works of Professor Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* and *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, are important works. The early little work, *The Kabbalah* by Christian Ginsburg, gives an excellent potted historical and philosophical outline.

REINCARNATION is very widely accepted in the East where it goes hand-in-hand with the belief in Karma (q.v.). There is also evidence for it to have been an ancient belief of the West, from Plato to the druids. It has various degrees of detailed exegesis: at the crudest level, that for evil conduct one might be reincarnated in the form of an animal or even insect. The belief that reincarnation is a punishment or at any rate a hard schooling of the soul, is the most prevalent and begs a number of questions about the value and worth of earthly life. It is an understandable doctrine in the East with its long history of disease and squalor, such as caused Gautama the Buddha to turn away from physical life and preach the destruction of desire as a means to escape the wheel of birth and death.

It does not accord well with Spiritualist belief that sees life after death as a kind of continuation of that existence which we have now. Though many feel that this sort of astral plane suburbia has a depressing aspect that rivals being reborn physically as a lower form of life.

The reincarnation theory does not accord well with Christian belief which sees the soul as going to unimaginable glories, if it accepts reconciliation with God. Those Christians who have seriously considered the matter (and these are few) would concede that there might well be reincarnation for those who wanted a further chance, or further experience of life, before committing themselves. Or on the other hand that there may be a voluntary kind of reincarnation by those souls close to God who wish to serve again at this level of Creation.

There is certainly evidence — though not voluminous — of cases of reincarnation. The sheer statistical evidence of the world population explosion points against the theory, though it opens up further speculation, which is less bound to a karmic treadmill, of new lives coming in from other planets, galaxies, or some other levels of existence.

All is food for fascinating speculation, though much of what is only speculation tends to be passed off as various forms of ancient or secret wisdom.

TALISMANS, like many other items of an occult nature are, in their more popular manifestations, part of the entertainment industry. But behind the popular superstition of 'lucky charms' is a profound magical philosophy.

Even a lucky charm, mass-produced from cheap plastic or paste, may have a certain virtue if its wearer really believes in it. Like much else in occultism it cuts through religious and scientific boundaries in a disconcerting fashion. The scientist may see in the talisman an instance of auto-suggestion, the religious may deplore the idea of someone having more faith in a fetish than in God. Yet in other instances religious medallions and similar items are undoubtedly looked upon by their wearers very much in a talismanic way — as bearers of some kind of force or virtue. Traditionally every Catholic Christian altar contains relics of saints within or about it.

The true talisman, in the occult sense, contains a particular force and is worn as a protection magnet or attracting principle for a force of a like nature. By the doctrine of correspondences, the idea is that an object constructed in a certain fashion of a certain material at a certain hour and bearing particular designs will act as a kind of lens whereby forces of a particular nature are focused through it, to the advantage of the wearer. Thus a talisman to attract love might be made of copper, engraved at an hour when the planet Venus was rising and



Talismatic figure

with a seven-fold figure or heptagram — copper, Venus and the heptagram all bearing symbolic correspondence to the quality of love.

In its highest use, as in magic of the Renaissance, talismans were used as a corrective to personality traits or imbalances, or as a counter to misfortunes indicated by astrological prognostication. In their debased form they were made of all kinds of revolting substances and formed part of primitive medicine and sorcery.

Most magical practitioners of today would emphasise that it is the work and ingenuity that goes into the making of a talisman that gives it its effectiveness and that generally speaking they work best, or perhaps only, for their maker. Though it is also said, with some truth, that if one is capable of making an effective talisman then one has no

real need of it. Therefore the art of making talismans is very much a matter of service to others and in making them effective by building in personal links with their intended user.

Thus a true talisman is a custom-made craft artefact, made to a specific purpose and intention for a particular person, and not a mass-produced object. But a mass-produced object may well pick up strong beliefs held about it and thus be formed into an effective talisman almost accidentally just as a piece of iron might pick up magnetism if left in a magnetic field. Again there is something rather more than the psychological in this because precious and semi-precious metals and crystals are held to be more effective than less internally structured materials. Israel Regardie's *How to Make and Use Talismans* is a useful primer.



Talismatic triangle arranged so that the letters of each word are gradually diminished.

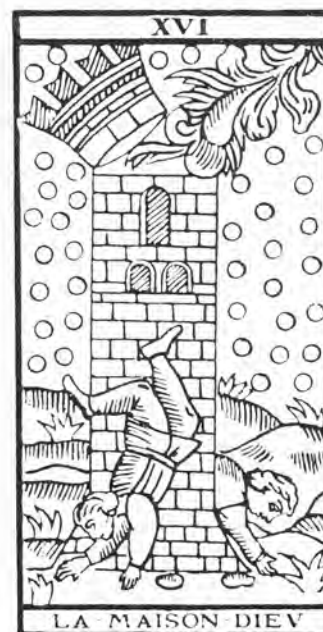
TAROT cards are the forerunners of our modern playing cards and are full of deep and evocative symbolism. The four suits are Wands, Cups, Swords and Disks and these suit-symbols have an ancient history going as far back as the traditional treasures of the Tuatha de Danaan, the fairy people of Celtic mythology. There are four Court Cards in each suit; a King, Queen, Knight and Page and again these have traditional Elemental symbolisms attaching to them. In addition to the four suits there are also 22 Trumps, numbered from 0 to XXI. The Zero Trump is the Fool who is the forerunner of the modern Joker. The other Trumps consist of the Magician or Juggler; the High Priestess, Female Pope or Pope Joan; the Empress; the Emperor; the Pope or Hierophant;



Marseilles Tarot cards

the Chariot; the Lovers; Strength or Fortitude; the Hermit; the Wheel of Fortune; Justice; the Hanged Man; Death; Temperance; the Devil; the Lightning Struck Tower or House of God; the Star; the Moon; the Sun; the Last Trump and the World or Universe.

With this wealth of symbolism, which constitutes a complete symbolic model-universe on the lines of other systems such as the I Ching (q.v.), there is obviously great scope for their use in divination, though for serious students of the occult they are used for purposes of meditation or for initiating waking dreams or visions. All in all it is a fine system of building blocks of the inner symbolism of the mind which retains its vitality in spite of much of the symbolism being in a corrupt state.



Marseilles Tarot cards

The oldest authentic design is the Marseilles version dating from the early nineteenth century, but traces of Tarot packs go back several hundred years. Their origin is still unknown though there is much speculation about them. A number of occult commentators have produced their own versions in the last hundred years or so. Most of these are described in Vol. 2 of *A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism* by Gareth Knight, though for those who wish for a less comprehensive coverage A.E. Waite's *Pictorial Guide to the Tarot* or Paul Case's *The Tarot* are well thought of, as is also Aleistair Crowley's *The Book of Thoth* though this is perhaps too idiosyncratic in some ways. The Tarot has benefitted from a great resurgence of interest in recent years and packs, once collectors items, are now readily available from specialist booksellers and there are a number of popular paperbacks on the subject.

UFO's are not strictly speaking of the occult though they do tend to get lumped in with it, particularly as many alleged contacts with occupants of Unidentified Flying Objects are claimed to have been effected through occult means, such as telepathy. The literature is vast and ranges from the serious attempt at systematic recording of sightings to frankly lunatic accounts by over-imaginative cranks — which again is a reflection of how things tend to be generally in the occult field. There are also, as with various branches of occultism, the occasional well-authenticated accounts of happenings that challenge the imagination and the basis on which we have built our view of reality.

The books of Charles Forte are worth reading for a general excursion into the field of the unexplained. He spent a lifetime collecting news items and other accounts of phenomena that could not be explained scientifically.

George Adamski is perhaps the most famous of the alleged contactees of extra-terrestrial visitors and those who wish to get to grips with the subject could do worse than start with his *Flying Saucers Have Landed* and then find their own way on from there. On a more extended historical field *Chariots of the Gods* by Erich Von Daniken presents some argument and evidence for the occurrence of visits to Earth from outer space.

WITCHCRAFT has undergone a revival in recent years, partly through the efforts of Gerald Gardner and his books *Witchcraft Today* and *The Meaning of Witchcraft*, although there are branches of witch tradition which would claim to be more ancient and authentic than his versions of the movement. The general tone has not been improved by publicity-conscious individuals claiming high-sounding titles for themselves and there has been a proliferation of Witch Queens and Kings of one kind or another.

It might have been better if the movement, which in its true sense is a form of nature mysticism (with traditional accoutrements of broom, cauldron, knife, horn and so on), had called itself what it more nearly is, Neo-Paganism. But perhaps witchcraft seemed to appeal more to the imagination if not always for the best of reasons.

Most witches we have met have been very sincere, religious-minded people who could not accept the institutionalised Christianity of our times and had turned to some kind of nature-worship as a means of religious self-expression. One has seen some quite ludicrous ironies resulting from mutual ignorance by Neo-Pagans and Christians. On one occasion a confessed witch stated in public that Jesus Christ was also a good witch whilst the church ministers of the town prayed that this wicked woman's evil be gone from their midst. One sees that claiming Jesus Christ was a witch was grotesque, but one can see what was meant. Likewise the ignorance of the church parties is no less grotesque, and very similar in its blinkered outlook and methods of expression.

What might be achieved by a fusion of native tradition and the established church is seen at its best in such functions as the Morris Ring held at Thaxted, where Morris-men and folk dancers foregather from all over the country to dance in massed formation in the streets; where the horned headdresses for the ancient dances are held in the church and where there is a High Mass for all the Morris-men on the Sunday morning — an occasion when the church is packed to overflowing.

Experiencing a function of this kind puts the Old Religion and the New Testament into a unity of worship and faith that is an inspiration for our times and an object-lesson to the bigoted and the narrow.

Books worth studying for a general groundwork of the Old Religion include *The Lost Gods of England* by Brian Branston and the relevant works of Dr. Margaret Murray, *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*, *The God of the Witches* and *The Divine King in England*. Robert Graves's *The White Goddess*, contains much basic material and is highly thought

of by many students of the subject. Doreen Valiente's *An ABC of Witchcraft* is a useful vade mecum on the subject, whilst Charles Leland's *Aradia, The Gospel of the Witches*, hitherto a rare nineteenth-century book, has been recently reprinted and is an important source work.

YOGA means 'union' and is an oriental discipline for the integration of certain powers of the soul and body. It has various aspects, for instance *raja yoga* pertains to the mind, *bhakti yoga* to the emotions and *hatha yoga* to the body. The latter, simplified, has found a vogue in the West for its physical exercises although there is very much more to the subject than callisthenics.



Yoga posture showing psychic centres

In the whole system of *hatha yoga* the physical postures are accompanied by complex breathing and visualising techniques which direct forces through the channels of the subtle body — whose link with the physical body is via the endocrine glands. This is very powerful and is highly dangerous to perform without close personal supervision by a yoga master. Eventually it can lead to quite incredible

feats of bodily control — though some, such as sucking water up into the body via the lower orifices, verge on the grotesque. This is in line with a philosophy that seeks to dominate matter in order to escape from it and which accords neither with religious beliefs nor the practical philosophy of the West.

Apart from its popularised physical health approach, the more complex postures are not easy for a Western body to adapt to, and those who take up the advanced study of yoga really need to have a burning vocation for it and to be prepared to go to the East, or at any rate to live a relatively enclosed or highly disciplined life close to a yogin, if one can be found in the West.

The West has its own techniques which are more suitable to our physique and temperament, though much of the documentation of a complete system was lost through a degree of religious persecution that never occurred in the East. The current resurgence of occult interest is reconstituting a "yoga of the West" which may well prove to be a saving grace to a society whose religion has persecuted it and whose science despised it.

The most popular books about yoga probably remain the works of Yogi Ramacharaka — *Raja Yoga, Gnani Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Yoga Philosophy and Oriental Occultism* etc., — who, under his real name of William Walker Atkinson, was quite capable of writing works on practical Western occultism such as *The Secret Mental Magic*.

THE OCCULT

Gareth Knight

Part 1. The Occult in historical perspective

Part 2. An Occult glossary with recommended reading

This brief introduction to the occult is intended for the open-minded and enquiring layman who has no knowledge of the subject but is interested to discover if there is really "anything in it".

The occult has led a chequered existence in public and official regard. Once it was the spearhead of scientific discovery but it fell foul of religious orthodoxy and became divorced from the religious and scientific disciplines of the Western world. From the seventeenth century it has led an underground, if virile, existence.

Since the last war a new interest has been forming about the subject. Is there something in it that has been missed?

A great deal of speculation now centres upon whether the alchemists and magicians of old may have been right after all in some of their investigations. Interest also centres on yoga and meditation techniques from the Orient, where the persecuting zeal of religious and scientific establishments have not all but destroyed a valid field of human discovery – the inner world of man. Gareth Knight covers the topic in two ways. First in a general overview of the subject, dealing with its trends in relation to society at large, past and present. Then, in a second part, by means of a glossary, most of the topics that comprise the large field of the occult are defined and described. Of particular importance is the bibliographical information that the author's professional (and vast) knowledge of the subject and its literature enables him to provide. Thus the reader is given directions for more intensive study should he wish to carry his interest further.

Gareth Knight is an international authority on occultism, particularly in the sphere of magic, and its theoretical basis, the Qabalah. He is author of two major works on this subject, *A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism*, and *Experience of the Inner Worlds*, a practical textbook and synthesising exegesis of religious and scientific roots of modern occultism.

He was occultly trained in a major school of the Western Esoteric Tradition, founded by the famous Western Occultist Dion Fortune, where he was for some time archivist and librarian. He left after twelve years to form and experiment with small groups. As a result of some ten years of this work he has since established an organisation for training interested students in the techniques of magic. His ambition is to re-establish this much misunderstood subject as a respected and responsible scientific and religious discipline.

Jacket design based on letters from magical alphabets by Liliane Lijn.

Kahn & Averill,

25 Thurloe Street,
London, SW7

£2.25
(in U.K. only)