# THE VARIETIES OF Magical Experience

## Indigenous, Medieval, and Modern Magic

Lynne Hume and Nevill Drury

# The Varieties of Magical Experience

# The Varieties of Magical Experience

## Indigenous, Medieval, and Modern Magic

Lynne Hume and Nevill Drury

PRAEGER

AN IMPRINT OF ABC-CLIO, LLC
Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado • Oxford, England

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Hume, Lynne.
The varieties of magical experience : indigenous, medieval, and modern magic / Lynne Hume and Nevill Drury.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978–1–4408–0418–2 (alk. paper) — ISBN 978–1–4408–0419–9 (ebook)
1. Magic—History. I. Drury, Nevill, 1947– II. Title.
BF1589.H86 2013
133.4′309—dc23 2012030383

ISBN: 978–1–4408–0418–2
EISBN: 978–1–4408–0419–9

17 16 15 14 13 1 2 3 4 5

This book is also available on the World Wide Web as an eBook.
Visit www.abc-clio.com for details.

Praeger
An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC

ABC-CLIO, LLC
130 Cremona Drive, P.O. Box 1911
Santa Barbara, California 93116-1911

This book is printed on acid-free paper ∞

Manufactured in the United States of America

# Contents

# Introduction

This book is inspired by William James's (1842–1910) pioneering work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, which emphasizes the importance of the personal experience in religious and spiritual matters.[1] Indeed, the *experience* takes precedence over dogma and doctrine and is the very foundation of religion. Following on from William James, this book, *The Varieties of Magical Experience*, looks at the personal experience as a phenomenon in itself, taking magical or metaphysical encounters as the lens through which to explore the experiential.

Throughout the book, the focus is on physical and metaphysical qualitative *experiences*, especially when they cross the barriers of what is normally regarded as body, mind, and space, and those encounters with events, "things," and entities that are viewed as "paranormal" or "supernatural." We take a phenomenological approach, suspending or "bracketing" the various assumptions and presuppositions that we all have and instead focusing on what Edmund Husserl has referred to as "the things in themselves."[2] Subjective experiences can be a potential source of insight in "methodological pluralism,"[3] according to which no point of view is privileged over any other. We offer *The Varieties of Magical Experience* as one of the contributions to methodological pluralism, the phenomena as experienced.

Magical experiences are those that appear to contradict mainstream science's constructs of time, space, and energy. In *Anomalistic*

*Psychology: A Study of Magical Thinking*, Zusne and Jones proposed that magical thinking was "wholly or partly at the root of any explanation of behavioral and experiential phenomena that violates some law of nature or suggests, without supporting evidence, the existence of principles, forces, or entities unknown to science."[4] Magic itself can be viewed as involving "principles, forces, or entities" that are inexplicable in scientific terms, that is, scientific knowledge that we have available to us today. The latter point is important, as things that were regarded as magic in the past have proven through scientific means and evidence to be within the realms of science and therefore no longer magic. We now know, for example, that a solar eclipse, as seen from Earth, occurs when the sun is fully or partially blocked when the moon passes between the sun and the earth, and not, after all, to the displeasure of the gods, but this does not make a solar eclipse any more or less true because of two different explanations for the one event. There are many things that cannot be explained *yet*, and so we tend to "lump" all these phenomena under the term "magic": "principles, forces, or entities" that are inexplicable.

It is no simple matter to define magic. There is no general agreement as to what it is because it encompasses many aspects: making herbs and potions that previously were dismissed as "magic" (but many of which have now been discovered to have medicinal properties); shifting one's awareness to the extent that an individual can feel that he or she has metamorphosed into another creature; entering other realms through an altered state of consciousness; healing and harming a person through occult (hidden or scientifically inexplicable) means. The imagination, emotions, and feelings figure prominently in magic, and until fairly recently this triad has been anathema in scientific circles, creating a climate within academia that magic is out of bounds as a serious topic. In the West, magic has been treated, since the Enlightenment, as irrational, foolish, and contrary to the highly valued scientific approach that is based on reason. We suggest that there is much more to magic and that it is certainly worthy of more serious attention.

The *magi* of ancient Persia were a class of priests considered to be both wise and learned. The Old Persian word *magush* meant "to be able, to have power." In the fourteenth century, the Old French word *magique* meant "the art of influencing events and producing marvels." Currently, in most dictionary definitions of magic there is a list of possibilities, one of which is: "mysterious tricks, such as making things disappear and reappear, performed as entertainment." This pertains to *legerdemain*, the sleight-of-hand magic of the illusionist as stage

performer. However, it is only one definition. Another is: "a quality of being beautiful and delightful in a way that seems remote from daily life." This definition could be applied to the way that one feels when looking at a beautiful sunset; it is a "quality" and a "feeling" that distances the experient from the mundane everyday world. Another definition of magic is: "the power of apparently influencing events by using mysterious or supernatural forces," or something that is caused by forces beyond those regarded as natural. In the late fourteenth century, a similar definition of magic was the "art of influencing events and producing marvels using hidden natural forces." In the twentieth century what might have been regarded in the fourteenth century as natural forces, albeit hidden, became supernatural forces. Magic is also defined as an "exceptional skill or talent," an art that "invokes supernatural powers." Inherent in these definitions is that magic is calling on supernatural means, powers, or forces to bring about an event, feeling, or experience of something more than the physical world as it appears in our everyday lives.

Anthropologist Evans-Pritchard proposed that magic and witchcraft formed a rational framework of beliefs and knowledge in some cultures, giving as an example the Azande people of Africa, with whom he carried out detailed and prolonged fieldwork.[5] Lévy-Bruhl formed the notion of a mystical mentality, which he explained as an orientation to the world based on an emotional association between persons and things in contact with a nonordinary spirit reality.[6] A more contemporary way of looking at magic is that proposed by academics who are also magical practitioners, such as Susan Greenwood[7] and Jenny Blain,[8] among others, who have fully immersed themselves in magical acts in order to experience magic for themselves, and to examine magic as an aspect of human consciousness that can be used as a source of knowledge. Building upon the idea of magic as "mystical mentality," and moving beyond reductionist sociological or psychological explanations, Susan Greenwood pursues the theme of magic as a process of mind, one that has a psychic and sensory connection with material and nonmaterial reality.[9] Magic, suggests Greenwood, "is a universal aspect of human consciousness" that is inherent in the mind,[10] and is a legitimate form of knowledge.

In *The Varieties of Magical Experience*, we have incorporated all these different facets of "magic," presenting a broad, encompassing sweep of magic and magical experience. Important in the practice of magic, we have found, are intuition, imagination, and the emotions; rationality plays little part in magic because magic occurs when one lets go of rational thoughts. When the imagination is permitted full play there is

room for a shift in the perception of reality. There can be a change in consciousness, so much so that physical boundaries and distinctions between real and unreal often dissolve. Such experiences are not able to be measured scientifically. Rather, the person might have a noticeable experience of deep inner change, or a knowing, or a sense that something significant has happened.

Occultist Israel Regardie sees magic as being concerned not so much with analysis as with bringing into operation the creative and intuitive parts of the psyche. "Magic," he says, is "a technique for realizing the deeper levels of the Unconscious,"[11] which is not unlike what Hubert and Mauss had to say about the root of magic as being states of consciousness that generate illusions rising from the amalgamation of ideas of a given person with those in the society of which he or she forms a part.[12] Although their approach to magic was that it was a social phenomenon, they did recognize that states of consciousness were important. Magic can involve altering one's consciousness. Doctrinal and intellectual speculations have no place in the practice of magic; rather, it is by the exercise of spiritual faculties and powers, such as those used during rites and ceremonies, that magic is possible. Imagination is a reality, and both the Imagination and the Will must be called into action to practice magic, says another occultist;[13] magic involves the secret forces of Nature,[14] and all magical work begins within and is projected outwardly.[15]

According to modern eco-feminist witch Starhawk, the primary principle of magic is connection with a fluid and ever-changing energy pattern, which is the very essence of magic;[16] magic is part of Nature; it works with Nature. H. P. Blavatsky, who cofounded the Theosophical Society in 1875 to study, among other things, the "powers latent in man," viewed magic as both spiritual wisdom and an art. As an art, it is the application of special knowledge, gained by an intimate practical knowledge of the occult properties inherent in natural laws. "Magic," she said, is "spiritual wisdom" and Nature, "the material ally," proposing that what is called "supernatural" is in fact "natural" and that the wise adept has gained both knowledge about natural laws and proficiency in using them.[17]

Transpersonal psychologist Charles Tart talks about "state-specific knowledge," the notion that some forms of knowledge that seem irrelevant or impossible in other states are unique to particular states of consciousness.[18] This is not to suggest that other methods of gaining information are invalid, but that these methods can be used in addition to others so that all sources of knowledge and experiences can be useful to give a more holistic picture of an event or occurrence.

Magic is associated with the direct spiritual experience; it is subjective, tends to appear in opposition to doctrinal and orthodox aspects of mainstream religions, and is more likely to appear in the esoteric branches of those religions, whose members place more importance on the heart and soul of their beliefs: melting into the divine, being at one with the natural world, and having a sense of the real essence of spirit, however they may explain this concept.

The magical experience varies greatly, but it always takes one out of the ordinary; it can be something that is felt in simple ways—sitting on a beach watching a beautiful sunset, being still and quiet in a natural setting such as a forest, having a serendipitous feeling of being "at one" with everything—or it can be felt by participation in a ritual, or a moment of heightened awareness during contemplation or meditation. Many magical experiences are had during altered states of consciousness (ASCs); for some this can occur during a light trance, for others, moving into a very deep trance through special techniques.

Magical experiences move one from the everyday world into different realms of awareness, opening up other possibilities of thinking and being, and can be intensely life-transforming experiences that challenge one's whole sense of reality. They involve imagination, intuition, and all the senses. The world of myth, dreams, and fantasy contributes to allowing a person into these other domains, a world that children seem to be able to enter more easily and willingly than the disillusioned and disenchanted adult, who often needs to access such domains through altering his or her state of consciousness intentionally, employing techniques, trance states, deep meditation, and ritual acts or habitual behavior that alerts the mind and the body that something special is about to happen.

So it is with a wide lens that we have searched for the magical in the human experience. We have covered a diverse spread of cultures and beliefs, from indigenous magical practices to Western practices. In spite of there being a time when religion seemed to have disappeared, or the prognosis for its continuance was not healthy, religion, in all its manifestations—as spirituality, quasi-religion, and postmodern forms of spirituality and alternative religions—has survived. Belief in something beyond a scientific worldview continues irrepressibly to pervade the thoughts and actions of many, and to manifest in some seemingly bizarre and controversial forms. Some of these forms we will touch upon in this volume, as well as current theoretical approaches to studying what James called the numinous, or more generally, the nonrational, experience.

The diversity of emergent religions defies any easy categorization, varying from self- realization groups, druids, shamans, Vodou

practitioners, neo-paganism, to the all-embracing and pervasive New Age. The supermarket approach that exemplifies the New Age results in an eclectic mix or "grab-bag" of ideas, converging both Eastern and Western concepts in such a way that New Agers might speak of raising the Kundalini energy while meditating in the morning, consulting a Chinese acupuncturist in the afternoon, and having a Reiki massage in the evening. They might also attend a "sweat lodge" one month, and a Vipassana 10-day meditation the following month. People are searching for meaning through seemingly bizarre and novel ways; some believe they are vampires, some are adamant that they have encountered aliens from outer space, some sincerely believe that they are therianthropes (half animal, half human), and what might begin with role playing begins to take on a life of its own.

The reconstruction of real or imagined past religions exists side by side with those based on fantasy literature, cinematic make-believe characters, goddesses from different pantheons, eco-spirituality, and even some forms of sport. A new industry, spiritual tourism, has sprung up to cater for the traveler who seeks his or her spiritual experience in far-flung locales that contain ancient sacred sites, or shamanic voyages of self-discovery via the ingestion of entheogens. Regions such as South America, with its ancient civilizations and well-known shamanic practices, are luring the adventurer who does not mind a bit of discomfort into more exotic areas to experience rituals where *ayahuasca* is administered by local shamans or purported shamans. Greece attracts goddess pilgrims to islands such as Lesbos, and British sites of significance pull the Celtic seeker to a myriad of locations.

The easy accessibility of communicating ideas worldwide on the Internet promotes the rapid global dissemination and transmission of ideas. Internet chat rooms provide a forum for a multitude of beliefs to flourish—some die out after a few months; others continue over decades. There appears a plethora of "new" to add to the heady mix of beliefs: neo-tribalism, neo-paganism, neo-shamanism, and neo-evangelism. Running parallel with the theme "everything old is new again" is a strong interest in religious fundamentalism. Fundamentalism reacts against modernity and the encroachment of secular values to strongly reassert orthodox beliefs. If mainstream traditional Christian congregations are diminishing in size, the opposite is true of evangelical churches, whose swelling numbers of enthusiasts indicate that this form of religiosity is addressing the needs of its adherents.

There are numerous definitions for that nebulous thing called religion, but we find William James's definition one of the most

satisfactory: "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men [*sic*] in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."[19] By "divine" he meant a primal reality that the individual feels impelled to respond to "solemnly and gravely." The "relation" may be, he says, either moral, physical, or ritual, and it is from this core experience that theologies, philosophies, and organizations secondarily grow. Part of that organization is in the way that people communicate their own experiences, or read about those of others, and form groups or communities in order to discuss or reenact segments of them, as well as forming personal and social identities from them. James preferred to pay little attention to the institution of religion, pursuing instead what he referred to as "personal religion," involving personal experiences, which he saw as more fundamental than either theology or ecclesiasticism.

More than a century after the publication of his now classic work, William James's thoughts are echoed in contemporary spiritualities with their emphasis once again on the importance of experience, and the mystical perspective is flourishing. In addition to the search for the spiritual experience, people seem to be looking for a sense of community in an often alien world. The West's focus on science, rationality, and materialism is what Max Weber described as the "disenchantment of the world."[20] The Enlightenment ushered in the loss of the capacity for enchantment; people became disenchanted. Disenchantment divorced the realm of magic and imagination from the world of the secular and mundane. The much later emergence of reenchantment brought back the imagination and the quest for some kind of balance between magic and rationality in our everyday lives.[21] Schneider describes enchantment as "the sensation when one experiences events or circumstances that produce a sense of the mysterious, the weird and the uncanny."[22] Enchantment contributes to the magical experience.

Today, enchantment has returned along with an increase in spiritual inventiveness,[23] which calls on imagination, playfulness, and a willingness to experiment and, above all, to entertain the idea that anything is possible. The contemporary search for meaning includes exploring inner personal experiences through meditation, ritual, dance, music, and drugs. Old dichotomies such as fact and fiction, real and imaginary, human and nonhuman, become blurred; and moving into trance states takes practitioners into realms that ordinary mortals have ventured into only in dreams.

British heathens, for example, look to fantasy fiction for inspiration, in particular Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series and Robert Holdstock's *Mythago Wood*, which speak of alternative and possible worldviews

for those who celebrate magic, imagination, and humor. These works of fiction are empowering to heathens as they touch on stories that embrace a community that extends further than a community of humans, to include fairies and elven folk, goblins and trolls, animals and trees, all communicating relationally as nonhuman persons, to richly engage in one another's lives.[24] Terry Pratchett's stories evoke other worlds that are peopled with such characters, and heathens pick up on the "relational engagement"[25] that is made in these worlds, extending their own human world to incorporate all other living, as well as mythical, beings into their everyday spheres. They might talk about dwarves as if they were physically present, and the places inhabited by creatures in the fictional villages and woods of fantasy stories are envisaged and visually experienced as real places with scenery and ecology.[26] They share their world with creatures they view as being as real and significant as humans, creatures that have been only mythologized by others.

The magical experience is the outcome of the practice of magic, itself a term that is flexible and somewhat indeterminate, as we have seen. Rather than trying to narrow and confine its definition, we investigate a wide variety of experiences to relay what the experients say or feel about them, the meanings and sensations from their point of view, and include ways that these experiences accommodate the belief system within which they occur. We attempt to identify their nature through the impact they have on the mind and body, and how they might change the experients' attitudes and cosmological schemes, challenging preconceived assumptions about the nature of reality itself.

As a counterpoint to reason, the magical experience is that which is denied by the strict materialist. We recognize that the human condition generally, and universally, is at times rational, comprehensible, and fathomable, but at other times it is irrational, incomprehensible, and unfathomable, and this book focuses upon the latter experiences. Our daily lives consist of one-third sleep, of which our dreams are not fully understood, and much time spent using our imagination, intuition, and other seemingly "magical" practices. We understand ourselves principally through our interactions with others, discovering who we are through a process of reaction and reflection; we see ourselves as we are reflected in others, somewhat distorted by their own backgrounds and prejudices, which we take on board in order to arrive at a continually changing self-definition.

Magic is elusive, and uses emotional processes of mind that work in an occult, or hidden, fashion, inexplicable by the scientific tools that

we have at present. But while it is elusive, it is as real as the feeling we get when we listen to music that pleases our senses, or see works of art that move us, or witness an act of compassion. These are not aspects of our lives that we can explain easily, nor can they be facilely explained away. Magical experiences are those that appear to contradict mainstream science's constructs of time, space, energy. Some experients suggest that quantum physics is the branch of science that approaches something that might come close to explaining certain aspects of magic: particles that appear and disappear from view, parallel universes, multiverses, and nonlocality. Albert Einstein referred to quantum physics as "spooky," because of its elusive and seemingly inexplicably random nature, making it difficult to pin down.

Whether an experience is "true" or "false" has little to do with the magical experience, and it is not our purpose here to test or contest the validity of such experiences. What we are concerned with, in this book, is to acknowledge the fact that people experience things that are not explained in a rational way, using existing methods, and that the experience has meaning for the experients. Although many attempts have been made to contain such experiences, these attempts tend to dichotomize experiences into "acceptable" or "unacceptable," "true" or "untrue," or to dismiss them because of their anomalous and "unreasonable" nature. Our phenomenological approach focuses on *qualia*,[27] especially when individuals cross the barriers of what is normally regarded as body, mind, and space.

What is the difference between a magical experience and a religious experience? The latter is through a particular religious set of beliefs; the former can be religious, spiritual, or even secular. On being asked to recount a magical experience she might have had in her life at any time, a student once said that it was during a folk festival held outdoors in the summer. On the morning of her experience, she had participated in the excitement of making her own personal lantern during a lantern-making workshop preparatory for the night's fire event, an annual occasion that entailed dozens of lantern holders walking in single-line procession from the top of a hill down to a large stage in front of an audience of hundreds of people. Her participation during the day and the lantern-lit procession at night provided the right setting for her to have an experience that was both magical and memorable; it gave her a sense of being a part of something special, something different from anything else she had participated in.[28]

While a religious experience can also be a magical experience, the latter encompasses a much broader array of experiences that move the person out of the mundane and evoke strong emotions, without

necessarily occurring within a specific religious framework. A magical experience does not have to have religious overtones, it just has to have that something special that is *felt*, and that touches the emotions in some way. William James expressed it in this way:

> Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens; there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. How to regard them is the question—for they are so discontinuous with ordinary consciousness.[29]

Our approach in *The Varieties of Magical Experience* is to peek through the "filmiest of screens" and explore some of those "potential forms of consciousness entirely different." We agree with James that there are different ways of knowing or experiencing the nature of reality.

Our book is organized in five parts: Part I: *Exploring Magical Realms*, Part II: *Indigenous Magic*, Part III: Gnosis *and Medieval Magic*, Part IV: *"Dark" and "Light" Magic*, and Part V: *The Earth and the Internet*.

In Chapter 1, "Accessing and Experiencing Other Realities," of Part I, we look at the general notion of other realms, through what has been referred to variously as the Otherworld, the Underworld, Heaven, Hell, Sky worlds, aquatic worlds, spirit realms, taking examples from various parts of the world. We look at how people access those realms via techniques that involve body, emotions, and mind transformation. Chapter 2, "Magic, Anthropology, and the Senses," takes the reader on a sensual journey to hear about anthropologists' firsthand accounts of forays into magical realms during their sojourns in the field. These published accounts of fieldwork experiences are invaluable for demonstrating the importance of suspending disbelief and fully engaging in magical activities and events. Such radical participation is a crucial tool for understanding the phenomena of magic and can suggest unique theoretical paradigms.

Part II: *Indigenous Magic*, contains Chapters 3, "Healers and Harmers," and 4, "Shamanism," which cover practical aspects of magic as it is used to bring about particular outcomes that either enhance life or harm certain individuals or groups. Both chapters call on examples from many cultures, highlighting the fact that magical practices are universal, are commonly used, and are mixed with physical practicality.

A common notion is that there are forces, fields, or energies that can be called upon by the specialist who "knows," and is trained to develop his or her skills for personal or communal benefit. Certain techniques are made explicit in these chapters. There is often little distinction between whether the magical act is performed at a physical or at a metaphysical level, as both methods are employed (e.g., herbal poison and/or spiritual arrows of poison). Sometimes this results in an onlooker from outside the culture assessing the whole procedure as mere charlatanism. In cultures where magic is an everyday possibility, the physical and the metaphysical are often indistinguishable; it is the outcome that matters. The imagination, emotions, and spiritual journeys and encounters, according to indigenous accounts, are showcased in this part.

In Part III, Gnosis *and Medieval Magic*, we enter into the magical practices of medieval Europe. Chapter 5, "*Gnosis*, Kabbalah, and Visonary Ascent," delves into the Western esoteric tradition of *gnosis*, or sacred knowledge, including ideas about how the spiritual practitioner can attain self-development and spiritual release, and achieve union with the One divine Being. Gnostic emanationist perspectives later emerged in Merkabah mysticism and the medieval Kabbalah. The Hermetic texts and Gnostic thought are also compared in this chapter, along with the concept of visionary ascent through the Kabbalistic Tree of Life.

Chapter 6, "Medieval Magic and Sorcery," continues with witchcraft, sorcery, and Hermetic "high magic" in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, when such practices were deemed malevolent and punishable by death. These troubled times created the craze of the witchcraft trials and their accompanying atrocities. We find stories of particular people, their trumped-up charges, and subsequent demises, and then move on to connections between magic and early forms of science. This chapter leads us into Part IV, *Dark and Light Magic*.

Chapter 7, "Left-Hand Path/Right-Hand Path," goes beyond the judgmental stereotypes of white and black magic as good and bad, indicating origins of terms and connections between Eastern and Western traditions, before launching into a detailed account of more contemporary groups and personas, such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Aleister Crowley, and the more contemporary scene, with magical practitioners such as Anton La Vey and the Church of Satan.

Chapter 8, "Magic and Sexuality," more specifically covers the Left-Hand Path and the sex magic of Aleister Crowley, detailing how ritual sex is intended to evoke the energies of the life force itself, seen by

such practitioners to be the key to magical illumination. Chapter 9, "Modern Trance and Meditative Magic," focuses more on the "inner plane" work as it is understood, practiced, and experienced in and through the tools of Western occultism, especially the Kabbalah, the Tarot, the Tattva symbols, and sigils, as well as Enochian magic, completing these accounts with the trance magic and art of Austin Osman Spare and Rosaleen Norton.

In Part V, *The Earth and the Internet*, we have a change of pace that takes us to the present. "Sacred Earth Mysteries" is the topic for Chapter 10, articulating the most recent trends in viewing the earth as a sacred, interconnected entity in itself. Both indigenous people and modern Westerners are viewing their roles within this "web of life" more as caretakers. The magic and mystery of the natural environment forms a backdrop for the magical experience. The passion for ecological spirituality can lead, as well, to political activism.

Finally, in Chapter 11, "Cybermagic," we have a unique form of magical practice that is the direct result of modern technology: the Internet and virtual reality, where humans all over the world can form communities that obviate the need for physical space and physical interaction. This is a truly modern way of practicing magic and a curious interface between the ancient practice and idea of magical realms and the uniquely modern realms of cyberspace, chaos magick, and the psychosphere. Here, the physical body becomes peripheral and almost unnecessary, creating a true dissolving of bodily boundaries where imagination can take full flight—a very magical concept.

This book will hopefully contribute to the already growing literature on the subject of magic, the metaphysical, and those areas of inquiry that have hitherto been anathema to an academic audience. We hope that the reader will be interested enough to take up any aspect of the book that he or she finds particularly intriguing in order to delve more deeply into this fascinating topic.

# Part I

# Exploring Magical Realms

# Chapter 1

# Accessing and Experiencing Other Realities

Humans seem to have an innate yearning for something other than our physical world and our brief existence in the physical form. This has led to myths and religious beliefs that try to offer us something more than the stark notion that once our physical body dies we cease to exist; there is nothing. We long to discover this "otherworld," and we have come up with all sorts of innovative and creative ways to explore it.

In Irish mythology, the Otherworld has been described in poetry and tales as being a land of paradise, happiness, and summer. It was a place where there was no sickness, death, or even old age. It is often described as a series of islands where the various deities and ancestors live, and many of the mythological heroes journeyed to these realms. The hero might set out on a quest, and at some time a magic mist might descend upon him. On passing through, and after many adventures, he returns to his mortal abode and is from that time changed. Irish tradition recounts tales of fairies and their dwelling places in mounds and hollow hills, where they live in communities ruled by a king or a queen. Their places might be found by humans at certain times of the year, most often midsummer.

In some traditions the Otherworld is referred to as the Underworld, a region that is thought to be beneath the earth's surface, a place where the souls of the newly dead go and is sometimes known as the realm of death. Otherworlds, Underworlds, or Innerworlds seem to be varying explanations for the "places" that humans go when they die from the physical world, and where they might venture at times, during their lives.

According to prophetic and devotional traditions, the Prophet Muhammad was miraculously transported from Mecca to Jerusalem one night in the company of the angel Gabriel. In several versions, his magical flight is described as mounting a "ladder" to the sky. Lao Tzu, the legendary founder of Chinese Taoism, is said to have left his body inert and lifeless in order to go "for a stroll to the origin of things."[1] In some Taoist sects, an essential mark of the holy man is the ability to take flight and wander freely through enchanted islands, sacred mountains, or celestial spheres.

In Christian thought, some refer to the notion of both heaven and hell as *metaphorical* places, while others view heaven as a more tangible place that is full of the presence of saints. Heaven is referred to by Christ as "a kingdom" (Matthew 25:34); in Acts 14:22 it is called "the kingdom of God"; in II Corinthians 12:2 it is referred to as "the third heaven"; and in Deuteronomy 10:14 it is called "the heaven of heavens," implying that there are layers, or levels of heaven, not just one.

In the book of Revelation, heaven is described as being a city resplendent with brilliant gems, crystals, gold, and other precious stones, and for those fortunate enough to arrive in heaven "there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them" (Revelation 22:5). Hell, on the other hand, is a place of darkness, completely devoid of God's mercy and goodness. It is full of terrors, a furnace of unquenchable fire, a place of everlasting punishment, where its victims are tormented in both their bodies and their minds in accordance with their sinful natures, and there is much "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:49–50). Those lost in the flames of hell will endure the most intense pain and suffering they have ever felt.

Christians might catch a glimpse of heaven during a near-death experience. Jayne Smith stepped into a subtly illuminated flower meadow "saturated with colors she had never seen before."[2] Other visitors to the heavenly regions have also commented on the colors. One man spoke of them as:

> the colors of Utopia, the perfect originals of which earthly hues are only a copy . . . verdant lawns, pure blue sky and lakes, and a mixed pallet of flowers and rainbows, the other world is ornamented with the colors of precious metals and jewels mined from the empyrean.[3]

In both medieval and modern near-death narratives, paradise topography frequently refers to pastoral meadows, seraphic choirs,

golden gates, shining cities, angelic music, and etheric smiling beings, all surrounded with light.

While heaven is for people who accept God, hell is for people who reject God. The way into heaven is through God's grace, and to avoid hell is through Jesus, who died for human sins. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the light." In the Acts of John 95:26–27, Jesus Christ is quoted by John as saying: "I am a door to you who knock on me. I am a way to you the traveller." Many Christian faiths have interpreted these words as necessitating the following of Christian dogma and doctrine. The Gnostics, however, had something a little different to say.

The early Gnostics argued that one's own experience is the ultimate criterion of truth and takes precedence over all tradition and second-hand testimony. According to the Gospel of Thomas (32.19–33.5 in NHL 118), one of the gospels that was omitted from the New Testament, Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom (of God) as being inside and outside:

> The Kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will realize that you are the sons of the living Father. But if you will not know yourselves, then you dwell in poverty.[4]

Elaine Pagels suggests that the term "Kingdom" symbolizes a state of transformed consciousness. The Gnostics insisted that it was only on the basis of immediate experience that one could create the poems, vision accounts, myths, and hymns that they prized as proof of the attainment of *gnosis*.

From many accounts in myths, legends, religious writings, and personal narrations throughout history, life in the physical world is connected to other planes of existence, and it is possible to move into those planes. The passage from one to the other might be serendipitous, or it might be attained using certain techniques. The spiritual journeyer may have to surmount obstacles, such as guarded doorways, walls of fire, mazeways, curtains of mist, and caves lined with teeth, and face many ordeals. Having penetrated the impasse, however, the person may then feel oneness with the universe, meet an illuminated or enlightened being, or gain knowledge that is unattainable on the earthly plane.

According to Amerindian cosmology, there are three levels to the universe—sky, earth, and underworld—all connected by a central axis. Moving from one world to the next is often represented by moving through an opening or a hole. All things are parts of a unified

universe, and each level, with its particular qualities and energies, interacts with and interpenetrates the other. There are no limits between the world of animals, humans, and spirits; they are One and the Universe is perceived as a live entity.

In order to access other realities, people in different cultures and religions across the world use very similar methods, and they are used by spiritual specialists, spiritual seekers, whether or not they have any particular religious belief, and even by the merely curious. One or all of the senses might be involved: visual signs and symbols might be employed, as well as voice and musical instruments, dance or body postures with accompanying body decoration of some sort, physical pain, and olfactory and tactile stimuli. Sometimes hallucinogenic substances are used.

As part of his fieldwork in Nepal among the Tibetan Buddhist Yolmo Sherpa people, anthropologist Robert Desjarlais became an apprentice to a healer, Meme, and with Meme's help, began his own forays into trance experiences:

> Taking the role of shamanic initiate, I would sit in a semi lotus position to the right of my "guru" and attempt to follow the curing chants. In time, Meme would begin to feel the presence of the divine, his body oscillating in fits and tremors, and my body, following the rhythm of his actions, would similarly "shake." Tracked by the driving, insistent beat of the shaman's drum, my body would fill with energy. Music resonated within me, building to a crescendo, charging my body and the room with impacted meaning. Waves of tremors coursed through my limbs. Sparks flew, colors expanded, the room came alive with voices, fire, laughter, darkness.[5]

After several months of learning how to use his body in a similar way to the people he was studying, taking note of their ways of approaching sounds and smells, ways of talking, walking, and sensing, over time his trance experiences slowly began to be more comparable to those that his teacher experienced. The more experience he gained of trance, the more controlled, centered, and steady were the visions he was having, and he realized that it is possible to expand one's "field of awareness" to a much greater extent.

Trance induction appears to be universal, from Western Pentecostal services to Islamic-based Sufi ecstatic circles, to the Kalahari San in South Africa, and is intensely emotional. There are some basic techniques that employ the senses in order to open what Aldous Huxley referred to as "the doors of perception," or knowledge that is different from that achieved via intellect and reason.[6] These techniques enable a person to move into a trance state that mostly necessitates blocking the

logical, rational thought processes (what yogis call "stopping the oscillations of the mind"), and being open to nonmundane experiences.

Sometimes, by focusing on a visual device such as a mandala, a mirror or pool of water, or a repetitive sound, such as drumming or rattling, or by wearing a mask, one can achieve a sense of passing from one state of consciousness to another. These are visual and auditory gateways, but there are other methods. What seems to be essential to the majority of experiences of alternate reality is to move into an ASC. In an altered state, the experience becomes a reality, rather than merely an exercise using the imagination. An important point to bear in mind when considering experiences in ASCs is that they are almost always interpreted through specific cultural and religious symbols (language and belief), and the original experience may change considerably in the relaying of it. For example, a woman once told Lynne Hume that she had seen "leprechauns" when she visited Ireland. On pressing the woman to tell her more about what they looked like ("were they wearing red jackets and green pants?"; "did they have beards?") the woman replied, "No," they were small lights that moved across the floor of the room she was in and did not really have any form.

Trance may be accompanied by visions and can be induced by dance, music, hypnosis, rapid overbreathing, inhaling substances, ingesting hallucinogens, and ascetic contemplation or deep meditation. Prolonged immobility, fasting, sleep deprivation, and even self-inflicted injury can produce a trance state, as can participating in "numinous moments," such as rituals, initiations, or séances. As well, various privations, ordeals, harassment, social isolation, and sensory deprivation can produce a trance state. Rhythmic and incessant clapping the hands together and stamping the feet in the company of others in a ceremonial setting with auditory stimuli can lead to trance. The key to bringing about a change in consciousness appears to be in the continuous and sustained use of any method in an emotional and/or meaningful setting. Both sensory deprivation and sensory overstimulation can result in a trance state.

An Oglala Sioux man cited by Thomas Lewis commented on his experience while participating in the Sun Dance, a ceremony calling on the power and healing properties of the sun, which is performed among many indigenous people of the Plains in North America:

> The experience of the Sun Dance I can't describe. It's like being hypnotized. As I go up and down it's as if the sun were dancing. It is a good feeling. It is all preparation, planning, fasting, being ready. It is not easy.

> My throat is dry and I am tired. I don't sleep before; I cannot sleep. I am thinking and planning how it will be. There is sacrifice, pain, death and dying, and coming back again to the real world.[7]

Fasting and purification before an actual dance might last from 48 hours to four days, and extreme forms of the dance might include self-torturous inflictions of pain on the physical body of the dancer: piercing, the insertion of skewers into the flesh before being tied to a rope that is hanging from a central pole. The dancer might continue the dance until the skewers are torn free.

The ultimate goal of a Sun Dance is the religious experience of a vision. It is also an empowering experience for the dancer, who gains some understanding of the complementarity of life and death, and that suffering is a part of life; it also helps the dancer to cope with the realities of everyday life. If the dancer receives a vision during the several days of the Sun Dance activities, his spirit might leave his body, and converse with one or more other spirits, receive power, and be instructed by them about how to use that power. A dancer might channel his power during prayer and dance in order to help sick relatives or friends. For both participants and spectators, the Sun Dance, especially in its extreme forms, is "a powerful emotional and spiritual experience," replete with electrifying energy within a highly charged setting.[8]

The movement of whirling as practiced in the Mevlevi tradition of Sufism is a ceremony of worship that involves the dancer performing the *sema* (which means "to listen"). While listening to uplifting music, the dancer, the Whirling Dervish, experiences the meaning of these words from the Holy Qur'an: "Wherever you turn is the face of God." The dancer unifies with others in a circular dance that is focused on his spiritual longing for God; in complete surrender, the dancer's thoughts and his body are concentrated on God's presence. He inwardly repeats the name of God while maintaining awareness of the precise manner of whirling that enables him to spin on his own physical axis, revolving 360 degrees with each step, and focusing on his deep love of God. The *sema* is said to carry the dancer beyond the usual universe of existence, to the Truth.[9]

Hyperexcitation such as experienced in the North American Sun Dance, the Balinese Kris Dance, or a West African spirit ceremony leads to experiences phenomenologically different from those induced by hyperrelaxation such as Zen meditation. Certain meditation techniques that reduce sensory input, for example the monotonous but mellifluous repetition of a mantra in an otherwise silent setting, can lead to light trance that becomes deeper the longer it is repeated.

Often trance is accompanied by bodily shaking. For example in Kenya, the Samburu men poised between boyhood and mature male regularly go into trance, shaking their whole bodies. The Shakers (and the early Quakers) were often beset by uncontrollable bodily shaking and trance states, achieved in emotionally charged church services. These instances were regarded as mystical and a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Shaking, trembling, and convulsions are characteristic of the preliminary stages of possession and trance in Haitian Vodou ceremonies prior to the spirit's entry into the dancer's body when they are said to "ride" their earthly hosts like a horse. They are often unaware of what they are doing. Some American black Baptist churches in places like New Orleans exhibit bodily trembling and epileptic-like states after highly charged emotional singing.

In the fifteenth century there was a curious spate of dance mania that swept through Italy in the wake of the Black Death. Called tarantism, because it was rumored that the frenetic and abandoned dancers had been subjected to the poisonous bite of a tarantula spider, people would dance, shout, scream, and sometimes foam at the mouth. Some had apocalyptic visions, and saw visions of Jesus and the Virgin Mary; some were seized by epileptic-like reactions. In some regions it was thought to be caused by demonic possession. Those affected would dance themselves into trance and then collapse exhausted. Peasant Italians in the fifteenth century regularly danced to the music of fifes, clarinets, and drums, and the hyperexcitation that occurred during the tarantism dances was thought to be due to the dispersion of the spider's poison through the body of the dancer.[10]

Trance dance can use a combination of techniques—body movement, sound, percussive rhythm, and breathing techniques—in order to focus on healing and the possible experience of discovering "parallel realities." One contemporary trance dancer, Robbie Robertson, who used the aforementioned techniques, with the addition of being blindfolded, writes:

> Imagine darkness so intense and so complete covering you like a velvet blanket . . . a blackness that cuts you off from the everyday world, forcing you to draw deep into yourself, a blackness that makes you see with your heart instead of your eyes. You can't see, but your eyes seem open. You are isolated, but you know you are united with all living things. And out of this darkness comes the roaring of the drums, the sound of the prayers. And among these sounds your ears catch the voices of the spirits, ghostlike, whispering to you from unseen lips. You feel the wings of birds brushing your face; feel the light touch of a feather on

> your skin. And always you hear the throbbing drums filling the empty space inside yourself, making you forget things that clutter your mind, making your body sway to their rhythm.[11]

The interpretation of experiences in ASCs depends to a great extent on situating the experience within a cultural and/or religious cognitive framework. A similar somatic experience might translate as divine revelation or an encounter with divas, or it may be interpreted as a mental disorder. In some cultures experiences are encouraged, in others discouraged.

As people move into altered states, they may experience physical sensations of corporeal shrinkage or expansion, which may be accompanied by a feeling of lightness, or rising up. Sometimes this lightness turns into the sensation of flying and/or becoming transformed into another creature, especially a bird, at which time visual perceptions indicate a sense of looking down from above. At other times, they may feel as if they are being drawn into a vortex, perhaps a tunnel, and they may experience physical constrictions and breathing difficulties. The physical body may begin to "vibrate," sounds may be heard, and a bright light or lights may be seen. Sri Ramakrishna, a Hindu who performed priestly duties in a temple of Kali, the Divine Mother, in India in the nineteenth century, wrote that he "heard clattering sounds in his joints" and felt that he had no power to move his body. He then started to see a "vision of particles of light like swarms of fireflies, then masses of light covering everything like a mist."[12]

Visualization is a method that is used in many practices. The Vajrayana tradition of Buddhism involves intensive visualization training based on a series of elaborate icons that must be successfully reproduced in full detail in the "mind's eye" during meditation practice. The more highly detailed the images (colors, implements, hand gestures, posture, which all symbolize different aspects of the path to spiritual fulfillment) that one can hold in one's mind, the more successful is the visualization. Focusing attention on a mental image of an enlightened being (such as Tara or Avalokiteshvara) is recommended as a means of developing single-pointed concentration. If one selects Tara for the exercise, the practitioner might imagine her body as emerald-green light, translucent and radiant, dressed in clothing of "celestial silk," and adorned with precious gems. She could be seated in a spiritually meaningful posture, holding a blue flower and smiling lovingly at the meditator. The visualization could include thoughts of Tara's inexhaustible loving-kindness and of opening one's heart to this energy. The aim is to produce a positive, joyful meditative experience, and to remind the meditator of the experience of enlightenment until it becomes a living reality.[13]

An old idea that is found in cultures as far apart as India and Alaska is that thoughts are mental images that have form and, when projected out into the etheric field, become realities themselves. In the Western esoteric system, thoughts, images, and vibrations are said to produce tangible forms that can become visible to those with psychic abilities. Finke[14] suggests that mental images can stimulate visual processing mechanisms directly, activating many of the *same information-processing mechanisms* that are activated during ordinary visual perception, resulting in the person "seeing" an imagined object just as vividly and clearly as if it were the "real" object. So if someone "sees" or experiences "spirit," it is as real as anything that he or she might experience in the mundane world. Both experiences are valid and real to the perceiver. Mental images that are enhanced by concentration and will, using techniques such as creative visualization, can project an image from the "mind's eye" to one that is projected outside the individual. This practice, whether explicit or implicit, is the experiential core of many mystical and magico-religious traditions.

To become proficient at visualization, certain exercises are recommended. An image held in the "mind's eye" is cultivated so that the image itself can be projected from the mind and "seen" outside the imagination. With practice, the mere thought of the emotion associated with the form will evoke in the waking consciousness the symbol-form concerned and, conversely, the symbol will evoke the emotion, until the proficient practitioner can directly perceive things on the "astral levels" or "astral planes" without the need for symbols. One exercise to enhance this process is to close the eyes and imagine the face of a familiar person (picture the shape, color, texture of the face), hold the image for as long as possible, then project the image on to a blank wall; the aim is to create such a strong image that it can be seen with the eyes open.

Successful magical work, write two modern Western magic practitioners, W. E. Butler[15] and Israel Regardie,[16] requires the ability to build up mental images. The magician learns to train the "mind's eye" in order to evoke images so that the "force" or "energy" of the energy-form can be used for magical purposes. Another technique is to imagine a particular god-form (for example Isis) surrounding and coinciding with one's own physical body. While breathing rhythmically, the name of the god is frequently vibrated for some time. As concentration becomes more intense and profound, the form is said to become vitalized by streams of dynamic energy and power, and the mind is invaded by light, intense feelings, and inspiration.

Other sensory modalities—hearing, smell, taste, and touch—can be enhanced with training techniques that are similar to those employed for image enhancement. Training for heightened audible sensitivity, for example, can be done through the use of a gradually diminishing sound, and the projection of audible forms is assisted by using aids such as large seashells. The advanced adept becomes familiar with these practices until there is a shift in consciousness, and this state can be attained at will.

In Islamic Sufi cosmology, there are five hierarchical planes of being, called "Presences" (*Hadarat*). On each of the planes there is a bi-unity of action and passion. Each lower Presence is the image and correspondence (*mithal*), the reflection and mirror of the next higher. In this way everything that exists in the physical world of the senses is a reflection of what exists in the world of Spirits.

It is important for the Sufi to attain a balance between the inner and outer dimensions, and so activities are directed toward emptying the mind of worldly preoccupations in order to be deeply plunged in the ardent love of God, to the extent that thoughts are completely centered on God. In order to "remember" that which is known, but forgotten, the Sufi needs to invoke "recollection" (*zikr*). When the mind is emptied of all other thoughts, and with God as the absolute focus, one is more likely to attain the goal of "remembering." This can be achieved by listening profoundly with the "ear of the heart" to music or poetry, or engaging in recitation or other activities that lead one to the same goal. One such recitation is: "God is with me; God watches me; God witnesses me"; and this is repeated over and over again each night until a "sweetness" manifests in the heart.[17]

The Sufi is also advised to stay responsive to divine communication and to keep the heart in a constant state of alertness. Visualization is very important to this endeavor, and there are specific exercises to practice in order to gain proficiency. The faithful need to "imagine" (*takhayyul*) God as present and must "attain intuitive vision" (*schuhud*) or visualization (*ru'ya*). They should contemplate God in the subtle center, which is the *heart*, while simultaneously hearing the divine voice vibrating in all manifest things to the extent that nothing else is heard. The Sufi says, "When He shows Himself to me, my whole being is vision: when He speaks to me in secret, my whole being is hearing." Visions, to Ibn 'Arabi and his followers, whether they are experienced in a waking or dream state, are themselves *penetrations* into the world of another dimension. Another exercise is to recite the name "Allah," or the Arabic names of God (mentioned in the Qur'an), while employing breath control techniques.[18]

While techniques and possibly the core experiences are very similar across many different religious traditions, the focus and interpretive frameworks are very diverse. This explains why seeing a "light" might be interpreted as a specific deity, iconic religious figure, an enlightened being, and so on, or as "proof" of the veracity of a believer's religious doctrines. Rudolf Arnheim writes that a person's direct observation is "an exploration of the form-seeking, form-imposing mind, which needs to understand but cannot until it casts what it sees into manageable models."[19] Intense concentration upon a particular symbol can center the mind, stimulate nonanalytical modes of knowing, and operate as a door or passageway; interpretation depends upon cultural conditioning and religious background. We would be highly unlikely to "see" something with which we were entirely unfamiliar in any way. Intense devotion to an icon of the Virgin Mary may produce a vivid and highly significant experience for a Roman Catholic, or a *vévé* (ground drawing, usually made in cornmeal, associated with a particular spirit) for a practitioner of Vodou, or a tarot card image for a Western occultist, but would not result in the same experience across these traditions unless there was familiarity and the appropriate context.

## MUSIC

Many of the religious communities discussed in the collection of articles in Sullivan's edited book, *Enchanting Powers*, comment upon the enchanting power of religious music and its ability not only to attune itself to other realities but to provoke other realities into resonating in tune with it. In medieval Java, for example, where Tantric practices were maintained after long years of study with a spiritual guide, focused yet relaxed listening to certain kinds of music was believed to be a vehicle of transportation to the mystic union with deity, or for the descent of a personal deity. Drumming, chanting, magical words, sound vibrations, and emotional songs that "uplift the soul" can act as a means to transcendence. Having one's ears "opened" to the significance of sound is highly significant to the Songhay of Niger, as Paul Stoller discovered when he became apprentice to a sorcerer.[20] The Songhay believe that sound is a phenomenon in and of itself, and is the carrier of powerful forces. Words not only convey knowledge or information, but they are also power and energy themselves. Indeed, Stoller's fieldwork experiences led him to believe that words have power, and that sound is very powerful indeed.

People who undergo a profound Christian religious conversion say that no words can do justice to such an experience. A Pentecostal service, where members feel they have encountered the presence of Jesus, would not be possible without the highly charged emotions that are engendered by the music. The musical instruments, uplifting emotional songs, and impassioned words of the preacher produce a heightened or ecstatic state in the worshippers, during which the presence of the divine can be "keenly felt."[21] Pentecostal services are a communal affair with the fundamental aim to construct an atmosphere in which they may consciously and intuitively encounter God, which is often expressed as a "felt presence of the divine." Music functions as an auditory icon, embracing and surrounding each of the worshippers. People may have a sense of being inspired to speak or act or, more dramatically, of being acted upon or seized by the divine, and being infused by the Holy Spirit.[22] The interweaving of music and emotion in Pentecostal groups is particularly fine-tuned, bringing about heightened emotions in most of the people present, and resulting in desired outcomes of healing, prophecy, and glossolalia, all of which are regarded as a sign of the presence of Jesus.

Songs or chants, accompanied by music or not, can be employed to evoke intense emotional experiences in singers and listeners alike and are used to great effect in charismatic Christian churches. Also, among the Sufis, repetitive prayer and movement can break through barriers so that the Sufis feel they are in the presence of God. Certain instruments such as drums (universally identified as a potent element of emotionally charged rituals), and the more culturally specific *didjeridu*, can trigger the same sort of transformations and lead to intense emotional and physiological changes.

The drum is used cross-culturally to move audiences into an ASC. Anthropologist T. R. Miller reports that the drums and rattles of the Siberian shaman, for example, promote "spectral shifts between inner and outer auditory perception," and that sounds moved "in aural streams between foreground and background, between inner and outer soundscapes, between memory and the present, between music, language and noise." The sounds and vibrations of both voices and drums reverberate in bodies and in acoustical spaces occupied by performers and listeners, serving to link mere mortals with the spirits. In a ceremonial performance known as *kamlanie*, the Siberian shaman's drum symbolized an animal that aided the shaman in his journeys to other realms. The drum was often placed between the legs of the drummer and he would "ride" it as if it were a horse. The drum also gathered together the shaman's spirit helpers.[23]

Drumming is an intrinsic part of trance in Vodou ceremonies. Drummers undergo long and intense training before they are experienced enough to perform in a ceremony that calls on the *lwa* (spirits). When the "servitor" (dancer) becomes the "vessel" for the *lwa*, it is said that the *lwa* is "mounting" or "riding" the possessed person, causing him or her to fall into an uncontrolled frenzy at which time other participants in the ceremony need to ensure that the possessed person does not injure him or herself. The wild dancing and excitement of the ritual performance promoted by the drumming indicates that the dancer has been possessed. There are drum patterns that correspond to certain *lwa*, and drumming variations assist and facilitate specific *lwa* to enter into the servitor's body during the ritual. Without the drumming it is unlikely that a Vodou ceremony could take place, so inextricably linked is the dancer with the drumming.

In Papua New Guinea, the Kaluli people also recognize the important link between drumming, emotions, and somatic experience. The Kaluli believe that everything, including objects such as a drum, has a visible realm (an "outside"), and a reflection realm (an "inside"); one is the deeper reality of the other. The intention of ceremonial drumming is for listeners to reflect on that deeper reality and acknowledge that sound is always more than it appears to be. The drum is said to have resonant carrying power, and when it has begun to "pulsate strongly," drummers feel the pulsing sensation in their upper arms and chest, as well as in the lower hands and fingers.[24]

The Pitjantjatjara, in central Australia, use a continuous stick-beating accompaniment known as *tukultjinganyi*, which is said to follow the heartbeat. The Pitjantjatjara say that while the breath controls the length of the phrase, the speed of singing and of beating is governed by listening to the heart. In the performance of songs that name (and therefore contain the power of) important geographical and sacred sites, the singing is accompanied by the large, strong beating of sticks (*timpil pulka*). The expression *inma pulka inkanyi*, or "singing in a strongly accented style," describes the performance. The ceremonial performance of an Ancestor, and the mythological narrative that accompanies that performance, links past and future simultaneously with the present.[25]

The *didjeridu* is not present in all areas of Australia, but even in areas where it is found, music is primarily vocal and is built around short bursts of singing, the length governed by the physical endurance of the singer to maintain breath. Anthropologist David Turner discovered that the *didjeridu* is much more than merely an instrument for producing sound, at least on Groote Eylandt (Australia). During

his fieldwork there he learned how to play the *didjeridu* under the guidance of a Groote Eylandt man named Gula. Turner was interested in the notion of high- and low-frequency sounds. He noted that some sounds "charge" the emotions, and other sounds "discharge" the emotions. Tibetan Buddhist chanting, he noted, charges and discharges at the same time. The effect of *dijderidu* playing, according to Turner, is like Tibetan chanting. It simultaneously "charges" and "discharges" and produces a paradoxical state of "excited relaxation."[26] Just as the sound of the *didjeridu* is produced by breathing in and out at the same time (circular breathing), the effect of that sound is simultaneously dual: a meditative mind in an enlivened body.

One time, after about four hours of *didjeridu* playing, Turner felt light-headed, released of stress, and energized. When he played the music associated with Groote Eylandt mortuary ceremonies, he became very detached and peaceful and saw how playing might calm the emotions and assist in the grieving process. The *didjeridu* is said to have considerable spiritual significance as it helps to transport the spirit of the dead person over to the "other side" during mortuary ceremonies. It acts as a channel between this world and the next. One of Turner's informants told him that care has to be taken when playing some tunes, even those that are not secret-sacred, as they can summon up spirit substance that might run out of control if the instrument is not properly controlled.[27]

After having mastered the art of playing the *didjeridu* in the way taught to him by Gula, Turner says that he gained an insider's insight into another world. One night, after a particularly good performance of *didjeridu* playing with others, Turner had the experience of floating above the landscape and soaring over green, patchwork fields, at which time he could see, with extreme clarity, all that he surveyed in a way that he had never before experienced. It was not a dream, he insists.[28]

Sound vibrations are mentioned as being important in many parts of the world. A Songhay healer conveyed to Stoller that although the meaning of words and songs is important, it is the sound vibrations that are even more important.[29] Similarly, chanting the names of Krisna using the mantra "Hare Krisna, Hare Krisna, Krisna Krisna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare" (known as the Great Chanting for Deliverance) is believed to set up a transcendental vibration that helps cleanse away misgivings of false consciousness and open up the possibility of spiritual understanding. The word "Hare" is the form of addressing the energy of the Lord, and the

words "Krisna" and "Rama" are forms of addressing the Lord Himself. Krisna consciousness is said to be the original, natural energy of the living entity, and when devotees hear the transcendental vibration of the chant this consciousness is revived. Through *kirtan* (a form of congregational chanting accompanied by percussion instruments and sometimes spontaneous dancing) the devotee associates with the Divine via sound vibration, and this can develop into a mood of spontaneous devotional rapture.

In the yogic traditions of meditation, a Sanskrit mantra is said to first calm the mind so that stillness can be experienced, and then, through constant repetition, the syllabic resonance takes one deep into the energy centers, or *chakras*. Sanskrit mantras are words of power considered to be essential for the internal journey of self-knowledge. Ian Prattis writes that the sound resonance of the mantra operates as a total energy system; the syllables in a mantra act as "a set of tonal frequencies that resonate with cellular templates and activate energy centres in the body, connecting and unifying them into a single integrated system."[30]

In Western occultism, audible perception can be enhanced by training in order to assist magical work. One of contemporary magician W. E. Butler's techniques is to listen to a familiar voice reading something (poetry is suggested), then attempt to hear the sound of the poetry when the person is not reading it. Another technique is to "vibrate" names of "power" (say, god names) when one is relaxed and breathing slowly and deeply. This can cause visual and audible images to arise, which can be used for purposes of communication between the conscious and superconscious levels of the person and lead to enhanced psychic abilities. The ideal magical chant is strongly rhythmical and appeals to the subconscious; its reiteration must be made to rise and fall by change of key. The Gregorian chant is said to be highly efficacious in magical work.[31]

## ENTHEOGENS

The British esoteric writer Colin Wilson once commented:

> Mystical, or poetic experience is somehow very simple, like drawing aside a curtain, or turning on a light switch. But if you blunder into a completely dark room, you may feel the walls for hours before you find the switch. Turning on the light is simple when you know where the switch is.[32]

Some Westerners are not content to wait for the serendipitous magical experience, or to undertake the many years of arduous spiritual training recommended by most religious traditions and spiritual practices, but prefer instead to turn on the light switch straightaway through the ingestion of psychoactive plants. Now referred to as "entheogens" (generating experiences of the divine), under their many and varied specifics, such as the traditional *ayahuasca*, *peyote*, *soma*, *yagé*, *caapi* (among others), they can catapult the imbiber into the terra incognita of alien and plant realms. The experiencer enters alternate worlds and seeks engagement with plant spirits and other entities.

Mazatec and Colombian shamans consider the world accessed through entheogens to be considerably more real than the ordinary physical world—that the everyday world is a pale echo of the otherworld. The exceptionally vibrant and vividly colored scenes of serpents, jungle creatures, and psychedelic geometric designs portrayed by Peruvian visionary-artist Pueblo Amaringo attest to his experiences while under the influence of the *ayahuasca* brew.

The herb *Salvia divinorum* (used sacramentally by the Mazatec people in Oaxaca, Central Mexico) takes the Western imbiber to what they call "Salvia Space." Any experience using *Salvia* depends upon the person taking it. One Western experimenter's first experience of smoking *Salvia divinorum* gave him the curious feeling of being transformed into the "hem of a black green and purple velvet gown," which merged into a "large, revolving vinyl record." When he looked up, he saw that the wearer of the gown was "a pale, stern woman with large dark eyes" and black hair, who seemed to be chastising him for wasting her time.[33]

Entheogenic users often say they enter a visionary landscape, where they experience "enhanced sensory acuity, complex ideation, great coherence of meaning, and transcendent emotion," and that the landscape is often inhabited by discarnate entities who are willing to interact with the tripper. The user can experience body dissociation, a sense of transcending time and space, and experience "a wide range of impressions including formless vibration, strange plant-like forms, alien machines, intelligent entities, and otherworldly music and languages."

Some experience the spirit world through DMT, n,n-dimethyltryptamine, a chemical that allows access, through the "K hole," into "DMT hyperspace." Beings that are commonly encountered are mantis-beings that look like praying mantises, and a presiding intelligence called "Lord DiMiTri," or a presence called "Lady K."

DMT hyperspace, explain those who have ventured there, is filled with various creatures, some of whom look like aliens (as popularly depicted, with two large almond-shaped eyes in a pear-shaped head); others have the appearance of insects, but there are many other beings. The experience, writes Tramacchi, is characteristically "both awe-inspiringly mysterious and strangely familiar," and the "meanings and feeling-tones" evoked in the partaker have enormous impact on the person.[34]

There is a growing literature on both the emic and etic perspectives of entheogens, their use, and experiences of those taking them.[35] Rather than taking the classical pathological or psychological approach to the whole area of analytic discourse about entheogens, Andy Letcher employs an animistic discourse, which suggests that consciousness-altering substances are not merely altering *perception* of the world, but that they allow the partaker to attempt to forge relationships with actual discarnate entities or intelligences.[36] This accords with Aldous Huxley's thoughts on the matter, that psychedelics strip away the mind's *filtering* mechanisms, which subsequently permits one to perceive that which is not normally perceived, in the manner of "tuning in" to some signal from outside the person.

Both Huxley and Letcher consider that in the spirit realm, or realms in which plants and other spirits have agency, consciousness and awareness is a reality in itself. Letcher's own experiences with psilocybin, or "magic" mushrooms, he says, had a profound spiritual and ontological impact on him personally.[37] Similarly, Daniel Pinchbeck writes how his personal experiences with "magic" mushrooms completely shattered his skeptical worldview, and he became convinced that "trees are watchers, plants are sentient beings, patiently aware of their place in the ultimate scheme of things."[38] Rick Strassman's search for a biological basis for spiritual experiences led him to conduct intensive research on psychedelic-drug experimentation. He suggests that our brain chemistry allows us to access other realms of existence and hypothesizes that DMT, which is naturally produced by the pineal gland, facilitates the soul's movement in and out of the body, and is an integral part of the birth and death experience, meditation, and even sexual transcendence. He points out that there are both dangers and promises to drug-induced spiritual experiences, and while one person might "soar, full of ecstatic and insightful discoveries" one day, that same person might "struggle through a terrifying nightmare" the next day, and different people might suffer greatly from one experience.[39]

Devotion and intense concentration or heightened awareness; focused thought on the activity (whether that is prayer, uplifting songs, or playing or listening to music); the vibrations and sounds that affect body and mind; the notion of the existence of "other" whether a deity, another realm, a universal energy; and so on are factors that can be found universally in the accessing and experiencing of other realities. At the very foundation of all these beliefs and practices is the idea that there is much more than the reality of this physical world in which we live, and that it is possible to access different realities by using any or a combination of the methods discussed.

# Chapter 2

# Magic, Anthropology, and the Senses

Anthropology was the first discipline in the social sciences to point out that reality is culturally constructed, and that there are multiple ways of experiencing the world. Early anthropologists sometimes noted that people in other cultures spoke of ancestral spirits, magic, and their beliefs in nonphysical realms, but the way they conveyed their notes in academic publications made it clear that these things were "not possible," and they were interpreted using functional or structural explanations. The cognitive framework within which anthropologists have situated themselves has been based on rationalism, and in many cases, atheism. This has had quite profound effects on the way we report our findings.

Most anthropologists and historians of religion would subscribe to what Evans-Pritchard had to say on religion, that is, that anthropologists have no need to concern themselves with the truth or falsity of religious thought.[1] There is no possibility of knowing whether the spiritual beings of primitive religions actually exist or not, so this cannot be taken into consideration. Sociological facts being scientific, rather than metaphysical or ontological, are what anthropologists should strive to ascertain. The objective view, agreed most, is not only possible but highly desirable.

With participant observation, the method *par excellence* of anthropology, the idea is to ensconce oneself in the everyday life of the people being researched and to be open to anything and everything that happens. Some fieldwork is disconcerting, emotionally traumatic, and at times highly dangerous. The ethnographer needs to view situations with the eyes of an outsider, and at the same time to

understand as much as possible, the view from the inside. Sometimes we have to overcome feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt when thrust into a new situation, and we need to move between intimacy and distance, which can sometimes be extremely difficult if we want to really understand what is happening and the importance of an event or experience to the people involved. Take, for example, Sylvie Tourigny's research into the survival strategies of socioeconomically marginalized families living with AIDS in inner-city Detroit, in the United States. Having made inroads into the lives of some of the families she needed to work with, some of whom were young, poor, and involved in drug marketing and gang wars, she found herself, at one point, in a car with some gang youth and with a shotgun muzzle pointing through the window of the car.[2]

High-risk moments such as this do not always occur, but there can be other emotionally traumatic and psychologically disturbing incidents as well,[3] not to mention long periods of ennui, and experiences of self-revelation. While not all fieldwork is as high risk to one's physical well-being as that of Sylvie Tourigny, other experiences lead to psychologically challenging moments for the fieldworker (see Hume and Mulcock).[4] Coping with these incidents is often left out of the academic ethnographic publication even though the fieldwork experience has an enormous impact on the anthropologist, in one way or another. However, the fieldworker, through reflection, can come to terms with self, the field situation, and the discipline,[5] and produce publications that not only further the discipline of anthropology but provide deep insights into the human condition.

Doing fieldwork using participant observation necessitates openness on the part of the anthropologist to everything she might encounter in that culture. As well as visual and auditory perceptions, we come into contact with tactile, olfactory, and other modalities that can provide clues to knowledge about a culture if we take note of them. With anthropological training and experience, the fieldworker can learn to "bracket" her beliefs and put some suppositions to one side. If she looks, sees, and hears stories about, say, a hunting expedition or a fishing trip, this might come within the anthropologist's own parameters of hunting or fishing, but if those same people tell her about an experience of *spirit* that is very real to them, and the anthropologist's own experiences have never stretched to anything remotely like that, or if the anthropologist is a person who would never consider such a thing possible, that same anthropologist might neglect to document the information, put it to one side as impossible, and the information is lost.

"Being there," in this scenario, makes absolutely no impact on the outcome of the field data, and would be excluded from the final written ethnography. But if one were to truly bracket one's everyday way of observing and thinking, and take note of objects, events, and the conversation of others, it is possible to notice more information from the senses than one is used to noting (small background noises, peripheral vision, snatches of conversation, a meaningful glance, a particular smell) that might lead to different types of questions, responses, and data. The anthropologist's task is to gain knowledge, and this might necessitate a real shift in consciousness, along with different modes of perception. This means paying attention to seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, and "sensing"—in other words, to an anthropology of the senses that incorporates a heightened awareness on the part of the fieldworker. Meaning can be conveyed through "evocative sensory referents,"[6] and this forms a part of the collection of data. In a rite of passage, for example, there is sometimes a connection between transition and odors. Smells are intangible and transitory; they alter and shift, making them useful symbols for someone undergoing a rite of passage, which is a transition from one state of being to another. In a funeral rite, the spirit of the dead person is often viewed as rising up with the smoke from a fire. The Batek people of the Malay Peninsula say that blowing incense on a spirit animal can change its form to human and communicate knowledge about magical practices.[7]

There has often been a discrepancy between what ethnographers write and what they might experience. Malinowski's personal diaries made this explicitly clear. The ethnographer's diary was meant to be kept separate to fieldwork notes, and because as anthropologists we were supposed to maintain objectivity, emotional diary notes were never to grace the pages of our academic publications. Malinowski's diary, which was not meant to be read by the public, created a wave of shock and interest when it was first published posthumously in 1967, more than 40 years after he had written it.

Born of aristocratic parents in Poland in 1884, Malinowski's fieldwork sojourns among the people of New Guinea were a great contrast from his place of origin, both geographically and culturally. Through his academic work we learned much about New Guinea culture, but through his diary we learn about the man himself, and it provides the immediacy of fieldwork: how he really felt in the field, the difficulties, the loneliness, boredom, and homesickness, and his contempt for the "savages." He also suffered constantly from splitting headaches, nausea, a lack of energy, and feelings of alienation. Through

the anonymity of a diary he reveals his darker side—his anger and rages, his hypochondria, and his frequent self-administered injections of a mixture of arsenic and iron in an attempt to feel better.

In spite of all this unhappiness, his diary is also permeated with colorful prose, and it is here we can sense the beauty of his field environment. He writes: "violet cloudlets in the pale sea-green sky; red sunset, under it glows the narrow belt of the sea." He talks of walking through "antediluvian forests full of sago palms, tangled climbing plants, and sago swamps"; of the "smell of the jungle"; of the "exquisite fragrance of the green *keroro* flower"; of the "frangipani, a smell as heavy as incense . . . its green bouquet with blossoms carved in alabaster, smiling with golden pollen." He writes of feather- and flower-bedecked dancers, sorcerers, magic and myths, and of intricate kinship systems; but also of "monstrous mosquitoes" and "rotting trees, occasionally smelling like dirty socks or menstruation, occasionally intoxicating like a barrel of wine in fermentation." "The atmosphere in the jungle," he writes, "is sultry, and saturated with a specific smell which penetrates and drenches you like music."[8]

Who could not be drawn to writing that is so explicit, so colorful, leaving the reader not only with the feel of what it would be like to do fieldwork in such a place, but with the sense of smells and sights that accompanied being there? The extensive fieldwork he did in those early years was to make him famous later and one of the great names in anthropological history by the time he died in 1942 of a heart attack.

The subfield of sensorial anthropology has created an exciting new area of investigation, providing us with publications that bring all the senses into play so that the reader can almost see, feel, hear, touch, and smell the fieldwork location and its people in a way that previously was to be found, if at all, only in personal diaries. Highlighting the senses in our writings, coupled with a more radical participation[9] on the part of anthropologists, and a willingness to express the previously unmentionable experiences that are often had during fieldwork, has led to a radical shift in the way anthropologists write about ethnography and their personal reflections on their research. Not only are they bringing the field into the reader's imaginal sphere with writing that has taste and flavor, they are expressing a part of themselves that makes the fieldwork situation more relevant, more real, while at the same time imparting as many facts about the culture as those whose writing is more laborious, even torturous, to read.

Case studies in which anthropologists in a wide variety of field situations reflectively discuss their personal insights and experiences demonstrate that this kind of attention to the field situation produces

rich ethnographic data from even the most awkward, difficult, and even dangerous situations. This more contemporary approach, with the colorful addition of sensorial anthropology, takes fieldwork in an exciting and valuable direction. David Howes calls it the "sensual revolution," an ideological turn from reporting principally visual senses to the incorporation into our thinking of all of the senses,[10] including the "sixth sense."[11]

Many contemporary writers would agree with Edmund Searles's comment, that the world cannot be explained by cognitive and material forces alone. About his fieldwork in Guinea-Bissau, he writes:

> I began to feel there was more to the world than natural forces and human agency. The weight and loneliness of a secular self began to loosen its grip on me. I began to feel re-enchanted and reanimated by a world of mystic presence and spiritual agency. I began to experience the world as saturated with unseen forces, a world suffused with God and other invisible beings.[12]

The magical experience engages all the senses: the smells of candles, herbs, and incense that set the scene, dispel unwanted presences, and invite communication with the Otherworld; the visual esoteric symbols and clothing that drape the mind and body; the physical engagement in ritual and dance, the play of light and shadow, the sound of music and chanting all help take the participant into trance, the inner sense of emotions and feelings, and the awareness of something more than all this. Like the numinous experience, the magical experience transcends and eludes comprehension in rational terms.

Conflict can arise between the desire to know about a culture's beliefs and ways of doing things, and our deeply ingrained personal perspectives on life, making it difficult for many ethnographers to fully engage in some practices. Nowhere is this more evident than in the area of beliefs about magic, sorcery, and the world of spirits. Also, the anthropologist is "constrained by his or her career dictates to suppress a great deal of the phenomena of experience, and interpret and communicate in preprogrammed ways that can leave the culture and self devoid of meaning."[13] While anthropologists might note the beliefs and move on to other aspects of the culture, or note their importance to, say, land claims and kinship systems, they might refuse to entertain the possibility that what their "informants" are talking about might be a part of fieldwork with which they can just as fully engage. Once thus engaged, they might eventually experience things that are taken for granted by the people among whom they are working.

These forays into other realms are not regarded as incredible in non-Western cultures, particularly those of a shamanic nature, many of which acknowledge these possibilities as very real, and have specialists who deal with them. For the Mekeo, in New Guinea, there is a "hidden aspect" to each person that is separable from consciousness and the physical body, acts almost like a totally independent entity, and can operate in another mode of existence. This hidden aspect of the self is said to partly exist in "the shadowy and perilous disembodied realm" that exists in the world of dreams. Michele Stephen refers to this Mekeo idea as the "autonomous imagination," which draws upon memories and information that is not readily available to conscious thought.[14] It is more richly inventive than ordinary thought processes, can emerge as vivid imagery, and possesses a different kind of access to memory. In spite of this seemingly psychological interpretation, Stephen was convinced that a phenomenological world exists independently of the human mind, and the complexity of such a world is described, interpreted, and ordered in different ways by different cultures.

One of the first to break the silence and reveal some startling revelations from the fieldwork situation is Paul Stoller. Prior to his apprenticeship as a sorcerer in Niger, Africa, Stoller told himself that the world of the spirits was an elaborate fiction. Nevertheless, he felt a sense of uncertainty about this, and after an extended stay with the Songhay people he experienced firsthand the powerful effects of sorcery. "Nothing that I had learned or could learn within the parameters of anthropological theory," he said, "could have prepared me for Dunguru."[15]

When he first went there to study sorcery, he was admonished by the Songhay sorcerer Sorko Djibo: "You look but you do not see. You touch, but you do not feel. You listen, but you do not hear."[16] He was told that in order to become a sorcerer and to "know," he needed to properly and deeply learn how to look, hear, and touch. During his apprenticeship with the sorcerer Dunguru, he learned how to use these senses as sorcery tools, and that there were other ways of knowing: knowledge, power, and energy can come just from sound, as well as sorcery attacks. Stoller writes:

> Having crossed the threshold into the Songhay world of magic, and having felt the texture of fear and the exaltation of repelling the force of a sorcerer, my view of Songhay culture could no longer be one of a structuralist, a symbolist, or a Marxist. Given my intense experience—and all field experiences are intense whether they involve trance, sorcery or kinship—I will need in future works to seek a different mode

> of expression, a mode in which the event becomes the author of the text and the writer becomes the interpreter of the event who serves as an intermediate between the event and the readers.[17]

A "disembodied analysis" could not make sense of the feelings of an "electric" handshake, or to "see, hear, and feel" in a Songhay way, he wrote, and all of his assumptions about the world were "uprooted from their foundation."[18]

One of the most compelling fieldwork experiences of this kind, which preceded even Stoller's revelation, is that of Bruce Grindal whose extraordinary participatory experience in a Sisala funeral in Ghana is relayed in detail in his 1983 article in *Journal of Anthropological Research*:

> At first I thought that my mind was playing tricks with my eyes, so I cannot say when the experience first occurred; but it began with moments of anticipation and terror, as though I knew something unthinkable was about to happen. The anticipation left me breathless, gasping for air. In the pit of my stomach I felt a jolting and tightening sensation, which corresponded to moments of heightened visual awareness. What I saw in those moments was outside the realm of normal perception. From both the corpse and *goka* came flashes of light so fleeting that I cannot say exactly where they originated. The hand of the *goka* would beat down the iron hoe, the spit would fly from his mouth, and suddenly the flashes of light flew like sparks from a fire. Then I felt my body become rigid. My jaws tightened and at the base of my skull I felt a jolt as though my head had been snapped off my spinal column. A terrible and beautiful sight burst upon me. Stretching from the amazingly delicate fingers and mouth of the *goka*, strands of fibrous light played upon the head, fingers, and toes of the dead man. The corpse, shaken by spasms, then rose to its feet, spinning and dancing in a frenzy. As I watched, convulsions in the pit of my stomach tied not only my eyes but also my whole being into this vortex of power. It seemed that the very floor and walls of the compound had come to life, radiating light and power, drawing the dancers in one direction and then another. Then a most wonderful thing happened. The talking drums on the roof of the dead man's house began to glow with a light so strong that it drew the dancers to the rooftop. The corpse picked up the drumsticks and began to play.[19]

Colin Turnbull's fieldwork experience of bliss when he was living and working among the Mbuti (Congo, Africa) prompted him to insist that:

> what is needed for this kind of fieldwork is a technique of participation that demands total involvement of our whole being. Indeed it is perhaps only when we truly and fully participate in this way that we find

> this essentially subjective approach to be in no way incompatible with the more conventional rational, objective, scientific approach. On the contrary, they complement each other and that complementarity is an absolute requirement if we are to come to any full understanding of the social process. It provides a wealth of data that could never be acquired by any other means.[20]

Anthropologists, writes Paul Stoller, are always *between* things—between languages, cultures, and apprehensions of reality; we are "sojourners of the between." One's first fieldwork experience is a *rite de passage*, and for most of the time we are "betwixt and between," regarded as novices, even children in an alien culture. When we "grow up" and can function as other members of that culture, and be seen by the people as having understood and experienced firsthand what they are talking about, an invaluable exchange of knowledge can take place. By writing about his own experiences of this whole process, Stoller was to open up a Pandora's box that allowed others to ponder, explore, and publish their own previously hushed accounts.

An increasing number of anthropologists began to engage in a radical empiricist approach,[21] recounting their anomalous experiences both in and out of the field.[22] Their "admissions" are beginning to break down old prejudices that effectively dampened any suggestions that there might possibly be something very, very interesting in what people in different religions and cultures have recounted for many years. Edith Turner, with her husband Victor Turner, had been visiting Africa for many years, but it was not until her visit in 1985, when she made a research trip to Zambia, alone, that she made an astounding announcement. During a healing ritual involving a patient inflicted with a devouring spirit, the details of which she recounted in 1992, she *saw* spirit.[23]

Prior to the ritual and during the preceding days leading up to it, she went with the African healers to collect the necessary plants to be used in the ceremony, and over several days participated in all of the other ceremonial arrangements with the healers. She became totally involved. When it came time for the ritual itself, she was also caught up in the emotional aspects of it, allowing full immersion in the experience, to "let go" and be fully engaged in the entire process.

At the height of the emotionally charged ritual, which involved much excitement, built up over several hours through clapping, singing, movement, and the expectation that something incredible was going to happen, there was a moment when she realized along with other people attending the rite that the barriers were breaking.

Something that wanted to be born was going to be born. Then there was a breakthrough, and:

> the patient's face wore a grin of tranced passion and her back was quivering rapidly. Suddenly she raised her arm, stretched it in liberation, and I saw with my own eyes a large thing emerging out of the flesh of her back. It was a big gray sphere—a sort of plasm—about six inches across, dark and opaque. I was amazed—delighted . . . the gray thing was actually out in the open, visible, and I could see the hands of the tribal doctor working and scrabbling on the patient's back—and then it was there no more . . . It was done. The patient was now relieved of her sickness.[24]

Like Grindal and Stoller, she had bridged the gap between detached observer and radical participant. She experienced an ontic shift, a reality shift in which perceptions change, one is removed from the certainty of what is really real, and nothing is ever quite the same again. She places emphasis on the feeling of being at one with the rest of the ritual participants, enabling a condition in which the community was one. This aspect, together with the high emotional excitement of drumming, the group expectations, and passion over a lengthy period, created the right conditions for an experience of spirit.

Anthropologists researching consciousness and religion, and anthropology and spirituality, are employing the method of participant observation to experience praying, singing, chanting, healing, dancing, magical practices, and rituals, entering trance, along with the people they are observing. In order to study human changes of consciousness, we have to totally engage in as many occasions as we can, that involve *doing* what our informants are doing. Edith Turner writes that she had not encountered Stoller's 1984 article until she was writing about her own African experience of "seeing spirit." Stoller later told Edith Turner that his article "had stirred up the jeers and shaming remarks of his colleagues in the corridors of Westchester University" where he taught, and for which, later, he received prizes for his work. This led Edith Turner to comment: "Are we ever again going to scorn someone who pushes on further than ourselves?"[25]

The effectiveness of academic ridicule leads one to consider Foucault's notion of power and knowledge as being maneuvered so that certain forms of thinking and acting determine how we write, speak, and think within any given historical period. Both the world and our consciousness of it affect the kinds of representations we allow, or discern, at any particular historical epoch. Certain kinds of knowledges are given formal recognition as permissible, while other kinds are subjugated as inadequate to their task. They have been

disqualified because they are "naïve knowledges, low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity."[26]

Experience is felt, immediate, and incorporates all our senses, bypassing our intellect. Magical experiences are emotional, sensory, evocative, wondrous, or terrifying events, and as we are physical entities, they are felt through the feeling, sensing body. A magical experience is nebulous, rather arbitrary, and while it might range from a brief but notable feeling of strangeness to a completely life-changing dramatic experience that brings about deep inner change or an intuitive knowing, there is almost always the feeling that something highly significant has happened. We start intellectualizing and analyzing an experience only after we have had it. As an example of this, I refer to August Reader.

A clinical professor of ophthalmology, Reader had an extraordinary experience at his home one night that seemed to engender a near-death experience. At the height of severe physiological symptoms that indicated cardiac ischemia, he was convinced that he was dying, and after his initial shock of fear at what was happening, he decided to let himself go and surrender himself "to the arms of God." At that moment, he says, he felt a sense of bliss and understanding, along with "holographic flashes of everything" that had occurred in his life. Then he was projected down a long tunnel with a bright light at the end that began to surround and suffuse through him, and saw the faces of everyone he had known, both alive and dead.[27]

Reader survived, and it forced him to seriously consider explanations for his experience. On reflection, his scientific background led him to intellectualize the event in physiological terms, detailing cause and effect through visual imagery being created by the stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system. Reader almost denies the reality of his experience in order to bring it in line with accepted academic thought that these things do not happen, that there must be a rational, scientifically explainable reason for an ineffable occurrence. In spite of this, however, he still remained baffled by the emotions that produced a "profound feeling of Spirit," with "a love that is so profound, deep, and unifying that it seems it can only come from a Universal Presence, and from nowhere else."

## EMOTION AND FEELING

Emotion and feeling are both terms that have been anathema to science, in spite of the fact that we all have emotions and we all experience feeling. Emotion (equated with subjectivity) has been placed in

a false dichotomy beside cognition (equated with objectivity). The fact that it is hard to scientifically document the quality of emotions and feeling has made it an elusive topic in scientific circles, and therefore put to one side as unimportant to any serious scientific researcher. However, although scientists cannot measure emotion per se, an emotional state can be measured through physiological changes. There is the physical response from stimuli (sweat), and the subjective feeling that the stimuli engender (fear). However, measurements do not do justice to the experience. One can just as easily measure the physiological effects of an emotion like love, but to describe the *feeling* of love and hazard a guess as to what it is in the fullest sense is impossible through a scientific lens.

Neuroimaging, neuropsychology, and neurophysiology show that the human orbito-frontal cortex is probably a nexus for sensory integration, emotional processing, and hedonic experience and an important gateway to subjective conscious experience, which could potentially explain why all experiences have an emotional tone.[28] However, personality and culture also play significant roles in shaping emotions, and this is made evident in anthropological literature. Many emotional stimuli seem to be processed at a nonconscious level, and later made available for conscious introspection. Highly emotional experiences of, say, a significant spiritual experience, or participation in a particularly compelling ritual, can stay fixed in someone's memory. Antonio Damasio[29] has demonstrated that emotions are, in fact, crucial to rational decision making, and Kringelbach[30] points to Charles Darwin's suggestion that emotions enabled an organism to make adaptive responses to environmental stimuli, enhancing chances of survival.

Whether it is calling on the Goddess in contemporary women's spirituality, chanting a mantra while contemplating divine love for Krishna, or being completely absorbed in thoughts of God while whirling for the Dervishes, emotional focus on the object of one's thoughts takes the devotee out of him or herself and to another place. Taking part in a ritual that is established in a sacred place involves emotion, expectancy, and focus, with other people who have the same purpose in mind, and if the setting is imbued with symbols, smells, sounds, and costume that "sets the scene," participants can very easily move into a place and space that can engender a magical experience.

Victor Turner[31] proposed that ritual performance changes the cognitive state of participants who can experience, during a performance, altered emotional states; they are subject to experiencing altered dispositions to behavior through performance. A ritual focuses attention

on a particular aspect as being highly important, and symbols, images, sounds, and smells are designed to change cognitive states of participants. Rituals create a cognitive frame with its own rules for behavior to which participants adhere for the temporal and spatial duration of the rite. Being set apart from the mundane, the geographical and mental space afforded by the ritual enables participants to bracket off the daily round of life and enter into a special, sacred space, in which they can feel free to behave differently. In a particularly successful ritual, participants might undergo transformation, especially if preparations beforehand, such as fasting, drumming, dancing, visualizations, and immersions in mythical stories, have led up over several hours or even days to the ritual event.

Dreams fall between physical reality and nonphysical reality, between the conscious waking state and the unconscious awakened state. In the Dzogchen tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, the dream state is thought to have great potential for spiritual progress. There are specific instructions for developing clarity, self-awareness, and learning within the sleep and dream states. As well, communication is possible between people in these states. Indeed, because we spend so much of our lifetime in sleep, it is thought to be extremely important to utilize sleep time through the Dzogchen exercises that are recommended to adherents of this path, rather than waste that time.[32]

Certain odors are said to enhance dream experiences. The Umeda (Papua New Guinea) word for dream (*yinugwi*) is very similar to the word for smell (*nugwi*), and the smell of ginger is said to stimulate dreams. Ginger is considered to be a magical herb that acts upon the imagination of the dreamer to produce prophetic and favorable dreams.[33] The Mekeo of New Guinea say that the dream-body, inadequately translated as "soul," is the "entity" that is activated in dreaming, the dream-self or dream consciousness. It can also leave the body when it is not asleep, which suggested to Michele Stephen a level of consciousness coterminous with waking consciousness, but known to waking consciousness only through dreams and similar states.[34] Dreams enable spirits and humans to communicate information. The Mekeo "man of knowledge" is aware of two distinct and separate realities: the world of physical bodies and objects, which he knows in waking consciousness, and the world of visible but noncorporeal entities he experiences in dream consciousness.[35] When she became apprentice to Aisaga, a Mekeo man of knowledge, Michele Stephen found that her own dreams, which were not usually vivid or prolific, sometimes became quite disturbing, and persistent dreams often followed Aisaga's instruction on spells. The rhythmic and alliterative

structure of the spells penetrated to subliminal levels of consciousness. Stephen suggested that "the spell provides a means of relaying messages to the dream consciousness" that is "in accord with what the man of knowledge asserts is its function, to send out his dream-body, or activate the entity that dreams."[36]

Jean-Guy Goulet also experienced compelling dreams after spending a substantial amount of time with the Guajiro people of South America, who place strong emphasis on the importance of dreams. His own dreams began to incorporate the symbolic elements of Guajiro dreams, and in fact, he learned a lot about Guajiro culture through relaying his dreams to people while he was there. They invited him to report his dreams regularly, to discuss the symbols and meanings contained therein, and to take them seriously. Participation in Guajiro interpretations and discussions of dreams, he says, "jolted me into an awareness I did not have before."[37] This early fieldwork with dreams among the Guajiro was to continue into meaningful interaction with the Dene Tha people in northwestern Alberta, Canada, when Goulet engaged in long-term fieldwork there from 1980. Dene Tha prophets, who claim knowledge on the basis of dreams and visions, say that they know because their mind is powerful. According to the Dene Tha, it is not possible to understand their religion without directly experiencing the reality of dreams and visions. Through dreams, say the Dene Tha, one "knows," and Goulet's ability to dream in the Dene Tha manner was a valuable part of his being accepted by them and included in their lifeworld. The Dene Tha also speak of the ability to travel long distances in spirit, with their animal spirit helpers.

Other researchers have commented on the fact that one's dreams accord with the culture within which they work while in the field. Take for example, Barbara Wilkes's comment on a lucid dream that she had. She writes:

> It was as if I were standing outside of myself at the bedside and watching myself sleep. At the same time, I felt as if I were fully conscious of my thoughts inside and outside the dream. As I slept, I heard a voice, sharp and insistent. I could not grasp the words, or comprehend their meaning, but recognized they were spoken in Blackfoot, which I could not comprehend at the time. The voice was calling me. Whether it was calling me by a name or simply calling to attract my attention I could not tell. I mumbled, "Leave me alone. Go away. I'm tired. Just leave me.' But the voice pressed me to acknowledge it. . . . it became clear the voice would not leave me alone. So I rolled over in my sleep toward the sound, and there, at the edge of my bed, to my astonishment (even in my sleep), stood a golden eagle. It spoke to me then in English and simply said: "Come with me."[38]

At this point the eagle told her to grab its feathers, and then it took her, she recounted, high over the prairies and she was flying with the eagle.

Sometimes, similar experiences continue once the researcher has returned home. Accounts may involve meditative and trance states, embodied knowing, paying attention not only to what is going on in the world around them, reflecting on their own inner lives, their dreams, and more. When returning home, Barbara Wilkes reflected:

> Looking back upon my own experiences, I can see, feel, taste, touch and hear the Sun dances I attended and those in which I participated . . . the beating of a drum . . . the burning sweetgrass or sweet pine . . . of enduring days without food or water: the relentless prairie sun burning my skin, the physical pain of long hours dancing, singing, and sweating under those conditions. The social pleasures of friendship and shared suffering combined with the intense spiritual joy of prayer and thanksgiving. I could not have contemplated the potential contributions of ecstasies as an epistemological tool.[39]

To return to August Reader's being caught betwixt his experience and his rationale for the experience, Napier[40] might refer to Reader's dilemma as "cognitive tyranny," an apt phrase that articulates the overwhelming power of thoughts and intellect to control our lives. While feelings are consistently downplayed, denied, or denigrated within academia universally, as Ehn and Lofgren have pointed out, this view creates contradictions for individuals within the academy who *do* have emotions and feelings, and have to deal with sentiments of pride and joy, envy, anger and shame, while at the same time seeming to deny that they exist.[41] Hidden emotions and mixed feelings often result in a culture of irony, what Ehn and Lofgren describe as something "betwixt fun and sarcasm," as a technique used to deal with uncomfortable emotions. In the West we have become overwhelmed by our thoughts, our intellect, and our rationality, which has led, in religious spheres, to a preeminence of doctrinal formulations and, in many cases, an embarrassment about any actual "spiritual" experience.

The most recent anthropological writings on religion now, however, include a whole spectrum of perspectives, from the positivistic scientific perspective (all religions are irrational) to one where the anthropologist's own beliefs have been profoundly shaken as a result of his or her experiences. In *Extraordinary* Anthropology,[42] a collection of anthropologists discuss fieldwork experiences that involved stretching their parameters of belief through personal experience. Some accounts involve meditative and trance states, experiencing and

reflecting on their own inner lives, their dreams, and more. A common theme that is found in this collection of essays is that each of the anthropologists had his or her beliefs about reality jolted, which led them to question some of the old paradigms. The personal experience becomes a tool itself in the attempt to understand. In this manner, the anthropological endeavor can offer new theoretical and methodological perspectives. Miller writes:

> I wish to consider my own examples of extraordinary experience to make my related argument that an experience-near anthropology may no longer be seen as a fringe activity, but rather, as increasingly in touch with changes in social science methods that are more responsible to indigenous peoples' concerns and perspectives.[43]

Some contemporary researchers of new religious movements, modern paganism, and nature religions have employed radical participation in the field that called for their full and intense involvement in rituals and practices that included magical activities.[44] Some have revealed their own interests and biases in their published accounts, discussing in some detail, and in the first person, what it meant to them as individuals and how it affected the field situation and their relationships with the other participants. Duncan Earle casts doubt on the whole notion of objectivity, rationality, and reality itself. He notes a dramatic shift from "the observing, well-mannered, and fundamentally removed character of the ethnographer" toward "a way of working that leaves the notebook behind for a time."[45]

Young and Goulet proffer that reality itself is not necessarily multidimensional, but that reality is experienced in different ways, depending on one's state of mind and the cultural context.[46] The accounts given throughout Young and Goulet's *Being Changed* attest to the fact that once ensconced in the field, fieldworkers themselves can have experiences very much like those that their informants tell them about. Questions that are now being posed by some researchers include: What constitutes a scientifically valid knowledge of reality? Is "spirit" another aspect of reality? How can we report our data in different ways? What is objective research? What constitutes scientifically valid knowledge, and how is knowledge itself subject to political and hegemonic maneuvering? There is a growing corpus of work that investigates ethnographic epistemologies and the construction of knowledge.

As it became increasingly obvious that the role of detached observer became not just inadequate, but sometimes wrong, previous understandings of the dichotomy between researcher and researched

had to be addressed. Even taking into account the emic explanations of events and happenings, those researched were still "other"; "we" objective, rational observers were fully cognizant that there was an etic explanation for everything, and that this, in fact, was more cogent and admirably more representative of those being studied than the researched themselves were able to convey.

A move toward a more reflexive attitude to both fieldwork and the situation of the subject developed.[47] Most anthropologists now realize that we are influenced by our own personal histories, cultural backgrounds, life experiences, and conscious and unconscious intentions. Anthropology as a discipline appears to have moved from a (mainly Christian) monotheistic assumption, to secular atheist, to a more contemporary phenomenological approach that is sometimes self-reflexive and that at times blurs the insider/outsider divide. Reflexivity examines the ethnographic encounter as a dialogue between individuals and cultures, and attempts to understand the limitations that subjectivities impose. This is the postmodern position: to challenge objectivity, theorize subjectivity, blur distinctions between emic and etic, and relocate the researcher from outside observer to center-stage reflective participant.[48]

A methodology put forward by Fiona Bowie is "cognitive, empathic engagement," which she suggests is particularly suited to the ethnographic study of paranormal phenomena. The cognitive element demands an effort of imagination, of seeing the world through the eyes of another and following the logic of a particular understanding of the phenomena described. This is not an entirely new concept in that anthropologists have done this in the past—the analyses of cargo cults in New Guinea is one example—and any sensitive anthropologist who stays in the field situation for any length of time must surely develop empathy for the people with whom they work, but it is new in applying the concept to metaphysical phenomena, particularly as the emphasis in early anthropology has been to take a "scientific" approach. With cognitive empathic engagement, one does not have to agree with or like a point of view, and understanding depends on the depth of engagement with the topic. Bowie emphasizes that it is essential not to start with any prior assumptions about the "reality" of any situation.[49] Terence McKenna discovered, in his meetings with tribal shamans around the world, that "spirit" is often used as a catch-all phrase for many aspects of metaphysical phenomena, and a part of reality for which our culture does not yet have working concepts.[50]

Such an approach might necessitate a paradigm shift on the part of fieldworkers who are not prepared to engage with certain material that comes their way as it suggests taking "abandoning disbelief" one step further: being prepared to see the world differently and willing to radically involve oneself in any experience. In most instances, this is not for the faint-hearted, as the fieldworkers cited above can attest.

Scientific inquiry as a whole is still deliberating the "thing-in-itself," writes Mark Schroll, and as a consequence continues to be restrained by the "straightjacket of a dualistic paradigm that refuses to acknowledge the existence of psi/spirit," an approach that disallows a comprehensive theoretical understanding of what he calls the psi/spirit/transpersonal experience. This is regrettable, he suggests, as it delays us from pursuing how we might all benefit greatly from a full and academically acknowledged pursuit of these matters.[51] Nevertheless, anomalous experiences are being discussed, and methodologies from different disciplines are being put forward not only as thinkable but as contributing to our overall knowledge.[52]

Jorge Ferrer advocates that scholars of mysticism also need to become practitioners, or at least to fully engage with the possibility, in order to effectively understand what they study. Although culturally conditioned biases play a strong part in any experience, the result of which is an "endless array of spiritual experiences," this fact does not necessarily lead to a complete reductionism that denies the reality of the experienced spiritual reality. Ferrer is not of the opinion that there is a fundamental, universal experience underlying all religious experiences, but the participatory model, he suggests, allows various religious traditions to yield a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the similarities and differences in various religious traditions.[53]

Anthropologists, with their training in participant observation, are exceedingly well equipped to do just this if they are willing. Some of us have been engaged in this manner for many years and can attest that the results will stretch the adventurous fieldworker's parameters beyond limits that others may not dare to go.

# Part II

# Indigenous Magic

# Chapter 3

# Healers and Harmers

A healer is a person who is known in a community as one who is able to effect a cure for illness, and is sought after by members of his or her community and even farther afield. A harmer, on the other hand, is a person who has the reputation, factual or not, of inflicting suffering on people and, as this is generally a socially condemned practice, is looked upon with fear and suspicion. Sometimes the one person is both healer and harmer; the Amazonian Desana of the Upper Rio Negro Region of Brazil, for example, have no separate terms for the shaman who heals and the shaman who harms, but they do distinguish healers according to the source and nature of their power and knowledge: the jaguar-shaman is called *yee* and is different from the blower of spells, called *kumu*. The former attains his power through trance and the ingestion of hallucinogenic snuff, and is said to be able to transform himself into a jaguar and see illnesses inside a patient's body; whereas the latter cures by blowing tobacco smoke, massaging, and sucking out objects from an afflicted person. But these are only two forms.[1]

Throughout all cases of healing and harming across cultures, a common feature is that harming is carried out by the insertion of something into the body, and healing attempts to counteract that action by extracting the object from the body. Physically, poisonous substances are put into the food, drink, and personal objects of a victim, as well as directly into the body itself, but malevolence can be attained by metaphysical means as well, by magical penetrations of the body and by requesting help in the harming process from spirit beings. Various forms of poisoning can produce illnesses such as diarrhea, high fever, vomiting, and either instant death or a prolonged and debilitating illness. The great majority of illness is attributed to having

been caused in some way by an intentional harmer and needs to be countered by an equally powerful healer. Kuné, for example, is a form of counterwitchcraft in the upper Xingu River region of southern Amazonia; it is both an inanimate object, the pot in which charms are boiled, and a "raw spiritual force." Spirit-like, it needs to be fed and cared for and handled with great care. A kuné ritual is conducted by a shaman going into trance through inhaling large quantities of tobacco smoke, and performing ritual in order to contact spirits who advise him how counter the actions of a witch. A kuné can last four months and is not always effective.[2]

In many societies there is a range of spiritual specialists, some having the reputation for being more powerful than others. There may be dream interpreters, foretellers of the future, diviners, wise people who are well versed in plant medicine and social relationships, and in any society, many people who are not considered specialists may nevertheless have a wide knowledge about how to cure common ailments through plants with medicinal properties, and/or magic spells. Whether one is a healer or a harmer often depends upon who is making the declaration or accusation, and about whom. The harmer is often the "other"—the other person, the other group, the other tribe—and fingers may be pointed at someone on the fringe of society to take the brunt of scapegoat.

Witchcraft accusations are often the outcome of social conflict and tension, and have very little to do with actual witchcraft practices.[3] One has only to review the large amount of publications on witchcraft in the Middle Ages to come to this conclusion, yet old forms of magic and witchcraft are still practiced in rural areas of Europe, as Jeanne Favret-Saada's work in France demonstrates.[4] Working in the rural area of the Bocage, in western France, she became embroiled in the daily lives of people who said that they were bewitched. Although the practitioners of magic do not call themselves witches, this is what they are. In the Bocage, one is bewitched when caught in a sequence of misfortunes just like those recorded in the Middle Ages—a cow dies, a woman has a miscarriage, milk goes sour, a child becomes ill—and even modern-day equivalents of similar catastrophes: a car runs into a ditch. A mere word, a look, or a touch might instigate accusations of witchcraft. Folk beliefs and recourse to magical practices are still common in Romania, especially when it concerns the health of children, the prosperity of the home, and the productivity of animals.[5] Many women know ways to neutralize the effects of the "evil eye" when it has been cast.

Especially troubling in parts of the Amazon area are accusations of child witchcraft. Child sorcery and witchcraft among the Peruvian Arawak were reported by a Franciscan missionary as early as 1880 and at other times by later missionaries and travelers. Children are believed to become initiated into the art of witchcraft during their sleep when they are visited and taught their craft by a number of demons and evil spirits of the dead in their dreams. The majority of children accused are girls. Like other harmers, they are said to use bodily exuviae such as mucus, feces, scraps of leftover food that the victim has touched, or any other item that has been in touch or in contact with the victim, thus employing "contagious magic,"[6] a practice that is found universally in societies where sorcery and witchcraft exist.

These items are used in magic to effect the physical body from which they are detached, the idea being that whatever is done to one part will affect the other part. The soul of child sorcerers (and adult sorcerers) is reported to be able to visit a victim while he or she is asleep and insert a prepared charm into the sleeping body. Anyone thus afflicted invariably enlists the services of a healer to counteract this malevolent magic. Child witches can be subjected to cruel punishment, and even torture, when discovered. Fernando Santos-Granero provides several case studies of child sorcery in the years 1896, 1923, 1939, and even 1994 and 2000.[7]

Known variously as sorcerer, witch, malevolent magician, or evildoer, metaphysical harmers are found in myths, legends, and folk stories as the possessors of knowledge of magic potions, spells, hexes, and destructive magic. A healer might be called upon to reverse the effects of the harmer, and both healer and harmer might use very similar methods but for different purposes and outcomes. In addition to having practical knowledge of local medicinal plants and being astute observers of social problems and interactions between people, many sources indicate that there is also some kind of power or energy that can be manipulated and used for either harmful or healing purposes, and the outcome depends upon the intention of the act, the skills and knowledge of the instigator, and his or her ability to communicate with spirits in other realms.

The San Bushmen of the Kalahari region of Africa talk about *n/um* energy and healing, and of being able to look, with a steady gaze, at and through an ill person to see the sickness inside that person's body. "Seeing" in this special way is also reported in Aboriginal Australia and in the Arctic Circle among the Inuit.

The notion of a force or energy seems intrinsic to both healing and harming. Those involved in traditional healing practices often talk about energy movement and blockages in the body, feeling (sensing as well as touch), and being able to see spirit energy during the healing process. As well as the cultures already mentioned, alternative healers in the West have discovered that much healing is carried out using a nonvisible energy, and of having energy moving through their hands in the process of healing. In Peru, the word *tinguna* refers to a kind of electromagnetic force field.[8] Some 30 years ago, in the 1980s, Peter Lawrence insisted that the powers or forces that Papua New Guinea people accept as real and use to their own advantage should be understood and analyzed, not with a secular positivist approach, but by investigating and reporting on the ways in which their practitioners believe they operate.

Invariably, the idea that permeates the literature is that the spirit world holds the true causes of things that happen in the ordinary world, and though these two realms appear as separate to most people, to someone such as a shaman, they are linked—indeed, they merge into each other. The shaman's ability to move freely between these different but linked worlds and to perceive things and events in both enables him or her to see the "real essence" of things. A San Bushman (Africa) describes in detail how his giraffe "helper" enabled him to leave his body so that he could learn how to cure people:

> The giraffe came and took me off again. We came to a river and I swam down it with my head downstream. Then my protector told me that I would be able to cure people by going into trance. We entered the earth and when we emerged we began to climb up a thread to the sky. Up there in the sky the spirits and the dead people sing for me so that I can dance. If a person dies, I carry him on my back, I dance him so that God will give his spirit to me and then I put his spirit back into his body. When you approach God, all sorts of mambas, pythons, bees and locusts bite you. And when you return into your body you go "He-e-e-e!" This is the sound of you getting back into your body.[9]

In another part of Africa, the Songhay, in the Republic of Niger, talk about "men of power," people who have knowledge that enables them to move between the world of spirit and the material world. Sorcerous attacks, called *sambeli* in Songhay, take two forms, which both entail sending something to harm the recipient: sending "fear" and sending "sickness."[10] One method of sending fear is by winding copper wire around certain ritual objects while reciting the victim's name and concentrating; and to send sickness, a special bow and arrow associated with one family of spirits is employed. The victim's name is recited

while the arrow is notched to the bow string, and the arrow shaft is spat on three times before shooting the arrow. The victim feels a sharp pain as if someone has stabbed him or her with a knife, and eventually the sickness spreads through the body. When Stoller became ill while doing fieldwork with the Songhay, he was told that someone had sent sickness to him in this way, and he eventually became so ill that he had to leave the field and return to North America.

While in African societies sorcery is peripheral to religion and religious knowledge, and those practicing it are generally regarded as a despised minority, this is not the case in Papua New Guinea and other parts of Melanesia, where both sorcery and healing form part of religious knowledge. The Garia[11] and the Mekeo[12] of Papua New Guinea distinguish between illnesses and deaths that they regard as "natural" and treatable by local remedies that most people might know, and those caused by malevolent agents. A death that befalls a young and otherwise healthy person is regarded with great suspicion, whereas the death of an old person is more likely to be viewed as "natural." The aim of a sorcery spell is twofold: to attract and then control the soul of the victim. The difference between inflicting serious illness, injury, or death differs from other magic only in that the sorcerer deals with more dangerous entities in the spirit world.

The magical act is performed on another level of reality, the world of visible but noncorporeal entities experienced in dream consciousness where it is possible to encounter the souls of both living persons and the dead. As in other societies where sorcery exists, the Mekeo believe that what occurs at the other level of reality eventually affects physical reality, and the experiences of the dream-self are later realized in the body. Through dreams or other ASCs, the Mekeo magical worker enters into other realms where he might encounter shadowy presences, whispered communications, and strange scents.[13] The sorcerer wears strong-smelling leaves when approaching a victim at night, and his smell can alert a victim to his presence. Merely by smelling the sorcerer, an intangible influence of magical power, a person can become sick.

The apprentice Mekeo sorcerer who has completed the rather grueling course of instruction finally is taught the specifics of how to harm and as well as how to heal. One technique employed is called *amale*, whereby the practitioner takes his bow, arrow, and a *koli* leaf, hides behind a tree, and waits for his victim to come along the track. Then, after breathing the deity Yeyaguliba's secret names, he becomes invisible and ties the *koli* leaf around the head of his arrow, which he then fits into his bow. He draws the bow but does not let the arrow fly: that

would kill his victim in an unseemly manner. Rather, he waits for the god to send a whistling sound, up from his stomach and out of his mouth. This sound travels along the arrow shaft, breaks off the head, and propels it into the body of the victim, who feels no pain because of the *koli* leaf. For curing or healing, the practitioner is taught to make a funnel of *kemi* leaves and bespell it with Yeyaguliba's secret names. He places the funnel over the painful part of the victim's body, breathes into it once again the appropriate spells, and then extracts the arrowhead.[14]

The range and complexity of esoteric knowledge throughout New Guinea are vast, and no single person is privy to it all. Rather, separate individuals "own" only a very small portion of the whole. Michelle Stephen highlights the importance of control in the work of both the shaman and the sorcerer. While both engage in communication with the spirit world, they must be able to control this interaction and be able to relate their experiences to external reality. One who loses control and is overwhelmed by an experience is viewed by his community as mad or sick. Herein lies the explicit difference, which is most likely applicable across cultures, between the trained metaphysical practitioners and those with a serious mental illness. But this is a controversial and much-debated question within anthropology.

*Ikifa*, roughly translated as "clever" or "knowledge," is the general Mekeo term for magical knowledge. The term *lalau(ga)* refers to the entity that is activated in dreaming that can leave the body; it is this part of a human that enters the unseen world of spirits, realms conceptually and symbolically separate from the earthly plane of human existence.[15] Normally, these realms are hidden from human view and do not impinge upon human consciousness. However, if the boundary between the human world and the world of spirits is transgressed, it is possible for communication to occur. This transgression may occur deliberately by the person with magical knowledge and abilities, or accidentally by others (through either dreams, temporary insanity, physical illness, or perhaps serendipitously). A man steeped in esoteric knowledge, a "man of knowledge," lives constantly in a state of continuous awareness of other realities and has a wide range of experiences brought about through waking visions, hallucinations, dreams, premonitions, and rituals.[16]

In the state of Orissa, in India, live the Sora, India's aboriginal people, whose shamans travel to the underworld during trances. The Sora says that there are two kinds of shamans: the "great" shamans and the "lesser" shamans. The former conduct funerals and are mostly women; the latter perform divinations and cures and are mostly

men. Each kind has helper spirits, and the work of the two kinds of shaman intertwines at a funeral; each one, with their assistants, plays a collective part in a ceremony. Sora shamans acquire their shamanic powers by marrying Hindu spirits in the underworld.[17]

The Sora use the term *renabti*, which means the impulse of spirits as a force, power, or energy. They see electricity as operating in the same way as *renabti*, which is similarly dynamic and capable of storage in containers, transmission along threads, and leaping across gaps. Piers Vitebsky attended a shamanic rite called *Moshi Tiba*, in Nepal, which was designed to call on the souls of deceased people. Attending the rite were five shamans, sitting side by side chanting, waiting for the souls of deceased people to arrive in their presence. Vitebsky took a photo during the rite with a digital camera, which revealed something quite extraordinary: colored energy shapes that were superimposed over the bodies and heads of the shamans and other people in attendance. When Vitebsky showed the photo to one of the shamans after the rite, the shaman commented, with much surprise:

> This is what the god, the witches and the ancestors look like! They don't really look the way you see them in pictures, with faces. These [Vitebsky's photos] are the exact colours I see, in exactly the right positions. But how can a camera see what only I can see? This is secret knowledge, ordinary people can't see these things. It must be a very good camera.[18]

Spirit is more than electricity, however, as it cannot be switched off and has its own will. When shamans negotiate with this power it enables them not only to make things happen but even to turn into animals.[19]

A Peruvian shaman also referred to this "power," one aspect of which is called *yachay*, a thick white phlegm that is retained inside his body in the upper part of his stomach. *Yachay* contains spirit helpers, which he calls upon for healing purposes, as well as to form magical darts, which he fires into victims to harm them. Derived from a verb meaning "to know," *yachay* also represents power as knowledge. The phlegm, the darts, and the helping spirits all form part of this powerful knowledge, to which the shaman is privy. He can also pass some of the phlegm along to a pupil, by regurgitating it and having the pupil drink it.[20]

In traditional Aboriginal Australia, a sorcerer was able to harm someone with an object that he had "loaded" or "charged" with power. Ronald and Catherine Berndt were told by a man called Karloan, in South Australia, that a sorcerer did this in the following manner:

> The way he did this was to remove his *ngildjeri* [a sorcery stick used as a pointing bone] from beneath the calf of his leg and warm it by the fire;

> then, with either a rag or a bunch of emu feathers (saturated with a dead person's fat), he would draw along the stem of the object to its points (but not placing his fingers in front of either point). He was said to be loading or charging the power within it. Karloan added that the sorcerer was electrically charging it! The sorcerer would then hold it in the middle, to one side, pointing it towards his chosen victim. Again, he would run his fingers down the *ngildjeri*, releasing the power of spirit (*pangari*). The sorcerer would feel the shock in his forearm and upper-arm as he held the *ngildjeri*: the spirit would go directly to the victim and enter him or her. If the *pangari* missed its victim, a swish of air would be felt as it went by with a stream of sparks issuing from behind it. The victim would see it flash past him and all the people would see its sparks.[21]

This comment clearly indicates the existence of power that can be used. Note that the sorcerer was careful not to place his fingers in the line of fire, and that it could be directed toward a certain goal as one would direct any other harmful weapon such as a spear. Roth reported that in northwest Queensland, thousands of kilometers distant from South Australia, an Aboriginal man called Tjalkalieri recounted that a pointing bone, once "loaded," had the power to kill someone, and that such an object was "like a spear of thought."[22] When in the act of pointing, a certain ritually sanctioned pose was adopted, and the bone was pointed in the direction of the intended victim while a chant was muttered over it. The first part of the operation was to establish a psychical counterpart while pointing it in the direction of the victim's body. The next part of the operation was to use songs of power when the bone was burned or disposed of in other ways. The power itself was said to come from the bone pointer himself and his songs, rather than the bone, which merely acted as a channel for the power.

The making of harmful objects such as the above was done not only by sorcerers. Stories of "clever" men (also known as medicine men or doctor men) making items such as death-bones are well reported, indicating that there is not a clear-cut division between people who harm and people who heal.

A wide range of Aboriginal beliefs and practices that were documented by the surgeon Walter Roth, during his travels in the late nineteenth century, reveal that in some cases deaths attributed to bone pointing had no discernible medical causes. He reported that a medicine man in the Boulia district of Queensland made a death-bone from either a human forearm or an emu bone, sharpened to a point at one end, with a string of human hair or possum twine attached to it. The string connected the pointer part of the apparatus to a container, also

made out of bone (either a human arm or shin bone, or a kangaroo or emu leg bone), which was the receptacle to hold the victim's blood. The bone pointer had to get within a short distance of his victim, fix the bone container upright into the ground, with the pointer resting between his big toe and second toe, and direct it at the victim. It was important that the connecting string be held in the hand and never allowed to touch the earth. This procedure varied from one region to another and sometimes involved more than one person.

The pointing bone absorbs its maker's power and becomes "loaded" with power in a special ceremony during which sacred and secret songs are sung over it. The clever man's own strength passes along his fingers into the bone and from there into the cord. It needs to be loaded in this way before it has the power to kill. The "pointing" is said to establish a psychical counterpart that enters the victim's body, and was described as being like sending a bullet. The pointing bone was greatly feared and, to all purposes, most effective. Roth himself witnessed three or four cases where a victim had been "pointed," and was unable to discover any medical cause of death.

Feces, urine, phlegm, or spittle was sometimes mixed with a dead person's fat and, depending upon the mixture, was said to cause specific problems: urine sorcery created bladder troubles; phlegm or saliva sorcery caused a severe cold or chest pains. Plaited human hair was also used in sorcery to draw a victim from his camp. It was believed that a woman's hair had more power than that of a man. Sometimes human hair was tied around other sorcery objects such as bird bone and dried sinew.[23]

Blood was believed to be very powerful when spilled for a variety of magical reasons, sometimes beneficial and protective, sometimes to give more potency to sorcery objects. Blood was also thought to give life, strength, and courage if smeared over the body, or ingested as a sacrament. Human blood was believed to have very strong curative powers and was smeared all over the face and body of a person suffering internal pain. The blood used was taken from any healthy individual (but never a woman) by tying a ligature around the biceps, making an incision with a stone knife, and collecting the blood in a *koolamon* (container). The patient might also be required to drink some of the blood.[24] Among the Dieri blood was sometimes used in rain-making magic; the flowing blood symbolized rain, and feather down was thrown into the air to symbolize floating clouds.[25]

The Kungganji medicine men of Cape Grafton, Queensland, used to doom their victims by choking them during sleep, piercing the head with a bone splinter plunged just above each nostril, taking out the

tongue, and removing the lifeblood; this same blood, when imbibed by a medicine man, gave him the power to "fly over immense stretches of country."[26] In northeast Arnhem Land, blood collected from a sorcery victim was considered to have special magical potency, but to be dangerous in a ritual sense by virtue of its spiritual power. The Arnhem Land *kalka* (sorcerer) would drain blood from the victim's body to rub on the eyes, cheeks, and arms of a hunter to make him alert and far-seeing.

Across different cultures, although specific substances are used for both beneficial and malevolent reasons according to the provisions of the natural environment, it seems that there is a neutral force or power, which is inherent in everything, in some people or objects more strongly than others, and much depends upon the person who is using it. Some people, such as medicine men, are considered to be "heavy with power."[27] Such a person was able to do many things: reveal a sorcerer, enhance the power of dream revelations, see spirits, transform themselves (shape-shift), and "fly" or move with great rapidity over vast distances. It seems that some or all of these powers could be used by medicine men as well as sorcerers, and for performing some of the really virulent forms of sorcery. Uttering "strong words" when using the power was a form of strong magic; indeed, it could cause death.[28]

Sometimes the Aboriginal notion of power, or vital force, is referred to by contemporary Aborigines as "like electricity" (Mowaljarlai;[29] Fazeldean[30]), mirroring the same comments made earlier by the Sora, India's Aboriginal people, and the Peruvians, with their notion of *tinguna*, referring to a kind of electromagnetic force field. It is curious that this same idea exists in such geographically distant cultures. It can be used for regeneration, healing, and the successful outcome of magic and sorcery. Mowaljarlai told of "really clever men" as having this power and of being able to pass knowledge of it on to some initiated boys:

> You got electricity inside your body from there above. That was transferred to man, electricity inside, a power. It is released from your body. You can feel it when you are standing on wet earth. If you want to strike a tree, a red flash goes out from red flesh, lights the tree and strikes it.[31]

Mick Fazeldean heals people by concentration, meditation, and touch, and says that he uses this ability when someone comes to him for healing. He looks at a patient, says a small prayer, and then places his hands on their body, at which time he feels "a kind of electricity":

> There is a power just like electricity that comes through from the switchboard on the other side. It is like plugging a wire in.[32]

In most cases the patient reports feeling much better within 30 minutes. If this does not happen, he says he has to "go up to another level," then:

> the appropriate power will come down strongly . . . there's no squeeze, no touch, but an electricity goes through and takes away from the body whatever is causing the pain. Electricity—that is the word that comes closest to explaining the workings of my healing.[33]

During a healing he might feel that something, "like bones," is being extracted from the patient's body, though he sees nothing, and immediately after a healing he sometimes feels a spinning sensation in his head.

The Inupiat, who live in the Arctic Circle, have deeply held beliefs in the spirit world, and say that with the assistance of spirits it is possible to affect the weather, find lost objects and people, and communicate with the dead, and that spirits "extend themselves through humans" during healing work.[34] By now, we are seeing a repeated universal pattern.

Edith Turner's year living with the Inupiat, during her quest to learn and practice their healing methods, resulted in her experiencing many of the things that the Inupiat had told her about, including spirit manifestation and premonition. Her prior African experience of having "seen spirit"[35] enabled her to discuss these matters easily with the Inupiat and undoubtedly encouraged them to allow her more in-depth information on their own beliefs. Her Inupiat healing mentor, Claire Sivuq, taught her how to heal through touch by placing her hands over an afflicted area on the body. One healing session resulted in Edith Turner describing what her hands felt: a "clenched thing, about one and a quarter inches across"; when she touched and worked on it she felt a lump. This is not unusual in itself as a masseur invariably feels lumps produced by knots of tight muscles, and pain is relieved by working on the tight muscle. But Turner goes a bit further than this in the healing process. She says:

> It was body stuff acting up hard in the wrong place. I sighed. My hands knew this thing was sore. Now, astonishingly, Claire [the patient] was letting the thing go into my hands. She let it go and let it go. The clenched part was mainly soft-ish now, but I could feel within it a little long section still hard, say half an inch long. And I handled it a bit in the place where it was hard, inside. You get a little picture of it inside there. Now there was only the shadow left.[36]

The perception of the lump seemed to be a "fine sense" in the fingers, somehow resulting in the transfer of Claire's ailment to Edith's own

hands and "a knowledge, a certain awareness in the human consciousness of a link between oneself and the sufferer." "When the feelings are open," says Turner, the channels to the other person are open.[37] In Inupiat thought, it is the rushing of consciousness from one person to another that is spirit. The healer merely *allows an opening*. Turner also talks about being able to *sense the sound* that sick flesh in a human body emits. Spirit perception and the experience of spirit came briefly and at various times during her year she was being instructed on the healing process.

Compare the above account with that of Mick Fazeldean, the Aboriginal healer who, from the age of 15 (he was in his 60s in 1987), is able to heal people by concentration, meditation, and touch. Sometimes, he says, he moves into a different "level of the mind," like taking the patient "up to another floor" in his mind, and a kind of power comes through, which creates a spinning sensation in his head, and during some of his healings he feels, with his fingers, that something is being *extracted* from the patient's body, which he describes as "like bones," though he does not *see* any physical object coming out of the patient.[38]

Returning to Edith Turner, under her Inupiat friend Claire's tutelage Edith said she could sense things, such as "mushiness" and "damaged tissues," through her own hands, and how pain seemed to "leak away." "The hands knew the details of the inner tissues: they were involved in the tissues, not just laid on the outside."[39] She compares it to the African healer in Zambia, where at the climax of the healing ceremony, the healer extracted an afflicting spirit out of a sick woman. It took several attempts, she says, but finally the spirit emerged from the woman's body and Turner saw for herself what was being extracted. She describes it as "a large gray ball, something between solid and smoke, a kind of globular ghost."[40] This experience convinced her that what indigenous people had been trying to tell Westerners for years is true: *spirits exist*.

As well as being able to heal in a similar manner to the Ndembu healer, Claire told Edith Turner that she was able to "see inside" a body, "like an X-ray," and that this enabled the Inupiat healers to diagnose an illness.[41] Similarly, Aboriginal Australian healers ("doctor men/medicine men") describe seeing with a "strong eye," the eye of a healer, and compare it to the X-rays that are produced in the West by technology. One man described how a "doctor man" (healer) could do this by looking into a patient's eyes:

> You know that X-ray, eh?
>
> Well, same way that the marrkidjibu ["doctor man"] can see.

> [But] this balanda (European) one (X-ray machine), that (an) outside one. You (yourself) can't see that way.
>
> But this Old Man ["doctor man"], he could just see your eye. That's all. Him bin just go [demonstrates using his eyes to look into you]
>
> Just look, didn't, couldn't, say anything, im bin just look in the body, eye.
>
> That's all.[42]

Reports of being able to "see" in this way, by a penetrating gaze that resulted in "X-ray vision," relay that parts of the body such as the liver and the intestines appear to be "shining" and, according to their color or brightness, it is possible to ascertain whether the organ is diseased. The organ might vary from a healthy clear transparency to an unhealthy gray or black. In order to extract the offending organ, the healer would rub his hands and grab the object to draw it out, trying not to let it break up into fragments. He would then massage the area around the wound, suck out the poisoned blood, and spit it out.

Yet another healing practitioner, one who is Western, discusses the healing process in a similar manner to the above accounts. As well as being a healer, Barbara Ann Brennan is a scientist. She trained as a physicist in atmospheric physics, and worked as a scientist for NASA at the Goddard Space Flight Center in the United States before turning her hand to psychotherapy. She was also trained in bioenergetic therapy, and studied with American and Native American healers. With such a diverse background, straddling science and spirituality, Brennan's experiences as an energy healer cannot be easily set aside.

In her two books, *Hands of Light: A Guide to Healing through the Human Energy Field* and *Light Emerging: The Journey of Personal Healing*, she describes her experiences of perceiving the human body visually, audibly, and kinesthetically during the healing process. Both books also contain paintings of the human body showing the colors of diseased and healthy organs. She calls her abilities high sense perception, the ability to perceive things beyond the normal range of senses, allowing her to "see, hear, smell, taste and touch things that cannot normally be perceived."[43] She is able to "scan" the human energy field and "see" abnormalities in the body, in the same way as the healers cited above. Tapping into these fields of energy, she works with the energy that flows throughout the body so that healing can occur. Such perception, she says, reveals "the dynamic world of fluid interacting life energy fields around and through things." This same idea is repeated over and over again in different cultures.

As a child she spent a lot of time alone in the woods near her house, sitting, she recounts, perfectly still so that small animals could approach her. In those quiet times of stillness and waiting, she would enter an expanded state of consciousness and be able to perceive things beyond the normal range of experience. She began seeing the energy fields around trees and small animals, which she describes as being like the glow around a candle. She also noticed that everything was connected by these energy fields. She began to pay attention to the energy fields and colors surrounding human bodies, and found that they are intimately associated with a person's health and well-being. Bright colors that flow easily in a balanced field indicate good health, whereas an energy field that has dark colors and an unbalanced flow of energy is indicative of poor health. These early experiences were the beginning of her high sense perception.

High sense perception reveals that most diseases begin in the energy field and are transmitted to the body, rather than the reverse,[44] an idea that we encountered earlier. She gained proficiency in seeing these fields of energy and interacting with them for the benefit of her clients. She would also receive information from outside herself, which would come in the form of words, concepts, or symbolic pictures, and often saw a dark spot or area in the energy field where the illness was situated. Sometimes she would also hear someone telling her what was wrong with the patient. She was always in an ASC when engaged in these sessions, and this appears to be a crucial factor.

To develop high sense perception, writes Barbara Ann Brennan, it is necessary to enter into an expanded state of consciousness, and this can be done by sitting in silence and in meditation—silencing our mind chatter so that we can blend into our surroundings. Many healers talk about either "silencing the mind," "concentrating intensely," focusing, or meditating prior to healing, and of being in a relaxed physical and mental state. All religious traditions imply the importance of being quiet and still in mind and spirit for transformative and integral spiritual growth to occur. In Christianity, there is the silence of contemplative prayer; in Islam, the Sufis insist on the importance of finding silence within. In Buddhism, allowing the mind to become silent in order to expand one's awareness helps lead one to spiritual enlightenment. In Hinduism, silence is important for inner growth; in Quakerism, silence is listening to "the still small voice within." There is a quality of perception that emerges in deep silence.

As Brennan's life progressed she first began sensing spiritual beings and then seeing them, "as if in a vision." Then she began hearing them talk to her and feeling them touch her, guiding her during healing

sessions. We are all guided, she suggests, by spiritual teachers who speak to us in our dreams and through our intuition, and if we listen, they speak to us directly. "We are like sponges in the energy sea around us. Since this energy is always associated with a form of consciousness, we experience the energy we exchange in terms of seeing, hearing, feeling, sensing, intuiting or direct knowing."[45]

In all these accounts of experiences from different areas of the world, the cause of the illness was due to an invisible object being inside the sick person's body, being extracted from the person's body through seemingly magical means, and the experience of the healer either seeing, feeling, or sensing the object. Reports from energy healers tend to regard illness as containing, as Turner puts it, "spirit stuff."

This chapter has so far discussed tapping into the energetic field for healing purposes, having dream experiences, having extrasensory experiences, and altering our awareness in order to gain knowledge, all *without* the use of substances such as plant entheogens or chemical-based hallucinogens. There is an additional substantial amount of literature that deals with the question of accessing altered states and thereby different dimensions through the entheogenic method. Rick Strassman speaks specifically of DMT (dimethyltryptamine);[46] Andy Letcher focuses on mushrooms (psilocybin);[47] Benny Shanon,[48] Nicholas Saunders et al.,[49] Alexander and Ann Shulgin,[50] and Des Tramacchi,[51] to name only a few, have written about different types of entheogens, contributing to a rapidly increasing number of books and articles on the topic.

In many cultures where there is a strong belief in spirits and spirit worlds, there is an integrated belief that these things affect the mundane world on a daily, lived basis, and that spirit communication, animal spirits, reincarnation, shamanic-style healing, prophetic dreams, and even the transcendence of clock time are merely facts of their everyday world. While we refer to them as magical, and the outcomes as "magical experiences," they are not necessarily "magical" at all, but natural. Westerners have come to dichotomize "natural" and "supernatural," and this is our problem. Insisting on sharp definitions about things like "spirit stuff" and replication of an experience in a laboratory setting highlights the Western approach. A better way of approaching magical experiences is via experience, rather than through intellectualization. Our emotions are important, and allowing an experience to happen, rather than holding back because it is "not academic," can teach us many things. We have been so enculturated in academia to ridicule the emotions and any "strange" experiences that are reported that we have lost sight of how people in other

cultures have used them to great advantage in their worlds. There is a growing body of publications now that ventures into the controversial world of "spirits," including a new journal, *Paranthropology: Journal of Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal*, as a means to explore theoretical methodologies and the paranormal.

Perhaps we should heed the words of St. Augustine:

> Miracles do not happen in contradiction to nature,
> but only in contradiction to that which is known to us in nature.

# Chapter 4

# Shamanism

> Spirit takes shape all around us, and where we have not met spirits it is more than likely because we have not been aware of them than because they are not there at all. For a shaman, all the world is alive.
>
> —Gordon MacLellan[1]

> Everything standing up [is] alive.
>
> —Mowaljarlai[2]

While shamans have existed for millennia, both academic and public interest in shamanism has recently burgeoned. It is now a well-researched field of academic pursuit, evidenced by international conferences on shamanism, several annual conventions of the American Psychological Association, the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness, and numerous articles on the topic in scholarly journals such as *Ethos* and *Anthropology of Consciousness*, to mention just two, as well as a two-volume encyclopedia published by ABC-CLIO in 2004,[3] and journals devoted specifically to shamanism.

Before launching into the experiential side of shamanism, which is the focus of this chapter, it is necessary to discuss briefly the contentious issue of definition, as this seems to be the basis of dissention among scholars about what constitutes shamanism. Is shamanism universal, or can the term be applied only to certain geographical areas and particular cultures? If not, then what are the main features of shamanism that might make it universal?

There have been many attempts to try to narrow shamanism in order to define it. In his classic 1951 French version of *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, Mircea Eliade suggests that the word "shaman" comes from the term *saman* of the reindeer-herding Tungus people in Russia, and refers to a person who "specializes in a trance during which his soul is believed to leave his body and ascend to the

sky or descend to the underworld"; the root of *saman* is the Tungus-Manchu verb *sa*, which means "to know."[4] The general term "shaman" now pervades the Western world, and it is probably the fact that it refers to beliefs and practices that are widespread, yet locally specific, that makes the term so difficult to pin down. It continues to be used as a heuristic device, however, for Western researchers wanting to identify linked phenomena that include common qualities.

Åke Hultkrantz suggests that shamanism is not a separate religion because Siberian religions contain many elements that cannot be subsumed under the heading "shamanism."[5] Graham Harvey argues that shamanism is the world as understood and experienced by animists—rather than anything new that needs to be labeled "shamanic" or " shamanism."[6] Harvey emphasizes the relationship aspect of that which is labeled shamanism, and refers to relations between all "persons": humans, nonhumans, and all that exists in the world and beyond. The working definition employed by the 2003 encyclopedia *Shamanism* is: "a religious belief system in which the shaman is a specialist in the knowledge required to make a connection to the world of the spirits in order to bring about benefits for other members of the community," a broad definition that enables the topic to be embraced in a world context.[7]

Joan Halifax provides a definition that focuses more on the experiential side of shamanism and includes various features such as an initiatory crisis, a vision quest, an ordeal, or an experience of dismemberment and regeneration; the sacred tree or *axis mundi* and the spirit flight associated with it; the role of the shaman as a healer; and the ability to enter shamanic trance.[8] As these features are experientially focused, we will launch this chapter using Halifax's useful criteria, especially with regard to the shaman as healer, trance worker, seer, and the shaman's initiation, which invariably involves themes of death, dismemberment, and regeneration.

Briefly, it seems to be agreed upon that the shaman is a man or a woman who, through trance, is able to communicate with the spirit world and journey to those worlds. To instigate such an experience entheogens (psychoactive plants) and/or other forms of trance-inducing techniques are sometimes employed.

Given our broad definition of shamanism, there are certain universals in the practice of shamanism that will be considered here, particularly with respect to ritual practices involving methods of entering trance, and shamanic experiences, always taking into consideration local manifestations and variations that differ according to the geographic or regional area and specific culture.

Without doubt, *shaman-like* activities occur cross-culturally, and most cultures have individuals within their community or tribe who have much the same type of ability as the shaman, even though the term used may not be directly translated as shaman. For example, while they might be referred to as shaman in one area of the world, they might be called "medicine man/woman" or "clever man/woman" or "man of power" in other areas. If we look at shamanism in the broader sense of *shaman-like* activities, which all seem to fall under a larger rubric of the magico-religious tradition, they occur as wide apart geographically as Aboriginal Australia and Mongolia. People who act in a similar capacity and use similar techniques as those used elsewhere are called, in Australia, "men of high degree," "medicine men," "doctor men," or "clever men." Elkin compared the clever man (or woman) to the Amerindian "man of power," because of the shaman-like knowledge, skills, and qualities they both have: being able to commune with the dead, see spirits, bilocate, shape-shift, fly through the air, and learn what is happening at a faraway location. They also have the ability to heal and to harm. In some places in Australia, clever people are called upon to interpret dreams, recover missing objects, predict future events, explain unusual phenomena, and protect people from psychic attack. Many Aboriginal people have some of these attributes, especially the ability to heal by using bush medicine, but are not considered to be "clever."

## THE SHAMAN'S WORLDS

The shamanic worldview encompasses the physical world of "ordinary" reality and the worlds of "nonordinary" reality, a dichotomy that is really used only by Western academics; for most indigenous people there is not such a neat boundary line between the two, and the clear-cut distinctions may have led to some rigidity in our discussions and understanding of the concept. But as these are commonly used throughout academia, it is useful to retain the distinctions here.

The traditional cosmology, in general, is a map to a numinous realm of forces that affect human life on the everyday level. The starting point for the shaman's journey is in ordinary reality, the ascent or descent is to the realm of the spirits, and the end point is the return to ordinary reality. Ronald Hutton notes that in various Siberian ethnographies, each realm has its own "elaborate geography" that has to be negotiated by the visitor.[9] The journeyer into nonordinary reality may discover that it is possible to revisit the same environs and have

special meeting places with spiritual allies. This "map" may simply be the path that a particular shaman uses to find a portal.

Classically, the shamanic worldview made famous by Mircea Eliade is of a multilevel cosmos, consisting of at least three major levels: the Upper World, the Middle World of humans, and the Lower World or Underworld. The Upper World of Siberian shamans was subdivided into several other levels—Vitebsky writes of 9 and even 16 levels in some places.[10] These realms may be connected, and sometimes accessed, in particular, sacred places. The model of three major realms is represented symbolically and pictorially as a tree, the *axis mundus*, with its roots in the Lower World, its trunk in the human everyday world, and its branches reaching up high into the Upper World. The shaman is a mediator between the world of humans and the world of spirits.

The cultural diversity with regard to these "worlds" is, however, great, and we need not insist on these seemingly clear-cut levels for all cultures. Indeed, this visual picture of "levels" might be merely a convenient way of describing the indescribable. What is universal is that the shaman journeys to "other worlds," realms that can be contrasted with the normal, everyday, mundane world of humans. Indeed, those worlds may intersect and permeate this mundane realm; as one contemporary shaman writes, "The Otherworld is all around you, beside you all the time."[11]

If we follow the three levels within the literature, it is generally found that the Upper and Lower realms are accessed through a kind of hole, or opening, in the sky or earth, depending upon the direction of the journey. A journey to one realm might start with a soul ascent from a high place such as a tree, a mountain, and so on; a journey to another may begin with the soul descending into a cave, a body of water, the roots of a tree, or other natural passage that can take one downward into the earth. The tree, or a pole, may be used to ascend via its branches to the Upper World, or descend, via the roots, to the Lower World.

The branching of the tree carries connotations of the interconnected web of life, and seems to be a universal symbol as it appears in the myths of many cultures. A "tree of life," called *Waligul* by the Yolngu people of Australia, is said to be the communicating link between the earth and spirit, with its roots in the earth, its trunks lifting through the songs, ceremonies, and art to its hidden high branches that are in touch with the spirit world. After a night of ritual singing by senior men, at that "special time" just before the first appearance of daylight, it is said that this mythical tree can be seen in a brief, fleeting second.[12]

Among the Yakut (Siberia), a visit to the World Tree forms part of the shaman's initiation, and a Mongolian Buryat shaman's initiation involves an elder shaman's ascent to the sky by climbing a birch tree.[13] The number nine, or other multiples of three, figures in many references to the Tree, symbolizing nine heavens.

The cosmology is reflected sometimes at the microcosmic community level; for example, the Axis is symbolically represented among the Inuit, by the pole at the center of their dwellings. Similarly, the Soyot yurt house has a pole that rises above the top of the yurt and is decorated with blue, white, and yellow cloths, representing the colors of the celestial regions. Among the Ainu of Japan, some Native American tribes, and many other cultures throughout the world, we find the same symbolic pole.

## DETECTING A SHAMAN

Again, this varies widely. While some shamans inherit the role, others may be detected by physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects that set the person apart. There may be distinctive bodily signs such as albinism, or an unusual birthmark; they may have fits or seizures or behave in a way that is culturally associated with the opposite gender. They may have out-of-body experiences, or extremely vivid dreams in which spirits call to them. This may happen at any time in a person's life, even at a mature age. The physical body may suffer from persistent sickness, which, after a time, is suspected as being due to the fact that the person is not acknowledging the shamanic tendency. This may be accompanied by bizarre behavior that is psychologically different to that regarded as normal in the particular culture. Both the sickness and the behavior invariably involve the recognition by others in the family, or in the community, that the person's behavior may be related to the call to shamanism.

In the north of Korea, around Seoul, a person becomes a shaman through what begins as an illness that cannot be explained, and she is most likely to have had a shaman ancestor. Inheriting shamanism is much more likely to be the case with regard to east-coast and southwest Korea; that is, they come from a line of shamans, learning shamanic skills from a family member or members. The shaman is also considered to be chosen by the gods.

Korea has a long tradition of shamanism that probably dates back to the animistic beliefs of the Muman people, believed to have lived in Korea during the Bronze Age. While today most shamans in Korea

are women (*mudang*), it has not always been so. The role of shamans has changed over time from a male-centered activity in which the shaman was actively involved in the political system to a female-centered one that has only informal and often underground connections to the government in modern times. Any male shamans in Korea today invariably dress in women's clothes. Although the role of shaman has economic benefits for women, it is considered to be an undesirable role, which understandably leads to resistance to the "call" to shamanism. Many enter the profession reluctantly, and only after much time enduring persistent illness.[14]

A shaman whom Laurel Kendall refers to as "Yongsu's Mother" recounted the "wondrous things" that had happened to her during her lifetime, most of which are tied up with her becoming a shaman: the Mountain God's intercession to save her life; a bowl of healing water being brought to her by divine beings in a dream when she was seriously ill; the gods choosing her to be a shaman when she was "down on her luck"; and divine possession. By virtue of the powerful gods that possess her, she can summon up divination visions and probe the sources of a client's misfortunes, heal the sick and unlucky, and help her community in other ways, much of which is of a mundane nature.[15] Like shamans everywhere, Korean shamans are the intermediary between the world of spirits and the mundane world of humans, sometimes persuading lingering ghosts to move away, other times to act as healer and retriever of souls.[16]

Some of the symptoms of possession sickness are hearing and seeing things that are out of the ordinary, experiencing voices whispering, having heart palpitations, having dizzy spells, which escalate until the person finally accepts her role as shaman. As one Korean shaman recounted to Kendall, "It's because you get so sick, faint so many times, and such that you finally invite the spirits in and become a *mudang* . . . At a certain point, it's simply the lesser evil."[17] Encounters with divine beings and spiritual guides while wandering in the wild are commonly reported by shamans in Korea, and sightings of the white-bearded Mountain God frequently occur, especially during the period of wandering that often precedes initiation, referred to sometimes as "the lunatic season before their initiation," alluding to their bizarre behavior, when they are governed by spirit voices and visions, or compulsively drawn to temples, shrines, and sacred mountains.[18] The call to shamanism is recounted through dreams that frequently involve the appearance of a divine being, sometimes bearing a bowl of medicinal water or a book of mystical teachings. All these things legitimize a woman's claim to be a *mudang*. If the call is resisted, they

often have very bad luck, become sick, and their illness progresses until they accept their calling.[19]

The Dene (Canada) acknowledge the strong link between dreaming and shamanism. Acquiring "dream power" is the same as acquiring shamanic power: "If you dream, everybody dreams, even little bit, you are little bit a sleep-doctor," one Dene person told Marie Francoise Guédon.[20] Shamanic practices and rituals lead practitioners into other, nonhuman worlds, just as dreams do. When Guédon noticed, after some time working with Dene people, that her own dreams became much clearer and stronger, and she began using them as a starting point for her inquiries, the discussion of dreams became an important part of her communication with the Dene about much deeper matters of importance to them, and the topic of shamanism was no longer taboo. The Dene say that shamanic practices can be understood and applied by anyone; being non-Native does not bar one from dreaming and therefore accessing shamanic powers.[21]

An Australian Aboriginal clever man called Tankli obtained his power in dreams. Around the time of puberty he had several dreams in which his father appeared with other old men and dressed him up with lyrebird's feathers round his head. The third time he had the same dream, the old men carried him through the air and set him down at a different place, in front of a large rock with an opening. His father tied something over his eyes and led him through the rock, where his eyes were uncovered and he discovered that he was in a place "as bright as day." He was shown "shining bright things, like glass, on the walls," and told to take some. He did so, and then his father taught him how to make them go into his legs and how to pull them out again. After this, he was carried back to camp by his father and the other old men and put on the top of a big tree, then told to let everyone in camp know that he was back, by shouting out to them. When he woke up from this dream he found that he was lying on the limb of a tree, and when he came down, he realized that he was holding the shiny bright thing in his hand. The old men declared him to be a *Mulla-mullung* (clever man). From that time on he could "pull things out of people, and do other marvellous things."[22]

The Gunwinggu clever man, from western Arnhem Land (Australia), obtains his power mainly from spirits of the dead. Berndt and Berndt were told that a deceased relative would "insert into his head a small thin rod, like a bamboo spear and breathe power into all his body apertures," which he could subsequently use for healing. The clever man could not speak; his tongue became soft like a baby's, and he could only nod in reply. Then the spirit blew into him again to

give him extra strength, after which he rose to his feet slowly and stiffly as if he were just awakening from sleep.[23] After this event, he became "clever" and could heal people.

## BECOMING A SHAMAN: INITIATION

A Korean *kut* is an elaborate, colorful, and dramatic ritual performance—a cacophony of sounds, accompanied by bright, many-layered costumes and headgear, that can last for hours, during which the *mudang* goes into a whirling trance dance, sometimes with an entire slaughtered pig across her shoulders. The *kut* often culminates in a startling demonstration of the powers of the *mudang*, invariably including the *mudang* standing barefoot on razor-sharp metal blades, without ill effect. In the initiatory rite for the god's descent into the shaman, called the *naerim-kut*, the possessing spirits are officially invited to descend and enter into her body, the point that marks the transition from afflicted victim to *mudang*. Thereafter, the relationship between the shaman and the possessing spirits is a transactional one: the shaman provides the spirits with access to human beings and their affairs, and the *mudang* is no longer plagued with illness and is able to heal others. If either one fails in their duties, they both suffer: the spirit might be challenged by the *mudang* about bodily possession, and the spirits might fail to protect the *mudang*.[24]

A Korean shaman called Wangsimni recounted to Laurel Kendall the events that led to her becoming a shaman. Prior to having any indication of "supernatural notification," she found herself feeling excited and entranced by the rhythm of the drum, a feeling that increased as time went on. She lost all sense of inhibition and became helpless, abandoning herself to the rhythm and sound of the drum, wanting to dance and chant to it, to the extent that she could not think of anything else, losing any sense of embarrassment. Wangsimni's *naerim-kut* was performed only after more than 10 years of struggle to resist the role of *mudang*. She says, "You can see how people who are possessed by spirits can go insane if they are improperly initiated. You have no way of making use of the feelings that take hold of you." "When you start doing your own *kut*, you just feel your spirits stealing into you and taking over; the sensation is incomparable."[25]

While Korean women reluctantly accept their role as shamans, in some cultures it is sought after, and the shaman is regarded as a significant figure in the community. One Iglulik Inuit shaman in the Arctic region recounts his own process of becoming a shaman. At first

he made attempts to instigate the "onset" of shamanism through practical means, calling on the help of others, visiting well-known shamans, seeking solitude, but all this effort merely resulted in his becoming unhappy and very melancholy. He would sometimes lapse into weeping without knowing why, and then, seemingly for no reason, he suddenly changed.

> Then, for no reason, all would suddenly be changed, and I felt a great, inexplicable joy, a joy so powerful that I could not restrain it, but had to break into song, a mighty song, with only room for the one word: joy, joy! And I had to use the full strength of my voice. And then in the midst of such a fit of mysterious and overwhelming delight I became a shaman, not knowing myself how it came about. But I was a shaman. I could see and hear in a totally different way. I had gained my *qaumanEq*, my enlightenment, the shaman-light of brain and body, and this in such a manner that it was not only I could see through the darkness of life but the same light also shone out from me, imperceptible to human beings but visible to all the spirits of earth and sky and sea, and these now came to me and became my helping spirits.[26]

While this Inuit man had spirits come to him after his ecstatic feelings of joy, an Arnhem Land (Australia) clever man called Djiburu said that his powers came from spirits, called *gulun*, who stupefied him for five days and operated on him while he was asleep, inserting a kangaroo fibula into his thigh, then rubbing away the wound with water. When he awoke, he recognized that he had been "made" because of his ability to see through objects.[27] In other places within Australia, the postulant is sometimes swallowed by a water snake and spat out, or by the Rainbow Snake and vomited out.

Becoming a shaman is not for the faint-hearted, and it is understandable that some enter the profession reluctantly. Initiates are privy to scenes of their own destruction and reconstitution, which must be terrifying; death and dismemberment of the body before renewal of the vital organs and rebirth is a universal theme, and it sometimes involves being eaten or swallowed by some monstrous being. The Inuit apprentice shaman may be ripped apart and devoured by a bear or a walrus; the Siberian novice's body might have his limbs torn from him by iron hooks, his blood drunk by the souls of dead shamans, his eyes torn from their sockets, and his flesh cut and pierced with arrows. In some cases, the physical body is reduced in all manner of ways, to a skeleton, with all the soft parts of the body having been gruesomely removed before the skeleton is reconstructed. After all this death and dismemberment, the shaman then discovers that he has special powers, including the ability to see the unseen. It seems that the

shaman must suffer agony before being able to heal someone else, and "die" before having the capacity to restore the life of others.

In some regions in Australia, the novice "clever man"/medicine man is eviscerated and then packed with crystals. He might be taken by a spirit into another realm where he undergoes disembowelment and his insides are replaced, usually by substances such as quartz crystals. In one particularly vivid account, the postulant is cut open "from his neck down the front of the body to the groin;" his heart, intestines, and other organs are taken out, and magical substances are inserted. His shoulder bones, thigh bones, and ankle bones are removed, and the bones are dried before being put back, along with more magical substances.[28] Alternatively, objects may be magically hammered into his body by a group of older medicine men. Thus transformed, he has the ability to use the power in these new innards to do his magical work. Quartz crystals and other magical substances such as a magical cord may be metaphysically put inside a medicine man during his "making." The following account is of the making of a Wiradjuri clever man:

> When I was a small boy [my father] took me into the bush to train me to be a *Wulla-mullung* [clever man]. He placed two large quartz crystals against my breast, and they vanished into me. I do not know how they went, but I felt them going through me like warmth. This was to make me clever and able to bring things up. He also gave me some things like quartz crystals in water. They looked like ice and the water tasted sweet. After that I used to see things that my mother could not see. When out with her I would say, "What is out there like men walking?" She used to say, "Child, there is nothing'" These were the *Jir* [ghosts] which I began to see.[29]

Crystals also appear in accounts of the making of shamans during South American initiations, after which they have heightened sensory perception.[30]

An Aboriginal Australian can become clever by being "made" by another clever person, a personal quest, a psychic experience, or being "called" by the spirits of the dead. Someone who shows promise as a child might be taken to an isolated spot and have his assistant totem or spirit companion "sung" into him and be taught how to use it. It is more common, however, for a young man with power to be required to pass through some of the stages of initiation before another clever man assists him to release his power. This may vary from one region to another. A potential clever man might have his vocation confirmed by significant dreams or visions, or by encountering a spirit. Essential elements in the making of a "clever man" in the southeastern part of

Australia involve going down into a bright cave and meeting supernatural beings, the growth of feathers, a flight into the sky or among the stars, quartz crystals being inserted into or rubbed against the body, and possession of a magic rope by which the person is able to climb upward to the sky. A fully qualified clever person can travel through the air or under the ground, cure illness, and see with a "strong eye."[31]

Universally, once any shaman has undergone initiation, the person can never be as he or she was before. The true initiation is one that the individual has with the spirit world, rather than any structured initiation ritual. The change is even more profound than a rite of passage that requires extreme body modification such as circumcision, subincision, or deep scarification. The transformation of death and dismemberment in shamans truly sets them apart from others. To attain dreams and visions of the spirit world, initiates undergo metaphysical journeys that might take them to magical lands on the back of eagles or vultures, or they may get there via ropes, ladders, or rainbows, or through cave passages, graves, or water, such as a river or waterhole. Once "made," the extrasensory powers allow the new shaman to "see," an experience that involves all the senses. His special "inner" eyesight enables him to see into the bodies of others and reveal their sickness, see future events, or see events happening at a distance.

An old Kalahari Bushman healer commented on one experience as:

> Your heart stops. You're dead. Your thoughts are nothing. You breathe with difficulty. You see things, *num* things, you see spirits killing people. You smell burning, rotten flesh. Then you heal, you pull sickness out. You heal, heal, heal. Then you live. Your eyeballs clear and you see people clearly.[32]

Nothing seems to be hidden from the initiated shaman; he gains the ability to see things that are happening at a distance, to discover stolen souls, and to participate and communicate in other realms. Not only does the shaman "see" differently, but other people see him as different. Newly made, he might be recognized by the light shining from his body. The explorer Knud Rasmussen (1929) wrote about a "mysterious light" that gives a novice Iglulik Inuit shaman of the Hudson Bay area in the Arctic insight:

> a mysterious light which the shaman suddenly feels in his body inside his head, within the brain, an inexplicable searchlight, a luminous fire, which enables him to see in the dark, both literally and metaphorically speaking, for he can now, even with closed eyes, see through darkness and perceive things and coming events which are hidden from others: thus they look into the future and into the secrets of others.[33]

Similarly, a Nganasan Samoyed shaman of Siberia reported that during his initiatory dismemberment, a spirit also changed his eyes, so that he could see, not with bodily eyes, but with "mystical eyes." Others remark on the intensity of the shaman's gaze,[34] and the brightness of the eyes is frequently mentioned. A. P. Elkin commented that an Aboriginal Australian medicine man he encountered had "shrewd penetrating eyes—eyes that look you all the way through—the lenses of a mind that is photographing your very character and intentions,"[35] and the Berndts wrote that the medicine man was noticeably different from others because of the light radiating from his eyes. His "shrewd eyes" enabled him to "see" an illness in a person's body, and to see through objects. His special sight also enabled him to see a light about a dead man's grave for up to three days after death. He could speak to the light and it would guide him to the dead man's murderer. This ability was acquired during his training period.[36] Aboriginal explanations of "strong eye" compare it to the way Western X-ray machines can see through the body and detect an illness.

Fasting, solitude, stillness (silent listening and meditation), and visualization, as well as dance, chants, songs, and other methods, help in being able to contact the spirits. The initiate is extremely vulnerable and undergoes much trauma. An experienced shaman may be on hand to help the initiate through this terrifying rite of passage, to guide him through the unfamiliar terrain. A Desana (Eastern Colombia, South America) novice shaman spends months or even years acquiring knowledge about myth, cosmology, the natural world, ritual procedures, healing, and learning to use hallucinogens that will help transport him to the Otherworld.[37] Reichel-Dolmatoff writes of apprentice shamans spending months in isolation with perhaps two or three other shamans, observing strict dietary rules, and ingesting hallucinogens, spending most of their time in their hammocks, "their prostrate emaciated bodies convulsed, their faces contorted their hoarse voices chanting endlessly to the rhythm of their gourd rattles."[38]

## THE IMAGINATION

Scattered throughout occult and shamanic literature are references to the imagination, or "seeing with the mind's eye," and similar metaphors. In the sixteenth century, Paracelsus said, "Everyone may educate and regulate his imagination so as to come thereby into contact with spirits, and be taught by them." Development of the imagination, the internal mental imagery that we all have, is strengthened during

magical training. Imagination and intuition are closely tied to shamanic and magical abilities, and both can be enhanced by persistent cultivation and training, paying attention to one's inner feelings and reactions. Employing all the senses in using the imagination is recommended: if one visualizes a forest, for example, one needs to see the forest, hear and feel the wind in the branches, smell the vegetation, listen for the sounds of the forest, its animals, insects, and birds, and feel the energies in the forest, a totally multisensorial experience.

In Sufism, the *batin* is a realm of idea images, subtle substances, scenes on which visionary events and symbolic histories appear and are considered "true reality." Using creative imagination through the active imagination is what the Sufis call "science of the heart," and allows the Sufi entrance into the *alam al-mithal* (the intermediate world). The active imagination, known as theophanic imagination, together with strong emotion, will, desire, and focused attention or concentration allow Sufi mystics to see things that normally cannot be seen.[39]

These same factors are employed by Western occult magicians. By focusing on mental images, the occultist can use the imagination and focused concentration to bring an image into visible appearance. It may not be visible to others, but the magician is able to see it. Magicians train themselves to create an image, hold it, and improve the vividness and controllability of the image to sustain it. When proficiency at mental imaging is perfected, the practitioner can perceive things directly on the "astral levels."[40] Occultist Israel Regardie insists on the importance of visualization and mental imagery cultivation before a practitioner of magic can move on to the next stages of training.[41]

Shamans also often undergo visualization training, with the goal of developing the "inner eye," or "strong eye," sometimes also referred to as the "third eye" in magico-religious traditions. The imagination is an important foundational stage to visualization training, which includes image enhancement and increasing the vividness of an image. The latter is brought about in sometimes quite drastic ways—pain enhancement, hypoglycemia and dehydration, long periods of dancing, seclusion, sleep deprivation, hyperventilation—which are also employed for entering an ASC.[42] The adept at mental imagery cultivation can sustain images to the point where they appear to take on energy and a life of their own. It is then the shaman's (or magician's) job to control the energies. In his study of Siberian shamanism, Czaplicka notes that the mental part of training consists in coming into contact with the "right spirits," those who will become the shaman's protectors.[43] Both clairvoyant and clairaudient abilities are

strengthened by persistent training in methods that will enhance vision and auditory faculties. Ancient alchemists referred to mental imagery cultivation as the *imagination*, the development of an inner spiritual sight.[44]

## SHAPE-SHIFTING AND TRANSFORMATION

The notion of somatic transformation from human to animal, or other creature, permeates myths from many cultures, not merely those that are shamanic. In Europe, stories of werewolves and vampires abound, as do stories that depict a change in character from good to evil (Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, for a malevolent side), or from human to superhuman (Superman, for a benevolent change).

In shamanic cultures, it is the shaman who has shape-shifting abilities, and who has the power to call on other creatures for assistance. The shaman may wear the skin or feathers of the animal or bird, or a costume or mask that resembles these spiritual allies, and carry other tools and paraphernalia. These things themselves become powerful magical tools for transformation, and the more they are used, the more they build up a residual energy over time, imbuing the costume itself with a magical quality that can aid in the wearer's transformation. Magical power can begin with the process of making the costumes and their attachments, especially as many costumes incorporate the actual bones, skin, fur, and feathers of the animals they resemble. Songs may be sung during their making and sung at subsequent healing rituals.

Metamorphosis generally means that the shaman takes on the powers, abilities, and strength of the animal or creature the shaman changes into: for example, the cunning of the fox, the strength of the tiger, the speed and hunting ability of the wolf, the power of the bear, the swiftness of the deer. Wolves, for the Huichol Indians of Mexico, whose myths tell of their origins as part-human, part-wolf, represent their mythical ancestors, and many Huichol shamans train for long periods of time, sometimes several years, to become wolf-shamans.[45] At the end of his apprenticeship, well trained in the ways of the wolves, the wolves themselves enable the candidate to see visions, and the shaman has the ability to transform himself into a wolf. Similarly, the Kwakiutl of the West Coast of Canada also see the wolf as their mythical ancestor. Both the wolf and the killer whale are equally important mythical figures to the Kwakiutl, and both are important in the initiation into the profession of shaman.[46] It is easy to imagine how, at night, a shaman, well versed in the actions and mannerisms

of the animal concerned, could put on his animal ally costume in front of a transfixed audience and appear to outwardly transform himself into that form while the shaman himself would experience the inner transformation.

The Meso-American belief that humans can shape-shift into animal others is called *nawalism*,[47] and was reported by the Franciscans when they first tried to missionize the "heathens." Ancient Mayan hieroglyphs, art, sculpture, and iconography depicted in the Mayan Sacred Calendar suggest that the belief in relationships between humans, animals, and power has a long history. This shape-shifting ability was a display of power that could be used to benefit the community, or for individual reasons.

The Korean *mudang* puts on, not animal skins or paraphernalia, but a series of robes, hats, and vests that represent the spirits of the ancestors that possess her. During her possession, and as different spirits speak, dance, or act through her, she switches garments to represent the appropriate spirit, her voice and demeanor recognized by those watching as belonging to certain spirits and not others.

## JOURNEYING TO THE SPIRIT WORLD

A shaman might have a particular animal, bird, or reptile that assists him in his work. This has been referred to variously as "assistant totem," "guardian spirit," "spirit ally," "tutelary spirit," "auxiliary spirit," or "familiar" (the latter term is found in European literature). These creatures act as his guide or protector and may accompany him on his journeys out of the body.

"Clever" people can go on journeys while their physical bodies are asleep. This is called "traveling in a clever way." The person's spirit might exit through the navel and fly away. During these journeys he might find himself at a ceremony and learn important songs and other information. In 1937, Norman Tindale noted that a man could "travel as a whirlwind," leave the supine body, and fly on a spider web.[48]

The Mekeo of New Guinea talk of the "hidden self" as distinct from the physical body. This "hidden/dream-self" can leave the body during sleep, and return to it unless something happens that prevents its return.[49] In Mekeo experience, writes Michele Stephen, there is a visible, bodily self (*imauga*) existing in a world of material objects perceived in waking experience, plus another part of self—a bodiless image (*lalauga*) inhabiting a world of noncorporeal imagery. This other self is truly a hidden self, since not only is it usually invisible to the

waking perception of others, but it is hidden even from one's own waking awareness, except to the extent that one can recall and accurately interpret one's dreams. Mekeo take care to distinguish between what they experience in their physical bodies (*imauga*) and what they experience as their dream-selves (*lalauga*), when they are in nonordinary consciousness.[50] The idea of a "hidden self" permeates many different cultures, and is now everyday talk in the West, where it is referred to as the "astral body" or "soul body."

The Mekeo say that the experienced spirit worker is able to bring about changes in the disembodied world of spirit beings by moving about in his own disembodied hidden self and being assisted by spirits. This is not without its danger, and sometimes the hidden self is forced out by means of rituals or spells in a violent separation between the physical and the hidden self. This is not a matter of belief with the Mekeo, but an experiential reality. The Mekeo man with whom Michele Stephen worked and derived her knowledge maintains "a lucid awareness of himself as a thinking, knowing embodied self—an embodied self trained to be aware of and to guide the actions of that other self."[51]

The shaman's ability to journey in the spirit world is aided by techniques that he has for entering nonordinary consciousness. This is brought about principally, but not everywhere, with the aid of entheogens, but altered states are also accessed via other means such as sound (drumming, for example) and movement (such as, but not restricted to, dance), as well as other methods. Aboriginal clever people are documented as having certain metaphysical powers, but less has been reported about their experiencing a change of consciousness via trance. Although there is no evidence that Aborigines use pharmacological aids, the ritual performances, especially those that are intended to "call up" Dreaming Ancestors, seem to hinge on knowledge of how to enter a special state in order to do so. Berndt and Berndt wrote that psychic experience plays an important part in the lives of all Aborigines, and in the case of clever people it is "more institutionalised," involving "much thought, which has its expression in contemplation, meditation, trances and visions."[52] Along with fasting and seclusion, trance is mentioned continually through Elkin's book *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*, as part of the process of the psychic experiences of medicine men.[53] A significant part of some rituals is performed at a burial place in order to bring the postulant into close association with the spirits of the dead.

Although some societies do not employ hallucinogens, sound in some form appears to be almost indispensable for inducing an ASC,

along with movement and/or dance, with some sessions lasting many hours, sometimes all night. Sound is often used to accompany shamanic ritual, most commonly some form of drum. Rhythmic drumming creates a kind of sound bridge that allows the shaman's soul to transcend the boundary separating the levels of the universe. Recall the Korean, Wangsimni (above), who became entranced by the sound of the drum to the point of becoming "helpless" to its rhythm. Drumming, dancing, singing, costume, rattles, and various paraphernalia form part of the shamanic trance technique. The drum summons spirit helpers and also helps the shaman to go on his journey. In various cultures the making of the drum itself follows a ritual procedure and is considered very special.

Of all musical instruments that are used universally, percussion instruments are the most prominent—drums, gongs, and bells—as well as chanting, incantation, or some vocal form of sound, in order to transform the performance space into a sacred space. Rattles and shakers of some description are also used in many places.

The type of sound and style of dance or movement are culturally specific, from rhythmic drumming, to the seemingly cacophonous (to the Western ear) sound used in Korean shamanic performance. But sounds are not restricted to musical instruments; some performances incorporate whistling, ventriloquism, cries, and imitation of animals, birds, or nature, and other acoustic effects that mimic "bird calls, rustling breezes, and voices of domestic animals."[54] Didjeridu players are experts in incorporating these types of sounds while using circular breathing to create a unique sound that seems to be unparalleled elsewhere.

Some sounds, such as a particular song, a chant, or some rhythmic formula, might invite a certain spirit to appear, or it may indicate that the spirit is already present. As well as invoking spirits and trance states through music, the reverse can occur. While music and dance are used to evoke the presence of spirits, and to assist the shaman into "taking flight" or journeying into the spirit world, music, songs, and performance might also be relayed to humans *by* the spirit world, sometimes in trance or in dreams. The Shipibo-Conibo Indian shaman of eastern Peru might perceive pulsating designs that float downward to his lips during a healing ritual. He then sings the design into songs, and during contact with his patient the songs again turn into designs that penetrate the patient's body, enabling healing to take place. The power of the design-songs is said to reside in their "fragrance," thus giving them a multisensorial flavor.[55]

Travel into the spirit realms takes place during the healing dances performed by the San people of the Kalahari Desert in South Africa

(also known as The Bushmen). The San do not use hallucinogens but induce an ASC by intense concentration, audio-driving, prolonged rhythmic movement, and hyperventilation. Dances last many hours, gathering in intensity until their culmination in the healing aspect of the ceremony, when the San healer lays his hands on certain members of their group in order to draw sickness out of them, expelling it through a "hole" in the back of the neck, and sending it back to the spirits of the dead.

During some trance experiences, the San shaman may travel in the sky, or below water, usually with the assistance of an "animal helper" and/or a particular "god" or other spirits. An example of the experience of journeying through water comes from this San shaman's account:

> We traveled until we came to a wide body of water . . . Kaoxa [his spirit helper] made the waters climb and I lay my body in the direction they were flowing. My feet were behind, and my head was in front . . . Then I entered the stream and began to move forward . . . My sides were pressed by pieces of metal. Metal things fastened to my sides. And in this way I traveled forward, my friend . . . And the spirits were singing.[56]

After reaching the spirit world, Kaoxa taught him how to dance and told him that his protector, the Giraffe, would give him potency. Then he found himself again underwater:

> I was gasping for breath, I called out, "Don't kill me! Why are you killing me?" My protector answered, "If you cry out like that, I'm going to make you drink. Today I'm going to make you drink water . . ." The two of us struggled until we were tired. We danced and argued and I fought the water for a long, long time . . .
>
> Then, my friend, my protector spoke to me, saying that I would be able to cure. He said that I would stand up and trance.[57]

At this point his protector then told him that he would enter the earth and travel far through the earth and emerge at another place. He continues:

> When we emerged [from the ground], we began to climb the thread[58]—it was the thread of the sky! . . . Now up there in the sky, the people up there, the spirits, the dead people up there, they sang for me so I can dance.[59]

Throughout North America, this kind of travel might begin with the sensation of entering a hole in a rock, passing through a tunnel, and emerging elsewhere through water.

The common denominator that is found within shamanism is the ability of the shaman to connect with the world of spirits in order to gain knowledge that is of benefit to his or her community, to bring back lost souls, and to heal members of the community. Underlying

all this, as well, is the notion of a power or force external to the shaman or healer that exists in all things, both sentient and nonsentient, and has been described as "ancestral power," "spiritual power," "force," "energy," or even "like electricity." Geographical locations where the power is concentrated are highly venerated in some, if not all, shamanic cultures. It often lies dormant and can be invoked and propitiated by the correct ritual carried out by the appropriate people. An Aboriginal man's response to Stanner's questions about sites that contained power was: "Old man, you listen! Something is there; we do not know what; something. Like engine, like power, plenty of power; it does hard work; it *pushes*."[60]

Similarly, Pitjantjatjara women in the Musgrave Ranges, central Australia, told ethnomusicologist Helen Payne that the concept of spiritual power as a force exists, and that they can "summon" or "pull" ancestral spiritual forces or "supernatural forces" through ritual enactment.[61] Once these forces are released, they can be used by living Ancestral descendants in order to change aspects of their lives—for example, to restore health or engender a sense of well-being, to avert unwanted attentions, to change weather conditions, or to redirect social behavior. Indeed, as a result of powers "pulled," any aspect of daily life can be altered.

The notion of an energy or power also exists in Native American medicine. Indeed, a medicine man is also called a man of power, referring to metaphysical power. A medicine man called Rolling Thunder once said: "It's a power which comes to you which you have to honor, respect and use; otherwise it can make you sick."[62] Rolling Thunder passed through seven sacred ceremonies that attribute recognition of him as a medicine person, spiritual healer, and spiritual advisor. Dreams, visions, and encounters with plants and animals are important in his gaining knowledge and assisting him in his work. For a full account of his healing abilities and specific healing stories, see Swan.[63]

Another power concept that exists in Aboriginal Australia is the power of the *miwi* (considered to be both the mind and the soul, and the source of personal power). It is in both men and women, and mastery over certain techniques enables it to be used most effectively. It is developed and strengthened through concentration and willpower, and has a strong visual element. The *miwi* could be used to influence someone at a distance. One man told Elkin how he did this, by moving his head from side to side, staring at someone, then silently saying, "Come quickly . . . walk here where I am sitting." He said he was able to draw someone to him, without words, just by the power of his *miwi*.[64]

Exerting one's *miwi*, however, makes one tired as it requires much effort and concentration. Some experiences while employing the power of *miwi* might be terrifying: one might see monstrous creatures with human heads and animal bodies, or disastrous physical calamities such as floods, fire, whirling waters, and trees shaking. The things seen are also described as being constructed upon a spider's web and suspended within the web. If fear is not controlled, the "threads" of the web are broken, and to reconstruct them a person would need to work through a series of trances that gradually rebuild the web and the image suspended from it. Having undergone completion of such experiences, one was said to be whole, or "perfect as a spider's web."[65] Over a period of time, the experienced visionary has the ability to see and communicate with the dead. The possession of a strong *miwi* was often a prerequisite to performing curative tasks and for having access to spirits of the dead;[66] uttering strong words when using the power of the *miwi* was a form of powerful magic. With strong *miwi* one can enhance dream revelations, send messages telepathically, reveal a sorcerer, gain personal strength, and even shape-shift and see spirits.

## CONTEMPORARY SHAMANISM IN THE WEST

Edward B. Tylor called shamanism "animism," and this sentiment has been echoed by modern scholars Graham Harvey and Nevill Drury. Drury suggests that shamanism is really applied animism, or animism in practice.[67] Graham Harvey also sees shamans as animists and emphasizes the relational aspects of what shamans do, of the human attempts to try to live alongside other persons. Animists engage shamans to deal with problems that arise with living alongside others, which may entail day-to-day problems as well as the spirit world. Harvey draws on Irving Hallowell's (1960) use of the term "other-than-human persons" to make a case for the fact that animists, and shamans who are in fact animists, are concerned about ways of speaking, listening, acting, and being that enhance many different ways of living that are respectful and life affirming to all persons: human, non-human, and everything that exists. The term "animism," being "relational," is conducive to debates about consciousness, environment, and ethics, and could sweep across different disciplines, suggests Harvey.[68]

Contemporary Scottish shaman Gordon MacLellan, who lives and works as a shaman in the UK, reiterates the importance of relationships.

He acknowledges that the term "shaman" is a slippery and elusive one; indeed, he says it is easier "to catch mist in a jam jar than find an easy definition" of shamanism.[69] He describes shamanism as "a way of life that explores a way of living in harmony with the world around us," and prefers to call himself a "patterner," a "pathfinder," or a "walker between the worlds," working on the relationships people have with their world, helping them to find their own relationship with nature and to understand and appreciate that connection.[70] Everything is alive, he says—people, plants, land, stones, spirit—in a living, spirit-filled world, reminiscent of Aboriginal David Mowaljarlai's pronouncement, "Everything standing up [is] alive."[71] Everything in the universe is interconnected and patterned.

One opens up the senses to allow the familiar to be seen in different ways. The Otherworld, writes MacLellan, is entered initially through the power of the imagination; once versed in the imagination, it can be experienced as "a blend of the dreams and experiences of other beings and of the land itself,"[72] where one can meet "talking foxes and watch the shapes of stone people unfold from the rocks on a hillside." Dreams, nightmares, or magic can access the Otherworld. People in the Otherworld "respond using the images we carry in our heads to give themselves forms that we can relate to." "Spirits," he says, "touch us with premonition, a fleeting unease, an atmosphere or a passing dream":

> The spirit-world is here beside us, always; and unseen, often unguessed, it touches and changes the world of physical forms that we live in. Our actions, in turn, change the spirit world, and we can work to heighten our awareness of it so that we are and are not consciously aware of it at will and we learn to operate in all the worlds at once, or in specific parts of them.
>
> . . . There is more than one spirit world . . . we may choose to have our eyes open to those worlds but our choice does not prevent the spirit world being close beside us and being able to influence what happens in our physical world. The shaman moves between the worlds and can act in all of them.[73]

He moves from one realm to another through trance, facilitated by music, song, pain, hallucinogens, and stillness, but particularly through the medium of free-flowing, wild whirling dancing, when he becomes one with the animal spirits:

> When I dance, my innermost self becomes still and the movement of the dance sets me free. I become all the spirits that I work with. I see with all their eyes, we enjoy the physical form of the dance. I feel a world that thinks and its presence humbles me and sets me free. This is bliss. My eyes open in a world where all that exists, lives. This is the inspiration.

> The pattern moves like a spider's web in many dimensions. Every step I take, every sweep of hand or arm trails energy like echoes of movement. The dance carries me across the web in a helter-skelter ride of awareness. The morning is crystal and the sunrise paints my body with green and red and gold. The Otherworld is this world—there are no barriers.[74]

He sees the shaman as a "communicator"—communicating between people, and between the human world and the spirit world, mainly for the benefit of those living.

Communication between human and spirit, for whatever reason and outcome, is an overall defining feature of shamanism, whether the shaman leaves his body to make this communication or has the gods descend into his physical form in order to do so. While most shamans journey to the spirit realm to make contact, in Korean shamanic practices the gods and spirits descend and speak through them. While some researchers say that possession is not an element in shamanism, others, such as Mihaly Hoppal, say that spirit possession and shamanism regularly coexist.[75] In A. L. Siikala's opinion, the shaman's role is to create a direct and reciprocal state of communication with the spirit world,[76] communicating information between the realms for all sorts of purposes.

Another contemporary practitioner who employs shamanic practices is Greywolf (Philip Shallcrass), the joint head of the British Druid Order. He is highly aware of the issue of cultural appropriation and the facileness of what has been labeled "New Age wannabes"[77] and carefully and cleverly deals with any accusations of the misuse of the term "shaman" by explaining that he does not call himself a shaman; what he does is Druidic because Druidry is the native spirituality of the land in which he lives (Britain). "If we were Siberian," he says, in an interview with Robert Wallis, "we'd describe what we do as shamanism."[78] The similarities between his practices and shamanic practices are many: he responds to local spirits and the natural world; he journeys to the spirit world to find healing for people, and to gain guidance and knowledge. As well, he spent years driving himself to the edge of psycho-spiritual endurance, suffering a breakdown at age 18, which is typical of the shamanic preinitiatory period, but he was able to move beyond this episode, after which he experienced "initiatory visions" that paralleled the traditional shamanic initiation stories. All this occurred within a culture that lacked any meaningful guidance to such experiences.

Greywolf works with wolf spirit energy.[79] Having associated himself with the wolf spirit, he discovered that he could slide his consciousness

into the body of the wolf and that this ability facilitated his journeying in the spirit world. He recounts to Wallis that it is not an easy path but is one replete with fear and pain, especially in the beginning. The negatives of following such a path can be egomania, madness, or death, but the positives are expanded awareness that can be ecstatic, and the ability to help others.

Unlike the scientific perspective, which focuses almost solely on the collection and analysis of hard data as facts, the shamanic perspective differs by paying attention to all aspects of the person—the body, sexuality, emotions, intellect, imagination, and spirit—and the experiences of people in both ordinary reality and nonordinary reality are given equal credence. Experiences that are attained through visions, dreams, and ritual performance and lead to a *shift in awareness* are considered extremely important. If the experience is put aside as just another event in a person's life, it loses that essential element that makes it a shamanic experience.

Michael Harner proposes that almost everyone is potentially a shaman, and that shamanic abilities can be awakened by experientially exploring one's spiritual relationship to the universe, to other forms of life on the planet, and to each other.[80] Similarly Paracelsus, in the sixteenth century, wrote: "Everyone may educate and regulate his imagination so as to come thereby into contact with spirits, and be taught by them."[81] In order to be successful at this, one needs to move from rationality and analysis into the realms of emotion, intuition, and inspiration (which of course does not mean that one abandons both rationality and analysis in other contexts).

With regard to his own engagement with shamanism, MacLellan writes that, in the end:

> The inward path is full of marvels, warnings and unexpected pleasures, and it is vital that you can walk it confidently, into the very heart of who you are, for there, at the still centre of yourself, lies the doorway to Vision, where the Universe speaks to your heart and spirit.[82]

Having an open or even neutral attitude to the possibilities of spirit and all that the term implies enables one to engage in discussions at a deeper level than if one were closed, or not asking the appropriate questions to elicit informant responses. If one is completely closed to any such possibility, it is unlikely that the discussions will take place in the first place. When engaged in fieldwork with the Dene people in Canada, Guédon soon realized that the reported secrecy surrounding shamanism was not so much that the content was secret, but that this is a useful response to the incomprehension by others about such matters.[83]

With the emphasis on feelings, emotions, imagination, spirit, and "heart" within shamanic practices, rather than "objective analysis," or partial participation that does not involve shedding one's disbelief and skepticism, it is not surprising that anthropologists who have engaged with shamanic cultures in the past have not been able to understand the full extent of what is going on. Fortunately, recent forays into shamanic cultures and the modern impetus to engage in shaman-like activities, and other forms of metaphysical practices are being taken on as legitimate areas for study. This approach differs from our early anthropological ancestors who regarded shamans as either clever tricksters or madmen. Full engagement in shamanic and metaphysical research, both in other cultures and in the West, not only avoids "othering" people who practice these things, but will help us to make leaps and bounds into other kinds of knowledge that have been gained only by people who kept insisting that these things are real. More interesting times are ahead.

# Part III

# *Gnosis* and Medieval Magic

# Chapter 5

# *Gnosis*, Kabbalah, and Visionary Ascent

*Gnosis* is the ancient Greek word for knowledge. Within the context of the Western esoteric tradition, *gnosis* is associated not with secular intellectual knowledge but with experiential spiritual knowledge—sacred knowledge founded on visionary and meditative experiences of the "higher" cosmic realms. The hallmark of Gnostic thinking is that Spirit is the supreme transcendent reality while the physical world is gross and debased. In cosmological terms the material plane is furthest removed from the sacred source of Being—the lowest emanation within a stratified cosmos that also includes all the intermediary planetary and angelic realms between the physical world and the supreme transcendent Godhead. The various Gnostic sects formulated their cosmologies in widely varying ways and gave different terms to the spiritual "rulers" of the intermediary heavens, but at heart the key principles and concerns remained the same: from a Gnostic perspective, the spiritual soul was trapped within a material prison. Accordingly, in order to attain higher spiritual knowledge the human soul—the divine spark linking each individual being to its original sacred source—was required to seek spiritual release through a process of visionary ascent. The soul would find its way back through the various intermediary heavens, overcoming any obstacles in the way, before finally achieving union with the One.

## THE RISE OF GNOSTICISM

Gnosticism as a historical movement parallels the rise of early Christianity. Although some religious scholars have portrayed

Gnosticism as a type of debased Christianity, with its focus on knowledge instead of faith as the key to salvation, it is now clear that some Gnostic ideas actually preceded Christianity and reflected the earlier influence of Iranian dualism and the Egyptian and Hellenistic mystery traditions. By the second century of the Christian era, Gnostic thought was well established in major centers of learning like Rome and Alexandria and had also spread into Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. There were numerous Gnostic sects, like the Cainites, Sethians, Ophites, and Ebionites—each with their own cosmologies and specific points of emphasis—but all were united in their visionary quest for *gnosis*, or spiritual knowledge. Many Gnostic sects aligned themselves broadly with Christian perspectives but reserved the right to modify the teachings as they saw fit. Marcion of Sinope, born near the Black Sea at the end of the first century, considered himself to be a Christian but regarded Jesus as the son of the "Good God" of the Spirit and not the son of the Old Testament creator God (or demiurge). Marcion rejected the Old Testament completely, as well as most of the New Testament, but nevertheless considered Jesus Christ to be a saviour figure. The Cainites rejected Jesus in favor of Judas in their belief that Jesus distorted the truth—according to the Cainites Judas had come to redress these shortcomings. Meanwhile, the Ebionites were essentially a community of Greek-speaking Jewish Christians who rejected the apostle Paul but followed the gospel according to Matthew. Major Gnostic thinkers on the periphery of Christianity like Basilides and Valentinus, meanwhile, proposed emanationist cosmologies comparable to the visionary perspectives later adopted within the Western esoteric tradition.

The unearthing of a major Gnostic library near the town of Nag Hammadi in upper Egypt in 1945 provided a rich source of material on the Gnostic philosophies. Until this time, much of the existing Gnostic scholarship had been based on other surviving Gnostic commentaries written by Church fathers like Irenaeus, Clement, and Hippolytus, who were hostile to Gnostic tenets. What was so significant about the Nag Hammadi codices—an Ophite-Sethian collection of texts written in Coptic—was that they revealed the syncretistic nature of Gnosticism, which seemed to incorporate elements from Christianity, Judaism, Neoplatonism, and the Greek mystery religions as well as material from Egypt and Persia. James M. Robinson, editor of the 1977 English translation of the Nag Hammadi Library, explains the Gnostic philosophy in these terms:

> In principle, though not in practice, the world is good. The evil that pervades history is a blight, ultimately alien to the world as such.

> But increasingly for some the outlook on life darkened; the very origin of the world was attributed to a terrible fault, and evil was given status as the ultimate ruler of the world, not just a usurpation of authority. Hence the only hope seemed to reside in escape. . . . And for some a mystical inwardness undistracted by external factors came to be the only way to attain the repose, the overview, the merger into the All which is the destiny of one's spark of the divine. [1]

In the Gnostic conception there is a clear divide between the spiritual world, which is good, and the physical world, which is evil. The Gnostic texts portray humanity as being increasingly separated from the realm of divinity and spirit, and this in turn provides the rationale for the quest for spiritual transcendence—it was considered vital to liberate the "divine sparks" entombed within the physical world.

## GNOSTIC COSMOLOGIES

Gnostic cosmologies varied greatly but the emanationist conception—in a metaphysical sense, the key ingredient—emerged later in Merkabah mysticism and in the medieval Kabbalah. Basilides, an influential Gnostic philosopher who lived and taught in Alexandria ca. 125–40 CE and wrote 24 commentaries on the gospels, conceived of a universe with 365 heavens. As with most Gnostic cosmologies, Basilides's universe was characterized by a hierarchy of "divine emanations." The supreme reality was the "ungenerated" God, or All Father, who could be conceived as a seed or egg while nevertheless symbolizing nothingness. This "nonexistent" or nonmaterial God in turn emanated Mind (*nous*), Word (*logos*), Understanding (*phronesis*), Wisdom (*sophia*), and Power (*dynamis*). From Wisdom and Power in turn emerged archons and angels who formed the first heaven. Each heaven gave rise to another, until there were 365 in all. The year was defined as consisting of 365 days because this mirrored the number of heavens. The angels of the final heaven created the world as we know it. The last of these creator beings was a demiurge, the God of the Jews, and he decreed that his people would be the chosen race on Earth. However, according to Basilides, this archon was ignorant of his comparatively lowly position in the heavenly hierarchy, and, as a consequence, chaos reigned in the world. To overcome this parlous state of affairs the All Father was obliged to send his son, Jesus, to work miracles on earth. Perhaps predictably, Basilides and his cosmological system were condemned as heretical by the Christian Bishop Irenaeus.

Like Basilides, the important Gnostic philosopher Valentinus (100–75 CE) regarded creation as a process that unfolded from a state of transcendent formlessness. Born in the Egyptian Delta at Phrebonis, Valentinus claimed to have access to St. Paul's esoteric teachings through Theudas, one of Paul's followers. According to Valentinus, the *pleroma*, or Godhead, emanated 30 spiritual beings called aeons, with four major groupings: Abyss and Silence, Mind and Truth, Word and Life, Man and Church. The 30th aeon, Sophia (Wisdom), gave rise to matter and produced as her offspring Ialdaboath—a deity Valentinus claimed had been mistaken by the Jews for the creator Yahweh. The *Valentinian System of Ptolemaeus*, written by Valentinus's leading disciple,[2] begins with these words: "There is a perfect preexistent Aeon, dwelling in the invisible and unnameable elevations; this is Pre-Beginning and Forefather and Depth. He is uncontainable and invisible, eternal and ungenerated, in quiet and deep solitude for infinite aeons."[3] As with the system of Basilides, this "ungenerated" realm of sacred formlessness then began to emanate subsequent levels of *being*:

> With him is Thought, which is also called Grace and Silence. Once upon a time, Depth thought of emitting from himself a Beginning of all, like a seed, and he deposited this projected emission, as in a womb, in that Silence who is with him. Silence received this seed and became pregnant and bore Mind, which resembled and was equal to him who emitted him. Mind alone comprehends the magnitude of his Father; he is called Only-Begotten and Father and Beginning of All. Along with him, Truth was emitted; this makes the first Four, the root of all: Depth and Silence, then Mind and Truth.[4]

Here Mind is masculine (Greek: *nous*), but Thought is feminine (*ennoia*) and is the creator mother who gives rise both to the primal man and to God, the creator of Heaven and Earth. The creator mother is identified also with Sophia. According to Valentinus, the role of Jesus was to restore Sophia to her status as part of the pleroma.

## THE HERMETICA

In some instances Gnostic perspectives overlapped with the various forms of Hermetic thought that had their roots in Hellenism.[5] The so-called *Hermetica* was essentially a body of Greek mystical and philosophical writings dating from the latter half of the second century CE through to the end of the third century that drew primarily on Platonism and Stoicism.[6] In the Hermetic model of the universe,

all things were believed to have come from God, and the world was therefore part of a sacred Unity. Again, the core structure was emanationist—the universe itself being divided into three worlds. The lowest sphere was the world of Nature, which in turn received divine influences from the more sanctified realms above. At the next level were the stars, spirits, and "guardians." Higher still was the supercelestial world of *nous*, the world of angelic spirits who were thought to have a superior knowledge of reality because they were closer to the Godhead, the sacred source of Creation. According to the Hermetic perspective, the transcendent act of achieving a state of Oneness with God entailed liberating oneself from the constrictions of temporal life and entering the realm of pure and divine Thought.[7]

In the Hermetic texts the central figure, Hermes Trismegistus (Thrice Greatest Hermes), is presented as a wise spiritual teacher—a Gnostic master who in a sense is a composite of Hermes and Thoth. The *Corpus Hermeticum* takes the form of a series of philosophical exchanges between Hermes Trismegistus and his followers. A dominant theme of the Hermetic texts is that Hermes Trismegistus embodies the wisdom teachings because he understands the essential Oneness of the universe. From the perspective of those who hoped to learn from Hermes Trismegistus—figures like Asclepius with whom he entered into dialogue—this was a wisdom that had to be earned, and discrimination was required to distinguish the deceptive nature of physical appearances from the true world of sacred reality. There is a clear suggestion here, too, of a secret tradition:

> Hermes saw the totality of things. Having seen, he understood, he had the power to reveal and show. What he knew, he wrote down. What he wrote, he mostly hid away, keeping silence rather than speaking out, so that every generation on coming into the world had to seek out these things.[8]

Hermetic and Gnostic thought were not identical, however, and in some instances Hermetic thinkers diverged from their Gnostic counterparts on specific points of emphasis. For example, Hermetic scholar Dan Merkur has emphasized in a recent article that Gnosticism and Hermeticism present different concepts of God. Merkur writes: "Like the God of Stoicism, the Hermetic God was omnipresent and omniscient through the material cosmos. In Gnosticism, by contrast, God was transcendent, and the physical universe was an evil place created by an evil Demiurge. Hermetic ethics celebrated the divine within the world; Gnostic ethics were abstemious, ascetic efforts to escape from the world."[9] The Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus (204–70 CE) is a

case in point. A pagan follower of Plato, Plotinus was a Hellenized Egyptian who spent most of his life in Rome, and his six books—known collectively as the *Enneads*—influenced early Christian theologians. Plotinus rejected the Gnostic idea that human beings are born into a hostile world created by an evil Demiurge-Creator. He was also personally opposed to the invocation of the gods through sacred incantations, although he accepted that the stars had a symbolic, esoteric meaning and were divine. Plotinus was essentially optimistic, whereas the Gnostics felt a sense of deep alienation from the world around them. Nevertheless, Plotinus's mystical cosmology was essentially emanationist in nature and to this extent is closer to the Gnostic conception. Like the Gnostics, Plotinus considered the supreme spiritual reality to be a state of undifferentiated unity—the world of the One. According to Plotinus, when the human soul returns finally to its spiritual home it is absorbed within the One—for this is the source of all being. The world is an emanation from the One, but this act of creation does not give rise to something "other"—for there is no dualism in this process. The first emanation is Intelligence (*nous*), and the second is Soul. Soul in turn emanates matter, which is darkest because it is furthest from the spiritual sun. An advocate of spiritual visualization, Plotinus instructed his followers to "shut their eyes and wake to another way of seeing." The soul acknowledges the presence of light and increasingly becomes one with it, removing the duality of good and evil until awareness of the One alone remains.

Plotinus believed that the mystical ascent to the Godhead was accompanied by different stages of perfection, and as with the Gnostics, this is essentially an approach that seeks transcendence in the Spirit, "a liberation from all earthly bonds, a life that takes no pleasure in earthly things, a flight of the alone to the Alone."[10] Dan Merkur argues that "ascension" is also a key element in the Hermetic tradition.

> In the Hermetic literature . . . different varieties of mystical experience were each associated with a specific celestial region on the trajectory of ascension . . . A single region of the sky might be termed the seven planetary heavens or the twelve zodiacal mansions . . . The ascension was literal, but mental rather than bodily. The ascent beyond the seven planetary zones of the sensible world was a motion of the mind [and involved] an experiential sense of the mind's detachment from the body.[11]

In *Corpus Hermeticum XIII*, Hermes explains to his son Tat that in the course of Seeing, "I went out of myself into an immortal body, and now I am not what I was before. I have been born in mind."[12]

Elsewhere in the *Corpus Hermeticum* the sense of mystical ascent achieved during an out-of-the-body state is specifically associated with the spiritual will:

> Command your soul to travel to India, and it will be there faster than your command. Command it to cross over to the ocean, and again it will quickly be there, not as having passed from place to place but simply as being there. Command it even to fly up to heaven, and it will not lack wings. Nothing will hinder it, not the fire of the sun, nor the aether, nor the swirl nor the bodies of the other stars . . . You must think of god in this way, as having everything—the cosmos, himself [the] universe—like thoughts within himself. Thus, unless you make yourself equal to god, you cannot understand god.[13]

For the Hermetic initiate the visionary or "imaginal" realm was located in the Eighth celestial region, in a "dimension" beyond the seven planetary heavens; however, in due course the initiate had to ascend still further, rising eventually to the Ninth cosmic region and achieving union with the pure Mind of the Creator. "The Hermetic God," writes Merkur, "was the Mind that contains the cosmos as its thoughts,"[14] and the Hermetic initiate had to proceed "from vision to *union*,"[15] thereby experiencing the sacred realization that "both the universe and self were located in the mind of God."[16]

## THE MERKABAH TRADITION

Recognizing the significance of the emanationist approach in early Western mysticism, Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) maintained that the medieval Kabbalah also belonged to a cosmological tradition that had its origins in Gnosticism.[17] Indeed, Scholem, a leading authority on the origins and symbolism of the Kabbalah, often referred to the Kabbalah as a form of Jewish Gnosticism.[18] As he notes in his important study *Origins of the Kabbalah*, the bridging link between the earlier Gnostic emanationist cosmology and the medieval Kabbalah was the Merkabah tradition of "throne mysticism," which dates from the first and second centuries.[19] Key texts within this tradition, which is based on the symbolism of the divine chariot of Ezekiel, describe the celestial realms that could be explored by the Jewish ecstatic, and in particular the seven temples or palaces known as *Hekhaloth* that represented stages in the celestial ascent to the Throne of God. On this sacred quest the visionary mystic would be granted revelations concerning the secrets of Creation, the hierarchy of angels, and magical practices of

theurgy.[20] Ultimately, having reached the final palace the celestial voyager would stand before the throne of God and perceive the Creator in the "likeness as the appearance of a man"—the same anthropomorphic figure Ezekiel had witnessed on the throne of the Merkabah. Scholem states quite specifically that "the historian of religion is entitled to consider the mysticism of the Merkabah to be one of the branches of Gnosticism" and compares the ecstatic journey of the Merkabah mystic to the visionary ascent of the Gnostic soul "from the earth through the spheres of the hostile planet-angels and rulers of the cosmos to its divine home."[21] In both traditions we are dealing with visionary ascent to the sacred home of the human soul—a concept of transcendence that remains central in "high magic" and theurgy within the Western esoteric tradition.

The text known as *Pirkei Heikhalot* is one of the major Merkabah texts within a small body of mystical literature that for the most part was kept secret and has survived only in fragments. *Pirkei Heikhalot* can be regarded as a type of adjunct to Ezekiel 1, which in turn describes two types of heavenly hosts—the *Hayot* (plural: "creatures") and *Ofannim*, or Wheels—that are part of the Divine Presence. In Ezekiel, each mystical "creature" has a head with four faces—that of an eagle, a lion, an ox, and a man, representing the four kingdoms of the birds, beasts, domesticated animals, and humanity respectively. Each *Haya* stands erect and covers its body with wings. The *Ofannim* are gigantic wheels but have eyes and radiate intelligence—they are both mechanical and alive. Within the radiance and lightning, Ezekiel catches a glimpse of God upon His throne; the vision inspires a sense of awe and transcendence in the prophet who then prostrates himself upon the ground.

Conceived very much in the spirit of Ezekiel's vision, *Pirkei Heikhalot* belongs to the tradition of throne mysticism associated with God's "Chariot" and describes the visionary ascent of a mystical initiate as he ventures through the gates of the seven celestial palaces. The text lists the names of the angels associated with each of the different heavenly realms—these angelic names were inscribed on "seals" in order to facilitate safe passage for the initiate from one heavenly palace to the next. Chapter 16 of the *Pirkei Heikhalot*, which contains statements ascribed to a Rabbi Ishmael, makes it clear that the celestial journey is perceived as an exercise in obtaining *gnosis*, or secret knowledge, and that the quest itself has a noble purpose:

> Son of the Proud ones . . . go and bring before me all the courageous members of the group (*havura*) and all the mighty ones of the academy (*yeshiva*) so that I may recite in their presence the secrets and mysteries

> which have been suppressed, [the] wonders and the weaving of the tractate upon which the betterment of the world, the setting (of the world) on its path, and the beautification of heaven and earth depend, for all the ends of the earth and the universe and the ends of the upper heavens are bound, sewn and connected, dependent upon it [i.e., the secret knowledge]. And the path of the heavenly ladder whose one end is on earth and whose other end is in heaven at the right foot of the Throne of Glory [depend on it too].[22]

Nevertheless, according to the *Pirkei Heikhalot* the mystical ascent could be potentially dangerous, and the Merkabah mystic was obliged to call on a powerful angel, Surya, to provide protection during the visionary ascent. Each of the seven palaces had eight guards—four on each side of the gate. This meant that 56 names had to be mastered prior to embarking on the mystical journey, and since the mystic had to both ascend and later descend through the celestial realms, 112 sacred oaths of protection had to be sought from Surya by way of protection. It would appear from the Merkabah texts that the visionary journey was undertaken in some form of self-induced trance.[23] As Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan observes in his book *Meditation and Kabbalah*:

> The ascent through the Chambers [i.e., Palaces] seems to be some sort of spiritual projection. One creates for himself a spiritual "body" and with the hands of this "body" he holds the Seals that must be shown to the angels guarding each gate in order to gain admittance. Since the initiate is ascending mentally rather than physically, these Seals must also be mental images of the Names in question.[24]

The procedure for journeying from one palace to the next was quite complicated. For the journey through the first five palaces, the mystic had to present two seals at each gate—a seal from "YHVH, Lord of Israel" family to the guards on the right and a seal from the "Angel of the Presence" family to the guards on the left. If these seals proved acceptable, the angel on the left-hand side would allow the initiate to pass through in a state of "peace and radiance" toward the next gate. However, the guards at the sixth palace presented a much more formidable challenge:

> Now, the guards of the sixth palace make a practice of killing those who "go and do not go down to the Merkabah without permission." They hover over them, strike them, and burn them.[25]

The *Pirkei Heikhalot* commentary makes it clear that at the gate of the sixth palace only the spiritually worthy[26] are allowed safe passage:

> When you come and stand before the gate of the sixth palace, show the . . . seals of the guards of the sixth palace to Katspiel, the prince, whose

> sword is unsheathed in his hand. From it lightning shoots outward, and he raises it against anyone who is not worthy to gaze upon the King and His Throne. And there is no creature who can stop him. His drawn sword shouts: "Destruction and annihilation are on the threshold of the right."[27]

Chapter 17 of *Pirkei Heikhalot* provides a description of the guards surrounding the seventh palace and makes clear how confronting and awesome such an encounter would have been:

> At the gate of the seventh palace, they stand angry and war-like, strong, harsh, fearful, terrifying, taller than mountains and sharper than peaks. Their bows are strung before them. Their swords are sharpened and in their hands. Bolts of lightning flow and issue forth from the balls of their eyes, and balls of fire [issue] from their nostrils, and torches of fiery coals from their mouths. They are equipped with helmets and with coats of mail, and javelins and spears are hung upon their arms.[28]

Nevertheless, once again the spiritually virtuous are allowed to proceed, this time accompanied by Katspiel together with a prince from the sixth palace named Dumiel and also the archangel Gabriel—the latter acting as a scribe and recording the request of the initiate to stand before the Throne of Glory in the presence of God:

> They then conduct him before the Throne of Glory. They bring before him all types of music and song, and they make music and a parade before him until they raise him and seat him near the Cherubim, near the Wheels, and near the Holy Hayot ["creatures"]. He sees wonders and powers, majesty and greatness, holiness and purity, terror and meekness and righteousness at the same time.[29]

Chapter 24 provides us with a description of the awesome mystical encounter with the Throne of Glory itself:

> Anaphiel the prince opens the doors of the seventh palace and [the] man enters and stands on the threshold of the gate of the seventh palace and the Holy Hayot lift him up. Five hundred and twelve eyes, and each and every eye of the eyes of the Holy Hayot is hollow like the holes in a sieve woven of branches. These eyes appear like lightning, and they dart to and fro. In addition, there are the eyes of the Cherubim of Might and the Wheels of the Shekhina, which are similar to torches of light and the flames of burning coals.
>
> This man then trembles, shakes, moves to and fro, panics, is terrified, faints, and collapses backwards. Anaphiel, the prince, and sixty-three watchmen of the seven gates of the palace support him and they all help him and say: "Do not fear, son of the beloved seed. Enter and see the King in His magnificence. You will not be slaughtered and you will not be burnt."[30]

Hymns to honor God now resound through the palace, and the initiate regains his sense of assurance:

> They give him strength. Immediately, they blow a trumpet from "above the vault which is over the heads of the Hayot" [Ezekiel 1:25]. And the Holy Hayot cover their faces and the Cherubim and the Wheels turn their faces away and he stands erect, turns, and presents himself before the Throne of Glory.[31]

Although the mystic comes before the Throne of Glory, we are not provided with an account of the nature of God or his actual visual presence upon the Throne itself—according to the *Pirkei Heikhalot* the figure of God is veiled by the wings of Anaphiel. So this is not the sort of experience we might associate with the mystical approach of Plotinus where the initiate seeks to merge with the One in a state of transcendent union. As Judaic scholar David Blumenthal has noted:

> It is *not* a unification of the mystic with God. It is not even a separation of the soul from the body, or a return of the separated soul to its Source. It *is* an ecstasy, not in the proper sense of the word ("standing outside oneself") but in the general, sublime sense of the word . . . this type of mysticism is a "visionary mysticism"—"visionary" because the mystic sees and hears something of the supernal world, and "mystical" because he must prepare for it and work towards it.[32]

Nevertheless, in the Kabbalistic teachings that emerged after the Merkabah period, there is a distinctly different emphasis. In the medieval *Zohar*, for example, we find an approach that is fundamentally holistic—all emanations, including human souls, come from the transcendent Godhead and must ultimately return to this sacred source—and there is not the sense of implicit separateness between God and the human individual that we find in the Merkabah accounts. As Alan Unterman has written in his recent survey of the Kabbalistic tradition:

> Although the transcendence of God is emphasized in the idea that the Infinite Godhead (*Ein Sof*) is completely unknowable, the world also partakes of the divine because it is structured out of divine emanation . . . God is hidden everywhere in the mundane world and the whole universe partakes of the divine.[33]

It is this later, more all-encompassing concept of the Godhead that informs the Western esoteric tradition. As the contemporary Western occultist Israel Regardie has observed in *The Tree of Life: A Study in*

*Magic*, the aim of the theurgic magician is to merge one's consciousness with the transcendent Godhead:

> All the characteristics of the higher worlds are successively assumed by the Magician, and transcended, until in the end of his magical journey, he is merged into the being of the Lord of every Life. The final goal of his spiritual pilgrimage is that peaceful ecstasy in which the finite personality, thought and self-consciousness, even the high consciousness of the highest Gods, drops utterly away, and the Magician melts to a oneness with the Ain Soph wherein no shade of difference enters.[34]

## THE MEDIEVAL KABBALAH

In its most fundamental sense, the Kabbalah can be defined as a mystical commentary on the Pentateuch: the written Torah, or "five books of Moses."[35] The Hebrew word *Kabbalah* (which translates as "that which has been received"[36]) refers to an oral or secret tradition, and as Scholem has observed, the *Zohar*, the central text of the medieval Kabbalah, compiled in written form by the Spaniard Moses de Leon circa 1280 CE, has spiritual links with the earlier schools of Gnosticism[37] and Neoplatonism.[38] In all three there are references to the concept of sacred emanations from the Godhead, to the idea of the preexistence of the soul and its descent into matter, and to the sacred names of God.

Although the Kabbalah did not exist in written form until the Middle Ages, it is thought that the *Sefer Yetzirah*, or *Book of Creation*, was composed in Palestine between the third and sixth centuries CE. The *Sefer Yetzirah* describes how God created the world by means of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the 10 *sefirot*—a term that appears for the first time in Hebrew literature. The 10 *sefirot* of the Tree of Life (also spelt *sephiroth*) are a central symbolic aspect of the Kabbalah.

Another early Kabbalistic text, *Sefer ha-Bahir*, emerged in Provence—where there was a Jewish community—between 1150 and 1200. Interest in the Kabbalah subsequently spread across the Pyrenees into Catalonia and then to Castile. In circa 1280, the Spanish Jewish mystic Moses de Leon (1238–1305) began circulating booklets among his fellow Kabbalists. These texts were written in Aramaic, and de Leon claimed that he had transcribed them from an ancient book of wisdom composed in the circle of Rabbi Shim'on bar Yohai, a famous disciple of Rabbi Akiva, who lived and taught in Israel in the second century. These booklets gradually formed the text known as *Ha-Zohar ha-Qadosh*, usually referred to as the *Zohar* (*The Book of Splendor*). Although Moses de Leon may have drawn on early material received through the secret oral tradition, it is now thought that he himself was probably the author of the *Zohar*.

According to the *Zohar*, God first taught the doctrines of the Kabbalah to a select group of angels. After the creation of the Garden of Eden, these angels shared the secret teachings with the first man, Adam. They were then passed to Noah, and subsequently to Abraham, who took them to Egypt. Moses was initiated into the Kabbalah in Egypt, the land of his birth, and King David and King Solomon were also initiated. No one, however, dared write them down until Rabbi Shim'on bar Yohai.[39]

In the Kabbalah all aspects of manifested form, including the sacred archetypes or manifestations of the Godhead, are said to have their origin in *Ain Soph Aur*—also referred to as *En-Sof*[40] or *Ein-Sof*[41]—"the limitless light," a realm of being entirely beyond form and conception that "has neither qualities nor attributes." In Kabbalistic cosmology the subsequent emanations that emerge from this profound Mystery, and that constitute the spheres upon the Tree of Life (*Otz Chiim*), reveal different aspects of the sacred universe but are nevertheless considered as part of a divine totality. *Ain Soph Aur*, writes Scholem, "manifests . . . to the Kabbalist under ten different aspects, which in turn comprise an endless variety of shades and gradations"[42] These emanations nevertheless reflect the essential unity of the Godhead, and because the human form is said to have been created "in the image of God," the spheres on the Tree of Life are also spheres within the body of Adam Kadmon, the archetypal human being.[43] In the Kabbalah the quest for mystical self-knowledge is therefore regarded essentially as a process of regaining undifferentiated One-ness with the Divine.

The Kabbalistic universe is sustained by the utterance of the Holy Names of God: the 10 emanations or *sephiroth* on the Tree of Life are none other than "the creative names which God called into the world, the names which He gave to Himself."[44] According to the *Zohar*:

> In the Beginning, when the will of the King began to take effect, he engraved signs into the divine aura. A dark flame sprang forth from the innermost recess of the mystery of the Infinite, *En-Sof* [*Ain Soph Aur*] like a fog which forms out of the formless, enclosed in the ring of this aura, neither white nor black, neither red nor green, and of no color whatever. But when this flame began to assume size and extension it produced radiant colors. For in the innermost centre of the flame a well sprang forth from which flames poured upon everything below, hidden in the mysterious secrets of *En-Sof*. The well broke through, and yet did not entirely break through, the ethereal aura which surrounded it. It was entirely unrecognizable until under the impact of its breakthrough a hidden supernal point shone forth. Beyond this point nothing may be known or understood, and therefore it is called *Reshith*, that is "Beginning," the first word of Creation.[45]

The "Primordial Point" was thought of by the majority of Kabbalists not as *Kether*, the Crown (normally considered the first emanation upon the Tree of Life) but as the Great Father, *Chokmah* or Wisdom, which is the second *sephirah*. In Kabbalistic cosmology the energy of the Great Father unites with that of *Binah*, the Great Mother (Understanding), and from her womb all archetypal forms come forth.[46] As Christian Ginsburg notes in his seminal book *The Kabbalah: Its Doctrines, Development and Literature*, "It is not the *En-Sof* who created the world, but this Trinity . . . the world was born from the union of the crowned King and Queen . . . who, emanated from the *En-Sof*, produced the Universe in their own image."[47] In a symbolic sense the seven subsequent emanations beneath the trinity of *Kether*, *Chokmah*, and *Binah* constitute the seven days of Creation.[48] The Tree of Life (Figure 5.1), with its 10 *sephiroth* or emanations of divine consciousness, therefore encompasses a symbolic process by which the Infinite becomes tangible.[49] The 10 spheres on the Tree of Life are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Kether | *The Crown* |
| Chokmah | *Wisdom* (The Father) |
| Binah | *Understanding* (The Mother) |
| Chesed | *Mercy* |
| Geburah | *Severity*, or *Strength* |
| Tiphareth | *Beauty*, or *Harmony* (The Son) |
| Netzach | *Victory* |
| Hod | *Splendor* |
| Yesod | *The Foundation* |
| Malkuth | *Kingdom*, or *Earth* (The Daughter) |

These emanations align themselves into three pillars, the outer two being the Pillar of Mercy headed by *Chokmah* (symbolizing light and purity) and the Pillar of Severity headed by *Binah* (symbolizing darkness and impurity). Beneath them lies the Garden of Eden, with its four rivers *Chesed*, *Geburah*, *Netzach*, and *Hod* converging in *Tiphareth*, which is located at a central point on the Middle Pillar. The Kabbalistic scholar A. E. Waite has suggested that the Middle Pillar can be regarded as the Perfect Pillar, for it reaches to the Crown, *Kether*.[50] The other two pillars provide a duality of opposites and represent the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil." The sixth emanation on the Tree of Life, *Tiphareth*, is associated symbolically with the divine Son and is regarded in the Western esoteric tradition as the sphere of spiritual rebirth. The final emanation on the Tree of Life, *Malkuth*, "The World," is represented symbolically by the Daughter, *Shekinah*, who in turn is a reflection of the Great Mother, *Binah*.[51] The most direct

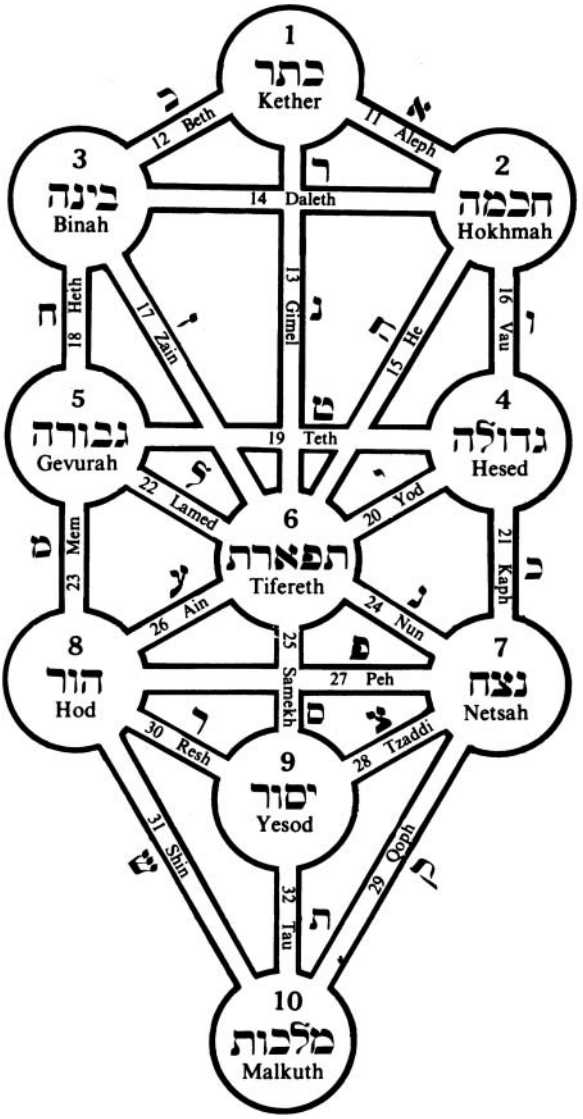



**Figure 5.1** Kabbalistic Tree of Life showing the ten sephiroth and connecting paths.

mystical ascent to the *En-Sof*—the ultimate reality in Kabbalistic cosmology—is via the Middle Pillar, which, as the symbolism of the Tree reveals, literally links Heaven and Earth.

In addition to recognizing 10 *sephiroth* upon the Tree of Life, the medieval Kabbalists also divided the Tree into "four worlds" of

creative manifestation. God was said to be present in each of these four worlds and each in turn was represented symbolically by a letter in the Tetragrammaton,[52] the sacred name JHVH (consisting of the four Hebrew letters *Yod*, *He*, *Vau*, *He*), usually translated as Jehovah, or Yahweh, meaning "Lord." The four worlds are as follows:

*Atziluth, the Archetypal World*: This level of existence is closest to the unmanifested realm of *Ain Soph Aur* and contains only one *sephirah*, Kether, which is described as "the hidden of the hidden. It is the emergence of God's Will, His creative urge. It is the infinite, the initiation of all that can and will be. It is infinity."[53]

*Briah, the World of Creation*: This world contains two *sephiroth*, Chokmah and Binah, representing the Great Father and the Great Mother and reflecting the highest expression of the sacred male and female principles. Their union gives rise to the World of Formation.[54]

*Yetzirah, the World of Formation*: This world contains the *sephiroth* Chesed, Geburah, Tiphareth, Netzach, Hod, and Yesod. As indicated by its name, Yesod literally provides the "foundation" for all that has preceded it in the creative process of sacred emanation from the highest realms of the Tree of Life.

*Assiah, the Physical World*: This world represents the final materialization of God's Will in the sphere of Malkuth on the Tree of Life and is represented by *Shekinah*, the Daughter, who is spoken of variously as "the Bride of the Divine Son in Tiphareth," "the Bride of Kether," and the "Daughter of Binah." *Shekinah* personifies the Divine Feminine on Earth.[55]

Each *sephirah* is also said to contain an entire Tree of Life. The "Malkuth" of the first *sephirah* emanates the "Kether" of the following *sephirah*, and so on, through the 10 emanations on the Tree. Each of these 10 spheres is therefore considered a mirror of the Divine. According to the Jewish mystical tradition, nothing exists beyond God, and as John Ferguson has observed in relation to the spiritual quest in the Kabbalah: "We must see God as the First Cause, and the universe as an emanation from his Will or Wisdom. The finite has no existence except in the light of the Infinite, which contracted so that the finite might be . . . Man is the highest point of the created world, and his soul contains animal and moral elements, but also an element of pure spirit, which in the righteous ascends to God."[56]

## VISIONARY ASCENT IN CONTEMPORARY KABBALAH

The notion that the human "soul" or "consciousness" can ascend to the celestial spheres is not only a central element in classical Gnosticism, Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, Merkabah mysticism, and

the medieval Kabbalah, but is also a key practice in modern theurgic magic (see the discussion on "rising in the planes" in Chapter 9, "Modern Trance and Meditative Magic," in the present volume). It also remains an important aspect of Kabbalistic meditation even today. In his book *Jewish Meditation* (1985), the well-known Orthodox rabbi Aryeh Kaplan writes that the concept of "ascent" can be utilized as part of one's visualization practice:

> Once proficiency in visualization is achieved, there are more advanced methods that one can learn. One such method, mentioned in the Kabbalistic sources, is to imagine the sky opening up and to depict oneself ascending into the spiritual realms. One rises through the seven firmaments, one by one, until one reaches the highest heaven. On this level, one depicts in one's mind a huge white curtain, infinite in size, filling the entire mind. Written on this white curtain one visualizes the Tetragrammaton [the sacred name of God: JHVH].
>
> The black of the letters and the white of the curtain become intensified, until the letters appear to be black fire on white fire. Gradually, the letters of the Tetragrammaton expand, until they appear to be huge mountains of black fire. When the four letters fill the mind completely, one is, as it were, swallowed up in God's name.[57]

Rabbi Steven A. Fisdel, meanwhile, reiterates that the Middle Pillar on the Tree of Life provides an important key to visionary ascent in Kabbalistic meditation:

> The central Middle Pillar is that of transcendence and balance. It is through the middle, through the neutral principle, that the conflicting forces of light and dark, of expansion and contraction are harmonized and held in relationship with each other. The central column is the axis, on which the forces of the Tree of Life revolve. This is, therefore, the most appropriate focus for meditation . . .
>
> For the meditator, this is one of the great secrets of spiritual awareness and spiritual growth. The road to God is one of transcendence. It is the unobstructed road of inner peace, achieved by harmony and balance, by connecting body, emotion, mind and soul together, through focus and ascent.[58]

# Chapter 6

# Medieval Magic and Sorcery

In the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, the resurgence of witchcraft, sorcery, and Hermetic "high magic" characterized an era of heresy and dissent in which repressed esoteric beliefs and practices once again found themselves at odds with religious orthodoxy. Fear of witchcraft and demonic magic was widespread, Manichaean Gnostic dualism resurfaced in the Cathar heresy, Kabbalistic concepts—formerly part of a secret oral tradition—were for the first time written down in mystical texts, and there was renewed interest in the *Hermetica* at the influential Medici court in Florence. Meanwhile, the medieval alchemists explored both the refinement of metals as well as the transformation of the soul. The late Middle Ages was an era when magical perspectives would begin to transform into the rudiments of basic science—the forerunner of scientific thought as we know it today—and many early scientists were regarded by their peers as magicians.

## HERESY AND DISSENTERS

After centuries of being under siege—from Magyars in the east, Saracens and Moors in Spain, and Vikings in the north—Christianity became the established religion in western Europe by the end of the eleventh century. Feudalism was the established social order, and Christianity reflected the same sense of religious hierarchy. In the medieval Ideal Universe, God transcended all, and beneath Him in turn were the hierarchy of angels, common humanity, and the animal, plant, and mineral kingdoms. The pope was regarded as God's representative on earth while reigning monarchs asserted comparable

divine authority in their respective political spheres. As St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–74), the Church's greatest theologian, made clear in his *Summa Theologica*, as long as every component of the Divine Plan retained its proper place in accordance with Right Reason, order would prevail.[1] On the other hand, anything interfering with Right Reason could lead to disaster, and as the leaders of the Christian establishment in the Middle Ages saw their Ideal Universe increasingly threatened by heretics and dissenters, their insistence on strict orthodoxy increased in like measure. The widespread popularity of various forms of magic and witchcraft during this period can really be considered from the perspective of heresy, for the Christian Church quickly came to regard heretics and witches as one and the same—Gnostics, witches, and other alleged practitioners of the magical arts were regarded collectively as dissenters who had departed from the path of Christian righteousness and salvation.

As early as 382 CE, a law imposed by Theodosius 1 had made heresy punishable by death. This became a powerful tool against lingering Gnostic sects and the dualist teachings of Mani (216–76 CE) that later reemerged in a new guise among the tenth-century Bogomils in the Balkans, and the Cathars in southern France in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[2] The first permanent tribunal to deal with heresy was established in Toulouse by Pope Gregory IX in 1230. Administered by Dominican friars, the Inquisition, or Holy Office, was intended to end the injustices that were alleged to have occurred as a result of the confused nature of earlier legislation about heresy. However, instead of removing such injustices, the Inquisition began to extend them. Soon its principal task would become one of identifying and removing any sign of heresy before it had a chance to take root and spread. In 1231 Pope Gregory IX directed that all convicted heretics would be burned to death. Historian Jeffrey Burton Russell argues that the judges of the bishops' courts, the secular courts, and the Inquisition believed themselves to be God's defenders. "These men," he writes, "were, by and large, neither venal nor extraordinarily depraved; rather, they were carried away, with man's infinite capacity for self-delusion, by ecclesiastical self-righteousness."[3]

During the Middle Ages malevolent magic was referred to as *maleficium*, which could mean any kind of crime or evil act. At the same time, Church officials assumed that all magic drew upon the help of demons, and as a consequence there could be no such thing as good magic. All forms of magic were considered innately evil. Officers of the Inquisition used the quotation from Exodus 22:18, which

is translated in the King James version as "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," as a justification for their persecutions. In due course the Inquisition would deal with many different sorts of witchcraft. These included charges of alleged child murder and cannibalism; shape-shifting—or the capacity to change shape magically; the ability to ride through the night sky to gatherings known as witches' sabbats; paying ritual homage to the Devil, invoking demons, and engaging in sex orgies; and acts involving the desecration of Christian sacraments. In some parts of Europe, charges would also be brought against worshippers of Diana and various other pagan fertility deities, a reference to the lingering folkloric and shamanic underbelly of some forms of witchcraft.[4]

An early trial for heresy—one that precedes the establishment of the Inquisition—was conducted by King Robert II at Orléans in 1022. At this particular trial a group of Reformist clergymen were charged with holding secret sex orgies at night, chanting the names of demons, and burning the children conceived during these gatherings. They were also charged with desecrating Christian sacraments in the presence of the Devil and receiving money from him. Though they were clearly not witches, the heretics admitted to having angelic visions and felt that they were transported from place to place by a supernatural agency—the earliest known reference to demonic or "angelic" transportation associated with heresy charges. Needless to say, the heretics of Orléans were consigned to the flames.[5]

Belief in Satan was fueled in the twelfth century by the Cathars. In effect, the Cathars were Gnostic Christians who believed that a Spirit of Evil had imprisoned the human soul "in a cage of flesh" and that the God of the Old Testament was therefore the Devil. They also believed that all the principal figures in the Old Testament, and also John the Baptist in the New Testament, were demons. As a pure spirit, Christ had come to the world to show his followers how to overcome the limitations of the physical world. In their view, the Catholic Church had been established by the Devil to deter believers from true spiritual salvation. As with the Manichaeans and other earlier Gnostic groups, Cathar dualism reflected an innate conflict between matter and spirit. The Cathars did not believe that a holy Christ could assume a flesh-bound form, and they rejected the notion that any physical objects could have a connection with spirituality. They also rejected all Catholic sacraments and ritual aids to worship, including baptismal water and the use of bread and wine in the Eucharist. The cross was of no account either, since it was made of wood.

The Cathars distinguished between a pure elite (the *perfecti* or *boni homines*) and ordinary believers (*credenti*). The *perfecti* were initiated by receiving the sacrament known as the *consolamentum* (the consolation) through laying on of hands. The Cathars referred to this process as "heretication." Once hereticated, the *perfecti* had to accept a number of disciplines including an austere manner of living, strict dietary rules, and permanent celibacy. This meant that only a few received the *consolamentum* while still involved in active life. The ordinary *credenti* received it only when death was near.[6]

Because of its anti-Catholic position, Catharism has been seen as greatly encouraging the development of demonology and witchcraft, especially between 1140 and 1230.[7] In one sense this is somewhat surprising, because the Cathars hated the Devil as much as conventional Christians. Nevertheless, it was in those areas like the Low Countries, Germany, France, and northern Italy, where Catharism was strongest, that witchcraft would become most widespread. Catharist beliefs were especially popular in Lombardy, the Rhineland, and southern France. The Cathar heresy was regarded by the Church as a threat as great as Islam, and in 1208 Pope Innocent III proclaimed that a Crusade should be waged against the Albigensians, as the Cathars of southern France were known (a reference to the city of Albi, which was a Cathar stronghold). By 1230 they had been conquered.[8] Catharism persisted in pockets after the Crusade but was greatly weakened by the Inquisition. Nevertheless, the same charges of heresy made by the Inquisition against the Cathars would later be made against the witches—namely, desecration of the Christian cross and sacraments, cannibalism, secret gatherings at night, and engaging in sexual orgies. While it is clear that the Inquisition was initially set up to deal with heresy, around 1326 Pope John XXII authorized the Inquisition to proceed also against sorcerers since, in his view, they had "made a pact with hell."[9] By excommunicating all sorcerers, the pope automatically defined them as heretics. In his influential Inquisitors' manual, written around 1320, Bernard Gui also proposed that the Inquisition investigate women "who ride out at night." A treatise written around the same time by an English Franciscan provides fascinating details of the magical world of shape-shifting and the visionary realm experienced by such women:

> But I ask, what is to be said of those wretched and superstitious persons who say that by night they see most fair queens and other queens and maidens tripping with the lady Diana and leading the dances with the goddess of the pagans who in our vulgar tongue are called *Elves*, and

> believe that the latter transform men and women into other shapes and conduct them to *Elvelond*, where now, as they say, dwell those mighty champions, Onewone and Wade, all of which are only phantoms displayed by an evil spirit? For, when the Devil has subjected the mind of anyone to such monstrous beliefs, he sometimes transforms himself now into the form of an angel, now of a man, now of a woman, now on foot, now as knights in tournaments and jousts, now, as has been said, in dances and other sports. As the result of all these things a wretch of this kind deludes his mind.[10]

## THE WITCHCRAFT TRIALS

The fifteenth century witnessed a vast expansion of alleged acts of witchcraft and witchcraft trials, and in 1486 the notorious text *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of Witchcraft*) by the Inquisitors Henricus Institoris (also known as Heinrich Kramer) and Jakob Sprenger was published in Germany. It would later be published also in France, Italy, and England. A highly influential work, the *Malleus Maleficarum* helped define witchcraft in a way that would persist for centuries to come. Here it was said that witchcraft was the most evil of all crimes and the most abominable of all heresies: it was characterized by the renunciation of the Christian faith, the sacrifice of unbaptised infants to Satan, the devotion of body and soul to evil, and sexual relationships with incubi. Witches became servants of the Devil by making a pact with him and by engaging in ritual copulation with him. Witches were also alleged to shape-shift into other forms and could be carried through the air from place to place with the help of demons.

During this period the Inquisition began to dominate witchcraft trials in a way not seen before. In a series of bulls, Pope Eugenius IV (1431–47) ordered the Inquisition to act against all magicians, accusing them of praying to demons, desecrating the Cross, and making pacts with the Devil. Pope Eugenius's successor Nicholas V (1447–55) made it clear that it was quite acceptable for the Inquisition to prosecute sorcerers, even when their connection with heresy was dubious, and in 1484 Pope Innocent VIII (1484–95) published a famous bull, *Summis desiderantes affectibus*, at the request of the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum*. This bull confirmed complete papal support for the actions of the Inquisition against witchcraft and opened the door for the bloodbaths of the following century.[11]

Appalling allegations relating to witches' concoctions and the act of kissing the Devil's posterior were to remain a hallmark of witchcraft accusations for years to come. In a notorious treatise against witchcraft,

Johannes Tinctoris charged witches of creating an ointment by combining the flesh of toads with the blood of murdered children, the bones of exhumed corpses, and menstrual blood, and then "mixing well." Many witches were charged with kissing the buttocks, anus, or genitals of the Devil—a ritual act known as the *osculum obscenum*. The Devil himself was said to appear in the form of a goat whose posterior was fetid, cold, and either revoltingly soft or repellently hard. As a token of his favor, it was said that the Devil also branded his devotees with a visible mark by touching them with his finger or toe. The resulting mark was pale and red and about the size of a pea. It could be found on the arm, shoulder, or under body hair—especially around the genitals. Withered fingers or other deformities were also sometimes considered evidence of the Devil's mark.[12]

The German Jesuit bishop Peter Binsfeld (ca.1540–1603) produced a list of seven major devils in his work *Treatise on Confessions by Evildoers and Witches* (1589) in which he correlated these devils with the "seven deadly sins."

| | |
|---|---|
| Lucifer | *Pride* |
| Mammon | *Avarice* |
| Asmodeus | *Lechery* |
| Satan | *Anger* |
| Beelzebub | *Gluttony* |
| Leviathan | *Envy* |
| Belphegor | *Sloth* |

Binsfeld's book was quoted throughout Germany for over a hundred years by both Catholics and Protestants and exerted tremendous influence in promoting the witchcraft delusion.[13]

## THE CLIMAX OF THE WITCHCRAFT CRAZE

The height of the European witchcraft craze occurred between 1560 and 1660, and there can be little doubt that increasing tensions between Catholics and Protestants, and the ensuing wars of the time, were a major cause of the social upheavals that helped fuel witchcraft beliefs. The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century sought a return to the apostolic age but brought little tolerance for witches in its wake. Even Luther argued that witches should be burned as heretics for having made a pact with the Devil. Around 1580 witches were blamed for bad climatic conditions and plagues of mice and locusts! When ordinary townsfolk became fearful and anxious, witches became the scapegoats.

With regard to witchcraft executions, different methods were adopted. In all countries except England (and later in the American colonies) where they were hanged, witches were executed by burning. In Italy and Spain they were burned alive. In Scotland, Germany, and France, it was customary first to strangle the witch, by garroting or hanging, and then to immediately light the pyre, always provided that the witch did not recant the confession she had made under torture. Historian Rossell Hope Robbins notes that if the witch had been uncooperative in court, the fire was made of green wood to prolong the dying. This method, following cutting and maiming the prisoner, was endorsed by the eminent French lawyer Jean Bodin, whose *Demonomanie* (1580) became a standard authority:

> Whatever punishment one can order against witches by roasting and cooking them over a slow fire is not really very much, and not as bad as the torment which Satan has made for them in this world, to say nothing of the eternal agonies which are prepared for them in hell, for the fire here cannot last more than an hour or so until the witches have died.[14]

In terms of witchcraft persecutions, the seventeenth century was as bloody as the sixteenth. The century of religious strife, which culminated in the Thirty Years War of 1618–48, ravaged Germany and affected most of Europe. The persecutions were especially fierce in Cologne between 1625 and 1636 and in Bamberg from 1623 to 1633, where Bishop Johann Georg II burned at least 600 witches. Witchcraft hysteria also extended to a number of convents, including those in Loudun and Aix-en-Provence.

The events involving the Aix-en-Provence nuns in 1611 focus on two women, Sister Madeleine de Demandolx de la Palud and Sister Louise Capeau, who were members of the small, exclusive Ursuline convent in Aix.[15] Madeleine, who had entered the convent at the age of 12, became very depressed with her environment and was sent back home to Marseilles. Here she was roused by a humorous and somewhat carefree family friend, Father Louis Gaufridi, with whom she subsequently fell in love. The relationship with an older man—Gaufridi was 34—was frowned upon by the head of the Ursuline convent in Marseilles, and Madeleine was taken into this convent as a novice. Here she confessed that she had been intimate with Gaufridi, and, undoubtedly to keep Madeleine's lover at a distance, the head of the convent, Mother Catherine, transferred the young novice back to Aix.

Madeleine soon began to develop dramatic shaking fits and severe cramps and had visions of devils. The hysteria soon spread to the five

other nuns in the convent, one of whom, Louise Capeau, tried to rival Madeleine with the intensity of her visions. The Grand Inquisitor, Sebastien Michaëlis, now became involved in the case and arranged for the two young women to be taken to the Royal Convent of St. Maximin to be treated by an exorcist. The demonic visions continued, with Louise claiming to be possessed by three devils and accusing Madeleine of being in league with Beelzebub, Balberith, Asmodeus, Ashtaroth, and several thousand other evil spirits. Later, Father Gaufridi was called in to attempt an exorcism. Madeleine mocked him with demonic condemnations and insults, and at first his part in the hysterical outbreak was unproven. However, when Madeleine continued with her visions, neighed like a horse, and told fantastic tales of sodomy and witch sabbats, Gaufridi was interrogated by the Inquisition in more depth. Finally, in April 1611, he was found guilty by the court of magic, sorcery, and fornication, and was sentenced to death. His execution was especially barbaric; he was humiliated, tortured, and finally publicly burned. His demise led to a sudden reverse in the fortunes of Madeleine who, the following day, seemed free of demonic possession. Louise Capeau, however, continued to have visions of witches and devils, and similar outbreaks of witchcraft hysteria were reported at St. Claire's convent in Aix and at St. Bridget's in Lille. In 1642, Madeleine was again accused of witchcraft. She was cleared of this charge, but a further attack against her 10 years later resulted in the discovery of witch's marks on her body. She was imprisoned and spent the rest of her life in imprisonment.

The events at Aix-en-Provence represent just one instance, among many, of cumulative witchcraft hysteria. When we evaluate the scale of persecutions for witchcraft in Europe, the depth of the tragedy becomes clear. Persecutions in Europe led to around 200,000 executions, at least half of them in Germany, and over the course of the persecutions at least twice as many women as men would be accused of witchcraft.[16]

Witchcraft in England and Scotland was somewhat different from its counterpart in Europe. In Europe charges of witchcraft were often intermingled with charges of heresy. English and Scottish witchcraft had more to do with "low magic" and sorcery—with curses said to be directed against young children and farm animals, and with spells associated with causing harm or disease. Witches were also frequently accused of nurturing witch familiars. Various tests for proving the reality of witchcraft were popular in England and Scotland. One of these was the technique of "swimming" a witch. In the first instance the witch was bound hand and foot and thrown into deep water. If she sank, it was proof that God's water had accepted her—she was

deemed innocent and hauled ashore, often drowning in the process. If she floated, the water had "rejected her" and she was deemed guilty of the charges against her. Another popular technique was "pricking." Here the witch was pricked all over with a sharp instrument in order to detect the so-called Devil's mark, which was regarded as being insensitive to pain. If such a mark was found, this was proof that the witch had made a pact with the Devil.[17]

For a while during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, there was only moderate concern with witchcraft. However, in 1563 a statute was issued by Elizabeth I that ordered the death penalty for witches and sorcerers. Under this law it was a felony to invoke evil spirits for any purpose, irrespective of whether any harm resulted. Charged under civil rather than ecclesiastical law, convicted individuals would be hanged rather than burned to death. In England around 1,000 witches were hanged during the period of the witch craze. The first major trial under the statute took place at Chelmsford in Essex in 1566.[18]

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the assizes in Chelmsford were the site of four major witchcraft trials. In the first trial three women were charged with witchcraft: Elizabeth Francis, Agnes Waterhouse, and Agnes's daughter Joan Waterhouse. All three lived in the village of Hatfield Peverell. It was alleged that their white-spotted cat, Sathan, was a witch's familiar and that it was capable of speech. It was also possessed by the Devil. Francis confessed to having been instructed in the art of witchcraft by her grandmother, Mother Eve, who taught her to renounce God and give her blood to the Devil. She also confessed to bewitching the baby of William Auger, which "became decrepit," and she confessed also to engaging acts of murder and abortion. Francis was sentenced to a year in prison. Agnes Waterhouse testified that she had bewitched a person named William Fyness who subsequently died, and also that she had willed her cat to destroy her neighbour's cattle and geese. Joan Waterhouse, meanwhile, was charged with bewitching a 12-year-old girl named Agnes Brown, who subsequently became "decrepit" in her right arm and leg. Joan was acquitted, but her mother was found guilty of "bewitching to death" and was hanged on July 29, 1566—the first woman to be put to death in England for witchcraft.

In the second and third trials at Chelmsford in 1579, four women were charged with witchcraft, one of whom was a repeat offender—Elizabeth Francis. The charges included two cases of bewitchment causing human death and a charge of bewitching a gelding and a cow, both of which subsequently perished. Three of the four witches, including Francis, were hanged. The fourth major trial at Chelmsford

assizes, in 1645, was instigated by the notorious "witch finder" and Puritan, Matthew Hopkins, who made his living by traveling through different parts of the countryside, encouraging witchcraft hysteria and then exacting payment from local communities for each successful witch conviction. Hopkins became one of the most feared men in the eastern counties, and, as Wallace Notestein has observed, "sent to the gallows more witches than all the other witch hunters hung in the 160 years during which this persecution flourished in England."[19] Hopkins believed that the most important evidence that could be presented against a witch was that she kept "familiars" and that she suckled them by way of a "witch mark" that could be found somewhere on her body. He had come to this view after reading King James I's book *Daemonologie*. It is not known how many people were charged by Hopkins at Chelmsford, but the jail calendar and pamphlets published after the trials listed 38 men and women, of whom Hopkins claimed 29 were condemned.[20] King James had become a learned proponent of the witch craze after becoming convinced about the reality of witchcraft during a trial that took place in 1590–92. The king accepted that when he was 24 he had been the target of a group of Scottish witches who had tried to raise a storm in order to wreck the ship in which he was journeying on his way to Norway. These claims first emerged during a trial in which the king was personally involved—the trial of the so-called North Berwick witches.

The case of the North Berwick witches is one of the best known witch trials in Scottish history.[21] The witches were accused by a maid named Gillis Duncan, who worked for a man named David Seaton in the town of Tranent. Duncan suddenly became possessed of miraculous healing powers, and she would sneak out of her master's house at night. Seaton became suspicious of her nocturnal escapades, felt that her powers had quite possibly been bestowed by the Devil, and subsequently had her tortured. When she failed to confess to being a witch, a search of her body was then made and a "Devil's mark" was found on her throat. Duncan then confessed to being in league with the Devil. The maid was imprisoned and encouraged to betray other members of her group. She named a well-known "wise woman" Agnes Sampson, respectable citizens John Fian, Euphemia Maclean, and Barbara Napier, as well as several other men and women. Sampson was brought before King James and a council of nobles but refused to confess to charges of witchcraft. She was then severely tortured and a Devil's mark was found on her genitals. Sampson subsequently confessed to the 53 charges against her, most of which involved diagnosing and treating diseases through

witchcraft. According to *News from Scotland, Declaring the Damnable Life of Dr Fian, a Notable Sorcerer* (1591), Sampson confessed to attending a sabbat with around 200 witches on All Hallow's Eve, where she and her fellow witches had kissed the Devil's buttocks after "making merrie and drinking." Sampson also described how she had once hung a black toad by its heels and caught the poison that dripped from its mouth in an oyster shell in order to make a charm of bewitchment. She also confessed personally to the king how she and a coven of witches had tried to drown him at sea by raising a storm as he was traveling to Norway to fetch his bride-to-be. A storm had indeed arisen and was responsible for sinking a boat traveling from Brunt Island to Leith, but the king's vessel was unharmed. Finally, Sampson described another witches' sabbat, which had taken place in the North Berwick church and which had been attended by over a hundred men and women. The witches paid homage to the Devil, and after turning widdershins, or counterclockwise, several times outside the church, Fian then blew open the church doors with his breath. Surrounded by the light of black candles, the Devil then mounted the pulpit, preached a sermon, and encouraged the members of his assembly to "not spare to do evil; to eat, drink and be merriye, for he should raise them all up gloriously at the last day." The coven members then went out to the cemetery where the Devil showed them how to dismember various corpses in order to create magical charms. In all, around 70 people were accused of witchcraft or treason during the North Berwick trials. Many were imprisoned, but Sampson, Fian, and Maclean were among those executed for practicing witchcraft and necromancy.

## MAGIC, COSMOLOGY, AND EARLY SCIENCE

If medieval witchcraft had much to do with heresy and dissent, it is also apparent that medieval magic had much to do with early forms of science. In the twelfth century there were men like John Duns Scotus (1266–1308) and William of Occam (1285–1349) who wished to investigate the world of natural phenomena, even if this seemed to conflict with St. Thomas Aquinas's concept of a single indivisible system dependent on God.[22] As historian Andrew McCall has observed, this led to a split in medieval consciousness because early scientific investigators then had to declare that

> there were in fact two sorts of knowledge: on the one hand the purely physical or, as we might say, the scientific, and on the other the theological or Divine. It was this distinction between the physical nature of

> a thing and its divine nature, as it filtered through to all levels of society and came to be applied to every aspect of life, that gave rise in the later Middle Ages to the prevailing mental attitude of double-think. . . . To medieval people, the theoretical or Divine nature of the world was just as real as the practical—if not, since the world below was but the imperfect reflection of the Divine World, even more so.[23]

In the late Middle Ages through to the early Renaissance, certain "magical" individuals stand out as pioneering investigators—as philosophers and observers of natural phenomena who would seek to transcend the constrictions of religious orthodoxy while also acknowledging the awesome and fundamentally mysterious nature of the Universe. They would be branded in some quarters as heretics and magicians, but, as Henry M. Pachter has written in his study of Paracelsus, thinkers like this were really engaging in pursuits that would eventually give rise to science:

> Medieval magic . . . anticipated modern technology. Experiments with the hidden forces of Nature were designed to bring forth the science we know. Paracelsus and his disciples . . . had quite a lucid and rational idea of what distinguishes superstition from science: "Natural magic is the use of true, natural causes to produce rare and unusual effects by methods neither superstitious nor diabolical."[24]

Figures like Albertus Magnus, Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Dr. John Dee are representative of the revitalized approach to the magical arts that emerged in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance and would in due course help facilitate the transition from magic to science. Albertus Magnus (1206–80), Count of Bollstadt, was born in the town of Lauingen in Swabia. He was highly regarded by his contemporaries as a philosopher, alchemist, and theologian. Although he claimed inspiration from the Virgin Mary, became Bishop of Ratisbon, and was a mentor to St. Thomas Aquinas, many suspected him of communicating with the Devil. He was more a philosopher than a magician, however, for he was essentially an observer of natural phenomena. A keen field botanist, he visited mines and mineral outcrops and was fascinated by the "marvellous virtues" of plants and stones—this type of inquiry would come to be known as "natural magic." Albertus believed that engraved gems had magical powers, and he regarded astrology as the basis of all forms of divination. However, this was for the proto-scientific reason that, just as Aristotle had decreed, celestial bodies were seen to govern all things on earth. Albertus similarly considered alchemy as a "true art" and championed the idea that gold could be produced artificially. According to popular tradition, he owned a precious stone that could produce

certain marvels: "When William II, Count of Holland, dined with him in Cologne, Albertus had the table set in the garden of the convent in spite of the fact that it was midwinter. When the guests arrived they found a snow-decked table. But as soon as they sat down, the snow disappeared and the garden was filled with fragrant flowers. Birds flew about as if it were summer, and the trees were in bloom."[25]

In Albertus Magnus we have both a man of magic and a man of science. He was regarded by his peers as one who truly understood the fundamentally mysterious nature of the world around him. It was therefore entirely credible that he could be regarded as the author of *The Book of Secrets*—a work purporting to describe the "virtues of herbs, stones and certain beasts," and widely known in the Middle Ages. Although the text contains personal references to Albertus Magnus, and some of the material on precious stones is taken from one of his works, it is more likely that the text was composed and assembled by one of his followers. It nevertheless demonstrates the fascination of the time with the secret or "marvellous" properties associated with herbs, precious stones, animal and bird species, and specific parts of the human body. It was translated into several languages including Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch, and English (the English translation appearing around 1550), and its popularity continued until Elizabethan and early Stuart times. As Michael Best and Frank Brightman have noted:

> The Elizabethans did not compartmentalize their knowledge; as the philosophical concepts of the four basic qualities and elements formed the basis of all pursuits in natural science—in alchemy, in the herbals and bestiaries, in medical science, astrology, and psychology—so the various areas of human knowledge were felt to be parts of a harmonious whole rather than separate, possibly conflicting disciplines. Each study in its microcosm reflected the macrocosm of an ordered universe; even magic and witchcraft could be made to fit the over-all pattern.[26]

*The Book of Secrets* tells us: "There be seven herbs that have great virtues, after the mind of Alexander the Emperor, and they have these virtues of the influence of the planets . . . *Daffodillus* (Saturn); *Polygonum* (Sun); *Chynostates* (Moon); *Arnoglossus* or Plantain (Mars); *Pentaphyllon* or Cinquefoil (Mercury); *Jusquiamus*, or Henbane (Jupiter) and *Verbena* or Vervain (Venus)." It describes the "virtues" of Vervain as follows: "The root of this herb put upon the neck healeth the swine pox, impostumes behind the ears, and botches of the neck, and such as cannot keep their water. It healeth also cuts, and swelling of the tewel, or fundament . . . and the haemorrhoids. If the juice of it be drunken

with honey and water sodden, it dissolveth those things which are in the lungs or lights. And it maketh a good breath."[27]

The commentaries on various stones and wild beasts are similarly illuminating: "Take the stone which is called *Adamas*, in English speech a Diamond, and it is of shining colour, and very hard, in so much that it cannot be broken, but by the blood of a Goat, and it groweth in Arabia, or in Cyprus. And if it be bounden to the left side, it is good against enemies, madness, wild beasts, venomous beasts, and cruel men, and against chiding and brawling, and against venom, and invasion of fantasies."[28] "The virtue of a Merula [a genus of birds that includes the thrush] is marvellous. For if the feathers of the right wing of it, with a red leaf, be hanged up in the middle of an house which was never occupied, no man shall be able to sleep in that house, until it be put away."[29] "If any man bear a Dog's heart on his left side, all the Dogs shall hold their peace, and not bark at him. If any man will bind the right eye of a Wolf on his right sleeve neither men nor Dogs may hurt him."[30]

Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535) was born of noble parentage in Cologne. He is sometimes portrayed as an archetypal black magician, and was said to possess a magic mirror in which he could divine future events. It was also rumored that he dabbled in necromancy, believing he could conjure the spirits of the dead, and that the black dog that accompanied him was his demonic familiar. Agrippa, however, is more accurately regarded as a Christian Kabbalist. His famous work *De Occulta Philosophia* is now regarded as one of the key works of Renaissance Kabbalistic magic. An attendant to Maximilian I, Agrippa studied Albertus Magnus's work in Cologne and then seems to have become a member of various secret societies. He wrote the first version of *De Occulta Philosophia* in Germany around 1509–10, and then came to London for biblical studies—here he was in contact with the British humanist John Colet, then dean of St. Paul's, who was interested in both the Pauline epistles and the Kabbalah. A year later he went to Italy, where he studied the Hermetic tradition and the Kabbalah. Agrippa published *De Occulta Philosophia* and an earlier work, *De Vanitate Scientiarum*, in Antwerp in 1533, thereby adding substantially to his fame as a metaphysician. In *De Vanitate Scientiarum*, Agrippa says that intellectual learning is of no account, and he then goes on to describe both natural magic and mathematical magic. He discusses "bad magic," which involves demons, and "good magic," which calls on angels by means of the Kabbalah. Agrippa's basic message is nevertheless conventional in a Christian sense: only Christ can teach

moral philosophy, and there is no key to knowledge other than through the Word of God.

In *De Occulta Philosophia*, Agrippa divides the universe into the elemental world, the celestial world, and the intellectual world, each receiving influences from the one above it. The virtue of the Creator descends via the archangels to the intellectual world, is then transmitted to the stars in the celestial world, and finally filters down into the physical world where it permeates the elements—from which all things are created. *De Occulta Philosophia* is divided into three books. The first is about natural magic, or magic in the elemental world; the second is about the magic of the stars and how to utilize it; and the third is about ceremonial magic, that is to say, magic involving angelic spirits. Knowledge of all three worlds involves a familiarity with the Hebrew alphabet, specific ritual formulae, and the sacred names of God. According to Renaissance scholar Frances Yates, Agrippa regarded himself very much as a Christian Kabbalist:

> He makes sure that only good and holy angelic influences are invoked, and that the star-demons are made harmless through their help. Agrippa's occult philosophy is intended to be a very white magic. In fact it is really a religion, claiming access to the highest powers, and Christian since it accepts the name of Jesus as the chief of the wonder-working Names.[31]

Paracelsus (1493–1541) was one of the most illustrious of the medieval metaphysicians. Born Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim in Einsiedeln, near Zurich, he spent his childhood in Villach in Carinthia, and is thought to have pursued medical studies under the direction of his father, who was a physician. Nothing else is known of his early medical training, but it is thought that he received his doctorate from the medical school at the University of Ferrara in northern Italy, around 1515. He then traveled to Rome, Naples, Spain, Portugal, Paris, London, Moscow, Constantinople, and Greece. Paracelsus subsequently accepted a position as city physician and professor of medicine at Basle in 1526. He stayed in Basle for only 11 months, however, and then became an itinerant physician for the rest of his life, living in many different places in Austria and Germany.

Paracelsus was highly regarded as a physician, specializing in bronchial illnesses and developing the first comprehensive treatment for syphilis. He believed that medicine was based on four distinct foundations: a sound philosophical approach, astronomy (by which he really meant medical astrology), alchemy, and the moral purity of the physician himself. He also wrote extensively on the connections between

medicine and astrology and was interested in the possible links between weather and illness. Paracelsus emphasized the Hermetic doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm, believing that each human being was a mirror of the universe, and he developed the so-called doctrine of signatures, which he had inherited from Albertus Magnus. This concept is based on the principle that every part of the human organism (the microcosm) corresponds to a part of the macrocosm, or spiritual universe, and the connection is then established through some similarity in color or form—which is its essential "signature."

Paracelsus regarded disease as a form of imbalance, and maintained that a healthy person combined the three alchemical constituents of sulphur (male), mercury (female), and salt (neutral) in perfect harmony. He also subscribed to the idea that each of the elements were governed by elemental spirits (he called the spirits of fire *acthnici*, the spirits of air *nenufareni*, the spirits of water *melosinae*, and the spirits of earth *pigmaci*). Paracelsus believed what many holistic practitioners and naturopaths continue to believe today: "Medicine is founded upon Nature, Nature herself is medicine, and in her only shall men seek it. And Nature is the teacher of the physician, for she is older than he."[32]

In addition to his training and work as a physician, Paracelsus studied with Johannes Trithemius, abbot of Sponheim, who had instructed Cornelius Agrippa in the magical traditions.[33] In the *Archidoxes of Magic*, Paracelsus writes: "Some will think that I write Witchcraft, or some such like things, which are far absent from me. For this I certainly affirm, that I write nothing here which is supernatural and which is not wrought and effected by the power of Nature and Celestial influences."[34] Nevertheless, he did believe that sacred names, magical motifs, and astrological symbols could be inscribed on lamens (magical talismans) and then hung around the patient's neck at the appropriate astrological time as part of an effective medical cure. By way of explanation, Paracelsus wrote: "Characters, Letters and Signes have several virtues and operations, wherewith also the nature of Metals, the condition of Heaven, and the influence of the Planets, with their operations, and the significations and proprieties of Characters, Signs and Letters, and the observation of the times, do concur and agree together. Who can object that these Signs and Seals have not their virtue and operations?" In the final analysis, like Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus considered his magical and medical knowledge compatible with the teachings of the Christian tradition, for he continues, "all this is to be done by the help and assistance of the Father of all Medicines, our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour."[35]

Dr. John Dee (1527–1608) was highly regarded during his lifetime as a classical scholar, philosopher, mathematician and astrologer. The son of a servant at the court of Henry VIII, he was initially attracted to the study of mathematics, studying at St. John's, Cambridge, and then at the University of Louvain. He was also fascinated by navigation and astronomy. In his role as an astrologer, Dee calculated an auspicious date for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth I, having been commissioned to do this by Lord Robert Dudley on the instructions of the queen.[36]

Following a meeting with a magician named Jerome Cardan in England in 1552, Dee became interested in the conjuration of spirits, but his most serious exploration of the magical realms began in earnest when he met an occultist named Edward Kelley, who claimed to communicate with angels in his spirit vision. In order to invoke these angels, Dee and Kelley made use of a crystal ball and wax tablets, or almadels, engraved with magical symbols and the sacred names of God. The tablet for a given invocation was laid between four candles and the angels summoned as Kelley stared into the crystal. In 1582 Kelley began to receive messages in a new angelic language called "Enochian." Dee wrote in his diary: "Now the fire shot oute of E. K., his eyes, into the stone agayne. And by and by he understode nothing of all, neyther could reade any thing, nor remember what he had sayde." On occasions Kelley seemed to become possessed by spirits, some of which—according to Dee—manifested to visible appearance: "At his side appeared three of fowr spirituall creatures like laboring men, having spades in their hands and theyr haires hanging about theyr eares." The spirits wished to know why they had been summoned, and Dee bade them depart. They desisted, nipping Kelley on the arm. Dee wrote: "Still they cam gaping or gryning at him. Then I axed him where they were, and he poynted to the place, and in the name of Jesus commaunded those Baggagis to avoyde, and smitt a cross stroke at them, and presently they avoyded."[37]

Although Dee's visionary explorations with Edward Kelley may seem to reveal a lack of discernment, they also gave rise to the Enochian system of magic, which has since been incorporated into modern Western magic. As a mathematician and philosopher, Dr. John Dee was regarded during the Elizabethan period as the English counterpart to the great German and Danish astronomers Kepler and Tycho Brahe, and he was considered a first-rate intellect. Although he embraced both astronomy and astrology, he seems to have adopted an approach to astrology that in his view reflected principles of systematic observation. Dee had first begun to cast horoscopes as early as the 1550s, and he described astrology as "an art mathematical,

which reasonably demonstrateth the operations and effects of the natural beams of light, and secret influences of the stars and planets, in every element and elemental body at all times in any horizon assigned." To this extent, within the frameworks of his time, Dee's approach was fundamentally scientific. It is possible that he may have influenced the creation of Shakespeare's magician in *The Tempest*, Prospero.

## THE HERMETIC REVIVAL

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there was renewed interest in the Hermetic tradition in Europe, and it once again enjoyed widespread intellectual and philosophical influence. Florence became the focus of this interest, for it was here, in the royal courts, that it received its most significant endorsement. In 1460 a monk named Leonardo da Pistoia brought with him to Florence the Greek manuscripts that would later become known collectively as the *Corpus Hermeticum*, or *Hermetica*. These particular texts had been found in Macedonia and were presented to Cosimo de Medici, who was a noted collector of Greek manuscripts. Two years later Cosimo passed the manuscripts to his young court scholar, Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), and requested that he translate them into Latin. This work was completed in 1463, and Cosimo was able to read the translation before his death the following year. Ficino's texts are now held in the Medici Library in Florence.

As noted earlier, the Hermetic material was essentially a body of Greek mystical and philosophical writings that drew on Platonism and Stoicism and then developed within a Gnostic-Egyptian context. Ficino felt that much of the *Corpus Hermeticum* text was divinely inspired:

> They called Trismegistus thrice great because he was pre-eminent as the greatest philosopher, the greatest priest, and the greatest king. As Plato writes, it was a custom among the Egyptians to choose priests from among the philosophers, and kings from the company of priests . . . Being thus the first among philosophers, he progressed from natural philosophy and mathematics to the contemplation of the gods and was first to discourse most learnedly concerning the majesty of God, the orders of daemons, and the transmigration of souls. He is therefore called the first inventor of theology.[38]

Although it is now acknowledged that the Hermetic texts date from the Christian era, Ficino seems to have believed that Hermes Trismegistus was a contemporary of Moses and at times implies that Hermes and Moses may have been one and the same. While this may seem surprising, the Renaissance mind assumed that many of

the ancient gods had actually lived on earth at one time or another, and Moses, after all, had been born in Egypt. Ficino also accepted that Moses had been entrusted with the secret teachings of the Kabbalah on Mount Sinai so, like Thoth-Hermes, he was a custodian of an ancient wisdom tradition.

For Ficino the *Asclepius* and the *Pymander of Hermes Trismegistus* offered profound inspirational instruction. As he writes in his Introduction:

> Mercury [i.e., Hermes Trismegistus] knows how to instruct . . . in divine matters. He cannot teach divine things who has not learned them; and we cannot discover by human skill what is above Nature. The work is therefore to be accomplished by a divine light, so that we may look upon the sun by the sun's light. For, in truth, the light of the divine mind is never poured into a soul unless the soul turns itself completely toward the mind of God, as the moon turns toward the sun.[39]

Ficino saw no contradiction in blending Neoplatonism with orthodox Catholic theology at the court in Florence. Interestingly, Hermes had already been endorsed by Christian figures like Saint Augustine and the fifth-century Christian poet Lactantius, so it would have seemed quite acceptable to Ficino to combine Greek mystical philosophy and Christianity. In this new syncretic cosmology, the Christian concept of God the Father, enthroned and surrounded by choirs of angels, mirrored Plato's idea of an uncorrupted archetypal domain. Humanity, meanwhile, lived in a kind of shadow world that was but a pale reflection of its heavenly spiritual counterpart. In the Hermetic philosophy this idea was conveyed through the mystical axiom "As above, so below."

As mentioned earlier, Plotinus believed that the mystical realm could be apprehended only through *nous*—a blend of higher intellect and intuitive power. Innate to both the Neoplatonic and Gnostic worldviews was the belief that human beings had the potential to transcend the world of appearances through spiritual will and intent. The Hermetic devotees of the Renaissance similarly conceived of a universe in which human beings could earn their place in the celestial realms and become one with God. As Tobias Churton notes in his overview of the Gnostic tradition, during the Renaissance it was both possible and acceptable to blend Neoplatonic and Christian perspectives:

> The wish was to return to the One, the source from which the power derived enabling the philosopher-magician to work the "miracle of creation." Christ had opened the way, the "veil of the temple" had been rent and the true followers of Christ could ascend. "Hermes," he of

> ancient wisdom, mediator between spirit and matter, with winged feet and winged mind, was both prophet and symbol of this possibility.[40]

Ficino's work with the *Corpus Hermeticum* was developed by Giovanni Pico, Count of Mirandola (1463–94), who similarly embraced an emanationist view of the world. Pico combined Ficino's Hermetic Neoplatonism with an extensive knowledge of the Kabbalah, Christianity, and "high magic" (*mageia*). He also brought to the court of Cosimo's successor, Lorenzo de Medici, an extensive knowledge of astrology, geometry, medicine, and astronomy. Like Ficino, Pico conceived of a universe emanating from the transcendent Godhead. At the highest level Mind is devoted to the contemplation of the divine Being, and below this realm are the celestial world and the domain in which humanity resides. However, Pico's conception was not simply that of a devotional mystic. According to Pico, man was unique in his capacity to transcend his worldly context. Not only could man come to know God but he could also become a type of god himself:

> Exalted to the lofty height, we shall measure therefrom all things that are and shall be and have been in indivisible eternity; and, admiring their original beauty, full of divine power, we shall no longer be ourselves but shall become He Himself Who made us. . . .
>
> For he who knows himself in himself knows all things, as Zoroaster first wrote. When we are finally lighted in this knowledge, we shall in bliss be addressing the true Apollo on intimate terms . . . And, restored to health, Gabriel "the strength of God," shall abide in us, leading us through the miracles of Nature and showing us on every side the merit and the might of God.[41]

This was Pico's idea of *mageia*—a type of high magic that could provide humanity with access to the inner workings of Nature and the cosmos. In this magical conception of the universe, Nature is pervaded by spirit. Matter cannot enter spirit, but spirit can enter matter. To this end *mageia* can be employed "in calling forth into the light, as if from their hiding places, the powers scattered and sown in the world by the loving-kindness of God." The role of the sacred magician—the practitioner of high magic—is to raise earth (matter) to the level of heaven (spirit). This is essentially a Gnostic undertaking:

> The method, or secret of working, lies with within the gnosis or knowledge of Man as he is and can be—he knows he has access to the divine world. In a process of contemplation or alchemy he rises through an inner imagination of ascending principles until he feels he is full of "light." In such a condition the *magus* sets to work. That work might be artistic, turning paint into vision, stone into form; mechanical, turning wood and brass into machinery; religious, turning ill thoughts and

> bitterness into love and brotherhood; landscaping, building, singing, travelling, loving, cooking, writing, capitalising—the possibilities are endless. In a holy mind the world may be transformed.[42]

In the Hermetic tradition there is also the clear implication that through the exploration of gnosis and high magic, man may become a god. As Hermes Trismegistus says in the *Asclepius*, in a text which was also quoted by Pico:

> He takes in the nature of a god as if he were himself a god . . . He is united to the gods because he has the divinity pertaining to gods . . . He takes the earth as his own, he blends himself with the elements by the speed of thought, by the sharpness of spirit he descends to the depths of the sea. Everything is accessible to him; heaven is not too high for him, for he measures it as if he were in his grasp by his ingenuity. What sight the spirit shows to him, no mist of the air can obscure; the earth is never so dense as to impede his work; the immensity of the sea's depths do not trouble his plunging view. He is at the same time everything as he is everywhere.[43]

Similarly we read in the *Corpus Hermeticum*:

> I see myself to be the All. I am in heaven and in earth, in water and in air; I am in beasts and plants; I am a babe in the womb, and one that is not yet conceived, and one that has been born; I am present everywhere.[44]

Here we have a quintessential statement about the spiritual nature of the magical quest. At its most profound level, high magic embraces the entire cosmos and proposes an archetypal process of mythic renewal. The journey of high magic is essentially a return to the source of one's being, a quest for realization of the Divine Unity that transcends the limitations of form and material appearances. The aim is to be "reborn" from the limited and restricted material world and return to the realm of Spirit. This approach is implicit in Neoplatonic and Hermetic concepts of the world and also permeates "high magic" belief systems in modern Western esotericism.[45]

## THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF ALCHEMY

Just as Gnosticism, Neoplatonism, and the Hermetic tradition are concerned with the liberation of the human spirit, so too can alchemical transmutation be regarded as a metaphor of spiritual renewal. Many scholars, including Titus Burckhardt, Kurt Seligman, Carl Jung, Mircea Eliade, and Robert Segal, have considered it in this light, and it is in this capacity that alchemical symbolism has profoundly influenced the Western magical tradition.

Western alchemy dates from the beginning of the second century CE and flourished in Hellenistic Egypt, where there was a high level of proficiency in metalworking skills, especially in relation to silver and copper alloys, which resembled gold. Two papyri found in a gravesite in Thebes, the so-called Leiden and Stockholm papyri, which date from around 300 CE, include recipes for changing the color of a metal so that it would resemble gold or silver, a fascinating precursor, perhaps, of the metaphysical concept of the transmutation of base metals into gold. The word "alchemy" itself is thought to derive from an Egyptian word, *chem* or *qem*, meaning "black," a reference to the black alluvial soils bordering the Nile. The fourth-century alchemical writer Zosimos of Panopolis (Akhmim) in Egypt maintained that a person named Chemes had given rise to the quest for gold and had authored a book of supernaturally inspired instruction called *Chema*, but proof of Chemes's historical existence has not been established. However, it is thought that the Greek word c*hyma*, meaning to fuse or cast metals, established itself in Arabic as *al kimia*, from which the more familiar term "alchemy" is in turn derived.

As a pagan practice the study of alchemy thrived in Alexandria in buildings adjacent to the famous Temple of Serapis, but this temple (the Serapeum), together with numerous statues and works of art, was destroyed in 391 on the orders of the Christian archbishop of Alexandria, Theophilus. The persecuted alchemical scholars then withdrew to Athens where the Thracian Neoplatonist Proclus was teaching, and in this way a more comprehensive knowledge of Egyptian alchemy was introduced to Greece. Although pagan traditions were finally suppressed by Emperor Justinian in 529, interest in alchemy was rekindled in the seventh century when Stephanos of Alexandria dedicated his *Nine Lessons in Chemia* to the Byzantine emperor Heraclitus, and in the eleventh century when Psellus revived Platonism. According to Kurt Seligmann the writings of Stephanos inspired a number of medieval alchemical poets, and these writers also extolled the virtues of the Hermetic philosophy.[46]

Like their Neoplatonic and Hermetic counterparts, the medieval alchemists believed in the unity of the cosmos and maintained that there was a clear correspondence between the physical and spiritual realms, with comparable laws operating in each domain. As the sixteenth-century Moravian alchemist Michael Sendivogius writes in *The New Chemical Light*:

> The Sages have been taught of God that this natural world is only an image and material copy of a heavenly and spiritual pattern; that the

> very existence of this world is based upon the reality of its celestial archetype; and that God has created it in imitation of the spiritual and invisible universe, in order that men might be the better enabled to comprehend His heavenly teaching and the wonders of His absolute and ineffable power and wisdom. Thus the Sage sees heaven reflected in Nature as in a mirror; and he pursues this Art, not for the sake of gold or silver, but for the love of the knowledge which it reveals; he jealously conceals it from the sinner and the scornful, lest the mysteries of heaven should be laid bare to the vulgar gaze.[47]

The alchemists adopted the Hermetic concept that the universe and humanity reflect each other which in essence is the core meaning behind the idea of the macrocosm and microcosm and the dictum "As above, so below." It was assumed by the alchemists that whatever existed in the universe must also, to some degree, be latent or present in every human being. A Syriac Hermetic text affirms this point emphatically:

> What is the adage of the philosophers? Know thyself! This refers to the intellectual and cognitive mirror. And what is this mirror if not the Divine and original Intellect? When a man looks at himself and sees himself in this, he turns away from everything that bears the name of gods or demons, and, by uniting himself with the Holy Spirit, becomes a perfect man. He sees God within himself.[48]

In medieval alchemical thought, each individual person consisted of spirit, soul, and body, and to this extent contained the very essence of the universe as a whole. Alchemy affirmed, as the Hermetic texts had similarly conveyed, that the Universal Mind is indivisible and unites all things in the material universe. The various metals, always a specific alchemical concern, were similarly one in essence, and had sprung from the same seed in the womb of Nature. Indeed, as historian E. J. Holmyard observes in his pioneering study of alchemy, it was assumed by the medieval European alchemists that because the world was permeated by a universal spirit, this meant that "every object in the universe possessed some sort of life. Metals grew, as did minerals, and were even attributed sex. A fertilized seed of gold could develop into a nugget, the smoky exhalation was masculine and the vaporous one feminine, and mercury was a womb in which embryonic metals could be gestated."[49]

However, the alchemists did not regard all of the metals as equally mature or "perfect." Gold symbolized the highest development in Nature and as an element came to personify human renewal, or regeneration. A "golden" human being was one who was resplendent with spiritual beauty and who had triumphed over temptations and the

lurking power of evil. By way of contrast, the most base of all the metals, lead, represented the sinful and unrepentant individual who continued to wallow in sin and was readily overcome by the forces of darkness. The Philosopher's Stone, said to be capable of bringing about a state of alchemical transmutation, was associated by some Christian alchemists with the figure of Jesus himself. Here alchemical transmutation was considered as a type of spiritual redemption, and the imagery of base and precious metals provided a metaphor for personal transformation. As H. Stanley Redgrove has noted, "Alchemy was an attempted application of the principles of mysticism to the things of the physical world."[50]

According to the medieval alchemists, all aspects of matter were a reflection of God, and matter itself consisted of four elements—earth, fire, air, and water—which in turn proceeded from the *quinta essentia*, or "quintessence." The alchemists also associated certain metals with the astrological "planets":

*Sun—gold*
*Moon—silver*
*Mercury—quicksilver*
*Venus—copper*
*Mars—iron*
*Jupiter—tin*
*Saturn—lead*

However, the alchemists believed that the process of transmutation from a base metal into silver or gold was not possible without the metal first being reduced to its *materia prima*, or "fundamental substance." This, in effect, involved an attempt to reduce the base metal to a state of "soul" or "essence." According to the alchemists, the soul, in its original state of pure receptivity, is fundamentally one with the *materia prima* of the whole world. In one way this is but a restatement of the theoretical premise of all alchemy, namely that macrocosm and microcosm correspond to one another. At the same time it is also an expression of the goal of the alchemical work.[51]

The idea of the *materia prima* itself referred to the potential of "soul" to take a material form. At this level one could consider a metal to be latent, or "unrealized." A metal in this condition was considered "uncongealed"—free of specific qualities. By contrast, specific metals were normally, and by definition, rigid, restricted, or "coagulated." Alchemical transformation therefore involved a shift from the initial coagulation through such processes as burning, dissolving, and purification, in order to produce a new outcome: a quite different reformulation from the

original substance. However, while many alchemists believed that amorphous *materia* could be burned, dissolved, and purified and then subsequently "coagulated" into the form of a perfect metal like gold (a literal symbol of wholeness), those alchemists who were more mystically inclined also believed that this process could be applied to the mystical quest for Oneness with God. As Titus Burckhardt has written:

> The form of the soul thus "born again" is nevertheless distinguishable from the all-embracing Spirit, as it still belongs to conditioned existence. But at the same time it is transparent to the undifferentiated Light of the Spirit and its vital union with the primordial *materia* of all souls, for the "material" or "substantial" ground of the soul, just like its essential or active ground, has a unitary nature . . . The highest meaning of alchemy is the knowledge that all is contained in all.[52]

## MEDIEVAL GOETIA

In stark contrast to spiritual alchemy, which focused on symbols relating to transformation and wholeness, the Goetic tradition represents the dark underbelly of medieval magic. The term "Goetia" is thought to derive from the ancient Greek word *goes*, which in Plato's time denoted a diviner, magician, seer, or healer.[53] The medieval Goetia, however, is more specifically associated with demonology. Although the *Goetia* is the title of a text included in the sixteenth-century *Lesser Key of Solomon the King*, the term refers more generally to a tradition of sorcery associated with medieval grimoires.

Grimoires are spell books containing "secret names of God" and magical words of power, together with practical instructions for evoking demonic spirits. Many of the devils and demons referred to in the Goetic texts derive from so-called heathen traditions, including Greek, Egyptian, Assyrian, and Persian sources. Some of these devils, like Beelzebub (Baal-zebub, god of Ekron in the ninth century BCE), Asmodeus, and Ashtaroth, are mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments.

The authority of the Goetia in the Middle Ages derived in large degree from magical knowledge ascribed to the Old Testament King Solomon who, according to tradition, was engaged in completing the Holy Temple in Jerusalem in which the Ark of the Covenant was housed. According to an early magical text, *The Testament of Solomon*, which originated in either Egypt or Babylonia prior to the fifth century CE,[54] the construction of King Solomon's temple was hampered by the interference of various demons. When King Solomon prayed for

divine assistance the archangel Michael presented him with a magical ring from God—engraved on it was the so-called Seal of Solomon that had the power to bind demons. More than 36 demons could be harnessed through this ring, and King Solomon was said to have utilized some of their magical powers to speed up work on the temple. Other demons were sealed up like genies in a bottle.[55]

It seems likely that *The Testament of Solomon* was the source of inspiration for many of the grimoires that began to appear in the Middle Ages. Grimoires provided a new and vital key to acquiring magical potency and influence. The fifteenth-century *Clavicula Salomonis* (*The Key of Solomon*) provides information on conjuring and binding demonic spirits for personal gain as well as other desirable outcomes like achieving military success, acquiring love, or becoming invisible, while the text specifically titled *Goetia* in the *Lesser Key of Solomon* (also known as the *Lemegeton*) describes the attributes and powers of the "72 Mighty Kings and Princes which King Solomon commanded into a Vessel of Brass, together with their Legions"[56] as well as images of the magical seals used to evoke these demons.[57] The description of the 29th spirit in the *Goetia*—the demon Astaroth (also known as Ashtaroth)—alludes to King Solomon's magical ring and its special powers:

> He is a Mighty, Strong Duke, and appeareth in the form of a hurtful Angel riding on an Infernal Beast like a Dragon, and carrying in his right hand a Viper. Thou must in no wise let him approach too near unto thee, lest he do thee damage by his Noisome Breath. Wherefore the Magician must hold the Magical Ring near his face, and that will defend him. He giveth true answers of things Past, Present and to Come, and can discover all Secrets. He will declare wittingly how the Spirits fell, if desired, and the reason of his own fall. He can make men wonderfully knowing in all Liberal Sciences. He ruleth 40 Legions of Spirits.[58]

After describing the particular attributes of each of the 72 evil spirits, including Astaroth, the *Goetia* provides an account of what happened when King Solomon "commanded" these spirits into "a Vessel of Brass":

> And it is to be noted that Solomon did this because of their pride [i.e., the pride of the evil spirits], for he never declared other reason why he thus bound them. And when he had thus bound them up and sealed the Vessel, he by Divine Power did chase them all into a deep Lake or Hole in Babylon. And they of Babylon, wondering to see such a thing, they did then go wholly into the Lake, to break the Vessel open, expecting to find great store of Treasure therein. But when they had broken it open, out flew the Chief Spirits immediately, with their legions

> following them; and they were all restored to their former places except Belial, who entered into a certain Image, and thence gave answers unto those who did offer Sacrifices unto him, and did worship the Image as their God.[59]

A medieval Goetic magician seeking to evoke a demon named in the *Lesser Key of Solomon* would begin by tracing a ceremonial circle containing the sacred names, as well as a large triangle to contain the demonic spirits. The magician would wear the seal and pentagram of Solomon, together with the seal of the spirit—in order to compel obedience—and would also draw the secret seal of Solomon on virgin parchment with the blood of a black cock. These actions would be performed on a Tuesday or Saturday at midnight, with the moon increasing in Virgo, while at the same time burning perfumes of aloes, resin, cedar, and alum. After observing chastity and fasting for a month while also praying to God, the magician could now commence his operation. Wearing a white robe with a mitre on his head and a girdle of lion's skin around his waist—the latter bearing the same sacred names as those inscribed around the magic circle—the magician would offer short lustration and vesting prayers and then proceed to his conjuration, invoking the holy names of God and conjuring the demonic spirit by name:[60]

> that ye forthwith Appear, and show your selfe unto me, before this Cirkle in a faire and human shape without any Deformity or ugly shape, and without delay . . . I Conjure you by him whome all Creatures are obedient; and by this Ineffable Name TETRAGRAMATON, JEHOVAH which being heard the Elements are overturned, the aire is shaken, the sea runeth back; the fire is quenched the Earth trembleth, and all the host of CEELISTIALL, TERRESTALL and Infernall do Tremble, and are trubled and Confounded, together, that you Visibly, and affibly speak unto me with a Clear Voice, Intelligible and without any Ambiguity; therefore Come ye in the Name ADONAIJ-ZABAOTH, ADONIJ AMIOREM—Come Come why stay you to hasten ADONAY SADAY the KING OF KINGS Commands you.[61]

In addition to the *Lesser Key of Solomon the King*, other texts associated with the Goetic tradition include the *Grimoire of Armadel*, *Grimorium Verum*, *True Black Magic*, *The Grand Grimoire*, *The Grimoire of Honorius*, and more obscure works like *Semiphoras*, *Shemhamphoras Salomonis Regis*, and *Liber Salomonis*.[62] Although the *Lesser Key of Solomon the King* is arguably the most "demonic" of all the major Goetic texts, medieval Church authorities seem to have feared the *Key of Solomon* (*Clavicula Salomonis*) the most, prohibiting it as a dangerous book in the Spanish Inquisition of 1559.[63] It is true that the grimoire assumes

the reader is familiar with astrology—it addresses such topics as "the virtues of the planets" and goes on to mention that acts of discord and hatred are best undertaken when the Moon is waning and in a Watery sign like Cancer, Scorpio, or Pisces. It also claims that raising the souls of the dead—especially soldiers killed in action—is most effectively performed during the hours of Mars.[64] In one of its most dramatic sections, *The Key of Solomon* briefly countenances the idea of "sacrificing white animals to good Spirits and black to the evil."[65] However, for the most part the approach adopted in the grimoire is evenly balanced, allowing for both positive and negative outcomes in business affairs, military engagements, and matters of love, kindness, and pleasure.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Goetic magic in the Middle Ages was that practitioners of these allegedly "dark" magical arts seem frequently to have pursued relatively low-key outcomes through their ritual conjurings. Locating "treasure," recovering lost or stolen objects, acquiring the "gift of tongues" or "invisibility," or seeking successful outcomes in matters of love or sexual conquest were especially popular. Clearly, those who could not obtain these results through familiar means felt drawn to evoking demonic forces in order to make them happen. As Joseph Peterson observes in his recent (2001) study of the *Lesser Key of Solomon*, this is ultimately a reflection on the practitioners themselves:

> The Infernal Hierarchy of the *Lemegeton* seems from time to time a promise of things more important, but the diabolism of practical Magic was essentially of a popular kind in the bulk of its documents, and those which aimed too high—as, for example, at logic and philosophy, the liberal sciences, eloquence and good understanding—had comparatively few votaries. To give riches, to kindle love and lust, to discover treasures—as these were the sum of ambition, so they were the qualifications in chief demand from the spirits. The class of people to whom such considerations would appeal were those obviously . . . who could not obtain their satisfaction through the normal channels—the outcasts, the incompetent, the ignorant, the lonely, the deformed, the hideous, the impotent and those whom Nature and Grace alike denied.[66]

As we have seen, the Middle Ages and early Renaissance witnessed the emergence of diverse forms of witchcraft and sorcery, alchemy and Hermetic magic. In order to understand this diversity, it is useful to return again to the concepts of "low" and "high" magic referred to earlier. In his influential study *Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (1999),[67] Ronald Hutton distinguishes between the "low magic" tradition of so-called cunning men and women, hexers,

and fortune-tellers—a tradition that survived from the Middle Ages well into the nineteenth century as an identifiable, largely rural category—and the "high magic" esoteric perspectives that were revived in nineteenth-century Britain with the establishment of the Rosicrucian Society in England and the subsequent rise of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.[68] Mundane and pragmatic magical outcomes like locating lost or stolen objects, inflicting harm on a neighbor, or seeking short-term financial gain, personal power, or sexual prowess are very much examples of the "low" magic tradition associated with folk-magic spells, acts of bewitchment, and medieval Goetic rituals. Hermetic "high" magic, on the other hand, is essentially transformative rather than results-driven and ultimately reflects a spiritual quest for *gnosis*. Nevertheless, as historian Richard Kieckhefer points out in *Magic in the Middle Ages*, even in the Renaissance spiritually oriented metaphysicians like Marsilio Ficino had to repeatedly defend themselves against the charge that their incantations were addressed to demons when in reality they were seeking to understand the true nature of the cosmos.[69] Ficino was fortunate because he was able to counter the charges of his critics, but on many other occasions during the Middle Ages, charges of heresy made it impossible for magical practitioners to defend their beliefs and practices, leading to tragic outcomes like the excesses and injustices of the Inquisition and witchcraft trials.

# Part IV

# “Dark” and “Light” Magic

# Chapter 7

# Left-Hand Path/Right-Hand Path

In essence the distinction between the Left-Hand and Right-Hand Paths in modern Western magic marks an attempt to move beyond the judgemental stereotype "black = evil" and "white = good" that has been with us since ancient times. For many years it used to be common practice in both anthropological and occult literature to refer to "black" and "white" magic—the first of these being associated with evil or harmful intent and sometimes referred to as "sorcery," the second with benign practices like spiritual healing or the use of folk charms. The advantage of embracing terms like "Left-Hand Path" and "Right-Hand Path" is that they are used by many contemporary magical practitioners to describe their own metaphysical beliefs and ritual practices, and to this extent the terms have a sense of authenticity and relevance.

Some researchers have argued that the concept of the Left-Hand and Right-Hand Paths in Western magic has an exclusively Eastern origin. The anthropologist Richard Sutcliffe, for example, claims that the Left-Hand Path derives from the Tantric term *vama-marga* ("left path"), and he associates the core practices of this occult path with the so-called five m's: *madya*, *mamsa*, *matsya*, *mudra*, and *maithuna*, i.e., wine, flesh, fish, parched grain and intercourse. Sutcliffe argues that these "involve the ritual transgression of certain taboos and incorporate ritual sexual intercourse," and he also believes that contemporary occultism has incorporated many ideas and techniques from both Tantrism and Yoga.[1]

It is clear that some modern occultists have been influenced by Eastern mystical traditions in general and by Tantra in particular. The ceremonial magicians of the late nineteenth-century Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn employed Hindu *tattvas*—symbols of the elements—as meditation devices to induce specific trance visions,

and the influential ritual magician Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) was introduced to Tantric practices in Ceylon in 1901 by his friend Allan Bennett (1872–1923), a convert to Buddhism who had been a fellow magical practitioner in the Golden Dawn.[2] Similarly, the Theosophist Madame H. P. Blavatsky referred to practitioners of the Left-Hand Path when introducing Hindu and Buddhist spiritual concepts to the West in the late nineteenth century. However, the symbolic distinction between "right" and "left" as "good" and "evil" respectively has ancient Western origins that are quite distinct from the *vama-marga*.

The Latin term for "left," *sinister*, implies a sense of evil and reflects a twofold distinction that is supported by Christian cosmology. The Gospel of Matthew locates God's followers (the sheep) on the right and nonfollowers (the goats) on the left-hand side. Similarly, in pictures of the Last Judgment, the Christian God shows his disciples their heavenly abode with his right hand and points with his left hand to Hell. The Left-Hand Path is therefore considered demonic. Meanwhile, a quotation from the Classical period in ancient Greece referring to the hero Asclepius—the founder and God of medicine and healing—employs a similar left/right distinction:

> After he (Ascelepius) had become a surgeon, bringing that art to great perfection, he not only saved men from death, but even raised them up from the dead. He received from Athena blood from the veins of the Gorgon. He used blood from the left side for plagues of mankind, and he used that from the right side for healing and to raise up men from the dead.[3]

Such thinking has become ingrained over the centuries, but in the contemporary context, Western magic is defined as Right-Hand Path or Left-Hand Path primarily on the basis of intent and without judgmental overtones. Here we can consider ultimate outcomes. The final goal of the Right-Hand Path magician is to merge one's individual consciousness with the Godhead in an act of mystical union or "surrender." The Left-Hand Path, however, is marked by a strong sense of individualism, and in this context mystical surrender would be considered a sign of weakness. The ultimate aspiration of the Left-Hand Path is for the magician to actually become a god—here the magical quest is essentially all about the pursuit of "self-deification."

## THE RIGHT-HAND PATH IN THE GOLDEN DAWN

Ritual activities in the late nineteenth-century Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn focused especially on structured initiations and "rites

of passage" linked specifically to the symbolic pathways on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. To this extent the Golden Dawn magicians were consciously pursuing a magical quest associated with *gnosis* and mystical transcendence. This initiatory process involved retracing sacred emanations from the Godhead (*Ain Soph Aur*). The principal aim of the Golden Dawn magician was to employ ritual in order to experience a sense of spiritual rebirth in the Kabbalistic sphere of *Tiphareth*. Having attained the ritual grade associated with *Tiphareth*, Inner Order initiates could then seek sacred union with the transcendent Godhead in *Kether* by meditatively ascending the so-called Middle Pillar on the Tree of Life.[4]

With specific reference to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Western magic, the "Right-Hand Path" can be defined as a *monistic* esoteric approach that culminates in the transcendent, mystical act of "merging into God." The various forms of ceremonial and visionary magic associated with this type of spiritual quest can then be reasonably categorized as *white* magic—and specifically as *white high magic*—because they are associated, in a fundamental way, with the pursuit of mystical illumination ("light") and spiritual transcendence. One of the most lucid exponents of the Right-Hand Path in modern ceremonial magic was Israel Regardie (1907–85), a former member of the Stella Matutina—an offshoot of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. In his various writings Regardie made several important observations about the nature of the modern magical process. In contrast to the individualism characteristic of the Left-Hand Path, which we will discuss below, Regardie believed that ultimately Western magic derived its potency from the Collective Unconscious, and he willingly embraced C. G. Jung's well-known model of the psyche:

> In the system propounded by C.G. Jung . . . the Unconscious itself is . . . conceived to have a dual aspect. That part of it which is personal and individual, and that great stream of power, archetype and image of which the former is only a part—the Collective Unconscious. It is a universal and uniform substratum common to the whole of mankind. We may consider it to be the historical background from which every psyche and every consciousness has proceeded or evolved . . . It is this that the medieval alchemists called Anima Mundi.[5]

Regardie believed that as a practical system, modern theurgic magic provided a means for exploring the creative and intuitive aspects of human nature. "Magic," he wrote, "may be said to be a technique for realising the deeper levels of the Unconscious."[6]

This necessarily involved summoning higher powers as part of an inspirational process:

> The magician conceives of someone he calls God, upon whom attend a series of angelic beings, variously called archangels, elementals, demons etc. By simply calling upon this God with a great deal of ado, and commemorating the efforts of previous magicians and saints who accomplished their wonders or attained to the realization of their desires through the invocation of the several names of that God, the magician too realizes the fulfilment of his will.[7]

Ultimately, however, the magician was obliged to acknowledge that there are greater powers in the universe than those associated with his or her magical will. According to Regardie, the key was to identify with the God (or Goddess) and thereby experience a profound sense of spiritual transcendence:

> The union or identification with the God is accomplished through suggestion, sympathy and the exaltation of consciousness. . . . the magician imagines himself in the ceremony to be the deity who has undergone similar experiences. The rituals serve but to suggest and to render more complete the process of identification, so that sight and hearing and intelligence may serve to that end. In the commemoration, or rehearsal of this history, the magician is uplifted on high, and is whirled into the secret domain of the spirit.[8]

For Regardie this was essentially a spiritual process and had nothing to do with intellect or belief:

> The higher Magic . . . has as one of its objectives a communion both here and hereafter with the divine, a union not to be achieved by mere doctrine and sterile intellectual speculations, but by the exercise of other more spiritual faculties and powers in rites and ceremonies. By the "divine" the Theurgists recognized an eternal spiritually dynamic principle and its refracted manifestation in Beings whose consciousness, individually and severally, are of so lofty and sublime a degree of spirituality as actually to merit the term Gods.[9]

Regardie maintained that the sort of magical ritual practiced in the Golden Dawn involved a "mnemonic process so arranged as to result in the deliberate exhilaration of the Will and the exaltation of the Imagination, the end being the purification of the personality and the attainment of a spiritual state of consciousness, in which the ego enters into a union with either its own Higher Self or a God."[10] The

final transcendental goal in this visionary process, as noted earlier, was mystical union with the Godhead:

> All the characteristics of the higher worlds are successively assumed by the Magician, and transcended, until in the end of his magical journey, he is merged into the being of the Lord of every Life. The final goal of his spiritual pilgrimage is that peaceful ecstasy in which the finite personality, thought and self-consciousness, even the high consciousness of the highest Gods, drops utterly away, and the Magician melts to a oneness with the Ain Soph wherein no shade of difference enters.[11]

## MAGIC OF THE LEFT-HAND PATH

Characteristic of the "Left-Hand Path," by way of contrast, are magical practices associated with a strong emphasis on individualism and/or self-deification, a fundamentally antinomian ("against the grain") approach to mainstream society, antagonism toward orthodox religious traditions (e.g., Aleister Crowley's *Book of the Law*—which is contemptuous of major religions like Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism), and an attraction to darkness and "underworld" chthonic deities associated with primal sexuality and fertility. As an extension of this emphasis on individualism and antinomianism, we sometimes also find support for the practice of sorcery or "dark" magic as an acceptable form of self-defence. Many occultists aligned with the Left-Hand Path are strongly opposed to the mystical act of merging with the Godhead, since this denies the fundamental individuality of the practising magician. Key occult figures associated with the Left-Hand Path, such as Aleister Crowley—and more recently Anton LaVey (1930–97), founder of the Church of Satan in 1966, and Michael Aquino, key formulator and present Head of the Temple of Set, founded in 1975—have all emphasized the *individual* nature of the magical quest. The task of the magician aligned with the Left-Hand Path is ultimately *to transform the individual into a god*.

Left-Hand Path practitioners willingly embrace the "dark" aspects of magic and sometimes define their approach as being aligned with a *nightside* tradition. Members of the American Temple of Set, for example, revere Set (the Egyptian God of the Night) as a deity associated with the infinite potential available to all aspiring magicians who pursue the Left-Hand Path. These practitioners identify the "dark" with their own infinite potential. Many such practitioners will freely acknowledge that their magic is *black* but distinguish it from *evil*, as conventionally understood. For them, the concept that "dark = evil" is a

judgmental evaluation associated primarily with the Judeo-Christian tradition and lies outside their essential frames of reference. Left-Hand Path magic may therefore be defined as "dark" or "black" magic without the implied connotation of evil.

The British-born, German-based Satanist Vexen Crabtree claims on his website that "the term 'Left-Hand Path' has become an umbrella term of self-designation used by certain contemporary ritual magicians and is usually taken to incorporate practitioners of Thelemic magick (beginning with Aleister Crowley), Tantrik magick and Chaos Magick (inspired by both Crowley and the magickal techniques devised by the occult artist Austin O. Spare, 1886–1956.)"[12] Crabtree also believes that all forms of Satanism should be regarded as Left-Hand Path, and he quotes contemporary Satanist Anton LaVey by way of support: "Satanism is not a white light religion; it is a religion of the flesh, the mundane, the carnal—all of which are ruled by Satan, the personification of the Left Hand Path."[13] Crabtree provides a useful summation of Left-Hand Path magic on his website:

> The Left Hand Path is solitary, individualistic, personal, based on *self* development, *self* analysis, *self* empowerment . . . Frequently called "evil" and "dark" by non-Satanic religions, the followers of the Left Hand Path often have to remain in the darkness or face severe persecution from the religions that ironically call themselves "good."[14]

Other aspects identified by Crabtree as characteristic of the Left-Hand Path include an emphasis on individualism and all things personal rather than universal, the rejection of absolutes, and an emphasis on free thought—as distinct from dogma. Meanwhile, the contemporary Nordic order, Dragon Rouge—founded in 1989—aligns itself with the Draconian path in magic and shares many points in common with Kenneth Grant's Typhonian branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) in England—a magical order strongly influenced by Crowley. It similarly identifies itself with the Left-Hand Path, referring to it as "the dark side of magic" and affirming that "darkness is a mirror of the depths of the soul":

> All that is hidden inside us, our desires and our fears, is projected on the darkness . . . We are exploring the nightside tradition on many different levels . . . Dragon Rouge is a practical magical order in which the individual experience is pivotal. We are focusing on an empirical occultism and a knowledge about the unknown based on experience.[15]

Members of the Dragon Rouge make a clear distinction between the magical paths of Right and Left:

> The philosophy of the dark side is represented by the Left-Hand Path and its ideology. The Left-Hand Path is founded around a philosophy which defines two main spiritual paths. One is the Right-Hand Path. It is evident in most forms of religion and mass movements. Its method is the magic of the light and its goal [is] that *the individual melts together with God* [my italics]. The other path is the Left-Hand Path. It emphasizes the unique, the deviant and the exclusive. Its method is dark magic and antinomianism (going against the grain). The goal is to become a god . . . The goal of the magic of Dragon Rouge is self-deification . . . To become a god means that one has transformed life from being predetermined and predestined by outer conditions, to the stage where one reaches a truly free will. Man becomes a god when he ceases to be a creation and instead becomes a creator.[16]

Stephen Flowers, a leading member of the Temple of Set, also emphasizes self-deification and antinomianism as key characteristics of the Left-Hand Path. Flowers defines self-deification as the "attainment of enlightened (or awakened), independently existing intellect and its relative immortality." This in turn depends on a heightened sense of individualism and "the strength . . . necessary for the desired state of evolution of self . . . attained by means of stages created by the will of the magician, not because he or she was 'divine' to begin with."[17] According to Flowers, antinomianism is an important characteristic of the Left-Hand Path because magicians following this path have to have "the spiritual courage to identify [themselves] with the cultural norms of 'evil.' There will be an embracing of the symbols of . . . whatever quality the conventional culture fears and loathes."[18]

## ALEISTER CROWLEY AND THE RISE OF MAGICAL INDIVIDUALISM

Although Aleister Crowley's magical approach retained mystical elements—he referred to the act of invoking the Holy Guardian Angel—he nevertheless spearheaded the resurgence of Left-Hand Path magic in the West. Crowley's antinomian proclamation of the doctrine of *Thelema* in 1904 polarized the twentieth-century Western esoteric tradition by shifting the pursuit of ceremonial magic away from an ultimately passive quest for mystical transcendence—or, as the members of the Dragon Rouge express it, "melting into God"—toward the potent development of the individual magical will.

To understand why Crowley ultimately rejected the "passive transcendent" model of Western magic we need to retrace aspects of his

personal background—even though these details are by now familiar to many readers. Crowley's proclamation of *Thelema* (Greek: "will") was in effect the beginning of a new, albeit minor, religion—and one that renounced all former religious traditions. The post–Golden Dawn Thelemic revelation accorded Crowley almost god-like status as the Lord of the New Aeon—a role Crowley took seriously—and this has a lot to do in the first instance with Crowley's narrow fundamentalist Christian upbringing.

Born at Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, on October 12, 1875, Edward Alexander Crowley was raised in a fundamentalist Plymouth Brethren home and soon developed an antipathy toward Christian belief and morality that would remain with him for his entire life. His father was a prosperous brewer who had retired to Leamington to study the Christian scriptures. Crowley came to despise the Plymouth Brethren primarily on the basis of his unfortunate experiences at the special sect school in Cambridge that he was obliged to attend, and which was run by an especially cruel headmaster. Much of his school education was unhappy—marked by poor health and a vulnerability to bullying attacks—but after he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1895, he was able to spend much of his time reading poetry and classical literature as well as confirming his well-earned reputation as a champion chess player.

Crowley's direct association with the Western esoteric tradition began in London in 1898 with his introduction to George Cecil Jones, a member of the Golden Dawn. By the following year Crowley had also become a close friend of magical initiate Allan Bennett, mentioned earlier. Within the Golden Dawn, Bennett had taken the magical name *Frater Iehi Aour* (Hebrew: "Let there be Light"), and he became a mentor to Crowley. For a time Bennett and Crowley shared a flat in London's Chancery Lane, and it was here that Bennett tutored Crowley on applied Kabbalah and the techniques of magical invocation and evocation, as well as showing him how to create magical talismans.

Crowley quickly grasped the fundamentals of magic—or *magick*, as he would later spell it in his own writings on the subject. In *Magick in Theory and Practice*, privately published in 1929 and frequently reprinted since, Crowley outlined the basic philosophy of magic as he had come to see it, which in essence involved the process of making man god-like, both in vision and in power. Crowley's magical statements are instructive because they reveal the particular appeal that magic had for him:

> A man who is doing his True Will has the inertia of the Universe to assist him.[19]

> Man is ignorant of the nature of his own being and powers. Even his idea of his limitations is based on an experience of the past and every step in his progress extends his empire. There is therefore no reason to assign theoretical limits to what he may be or what he may do.[20]
>
> Man is capable of being and using anything which he perceives, for everything that he perceives is in a certain sense a part of his being. He may thus subjugate the whole Universe of which he is conscious to his individual will.[21]
>
> The Microcosm is an exact image of the Macrocosm; the Great Work is the raising of the whole man in perfect balance to the power of Infinity.[22]
>
> There is a single main definition of the object of all magical Ritual. It is the uniting of the Microcosm with the Macrocosm. The Supreme and Complete Ritual is therefore the Invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel, or, in the language of Mysticism, Union with God.[23]

Crowley was initiated as a Neophyte in the Golden Dawn on November 18, 1898, and soon came to appreciate that those with the loftiest ritual grades in the Order were able to wield profound spiritual influence over their followers. Keen to scale the spheres of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life and to ascend to as high a ritual rank as possible, Crowley took the grade of Zelator and then Theoricus and Practicus in the following two months. Initiation into the grade of Philosophus followed in May 1899. Crowley then requested ritual entry into the Second Order—the Red Rose and the Cross of Gold—from the head of the Golden Dawn, Samuel MacGregor Mathers, who at the time was living in Paris. In January 1900, under Mathers's direct supervision, Crowley was admitted "to the Glory of Tiphareth"—the 5° = 6° Adeptus Minor ritual grade associated with the experience of spiritual rebirth. He then returned to England where he challenged the authority of William Butler Yeats who, quite apart from his fame as a well-known literary figure, was also the leader of the Golden Dawn in England. Yeats was unimpressed by this effrontery, and Crowley was unsuccessful in his bid for ritual supremacy.

Having failed to dislodge Yeats as the operative head of the Golden Dawn in England, Crowley suddenly switched course. Unpredictably and apparently acting on pure impulse, he withdrew from the dispute altogether and in June 1900 embarked upon a series of travels through Mexico, the United States, France, Ceylon, and India before finally arriving in Cairo with his wife, Rose, on February 9, 1904.[24] Crowley's entire conception of the magical universe was about to be dramatically transformed.

## CROWLEY'S THELEMIC REVELATION

The doctrine of *Thelema* derives specifically from a remarkable spiritual event that occurred during Crowley's visit to Cairo in 1904. Crowley would come to believe that the revelatory communication itself emanated from the ancient Egyptian gods, via an entity named Aiwass (or Aiwaz) whom Crowley believed to be a messenger from Horus. Paradoxically, Crowley's personal revelation would also come to acquire a quasi-biblical orientation, for it led him to regard himself henceforth as the Beast 666 referred to in the Book of Revelation. Crowley's life and career as a ceremonial magician would subsequently focus on the ongoing personal quest to find the ideal Whore of Babalon—Crowley's variant spelling[25]—or Scarlet Woman, with whom to enact the philosophy of *Thelema*, or magical will.

On March 17, 1904, Crowley performed a magical ceremony in his apartment in Cairo, invoking the Egyptian deity Thoth, god of wisdom. Crowley's wife, Rose, appeared to be in a dazed, mediumistic state of mind, and the following day, while in a similar state of drowsiness, she announced that Horus was waiting for her husband. Crowley was not expecting such a statement from his wife, but according to his diary she subsequently led him to the nearby Boulak Museum, which he had not previously visited. Rose pointed to a statue of Horus, or Ra-Hoor-Khuit, and Crowley was intrigued to discover that the exhibit was numbered 666, the number of the Great Beast in the Book of Revelation. Crowley regarded this as an omen. He returned to his hotel and invoked Horus:

> Strike, strike the master chord!
> Draw, draw the Flaming Sword!
> Crowning Child and Conquering Lord,
> Horus, avenger! [26]

On March 20, 1904, Crowley received a mediumistic communication through Rose stating that "the Equinox of the Gods had come," and he arranged for an assistant curator at the Boulak Museum to make notes on the inscriptions from Stele 666. Rose continued to fall into a passive, introspective state of mind and advised her husband that precisely at noon on April 8, 9, and 10, he should enter the room where the transcriptions had been made and for exactly an hour on each of these three days he should write down any impressions received. The resulting communications, allegedly dictated by a semi-invisible Egyptian entity named Aiwass—said to be a messenger of Horus—resulted in a document that Crowley later titled *Liber Al vel*

*Legis* (*The Book of the Law*). The pronouncements contained in *Liber Al vel Legis* became a turning point in Crowley's magical career. Crowley was specifically commanded by Aiwass to put aside the Kabbalistic ceremonial magic he had learned in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and to pursue the magic of sexual partnership instead:

> Now ye shall know that the chosen priest and apostle of infinite space is the prince-priest The Beast, and in his woman called The Scarlet Woman is all power given. They shall gather my children into their fold: they shall bring the glory of the stars into the hearts of men. For he is ever a sun and she a moon.[27]

Crowley would soon come to believe that his magical destiny was inextricably connected to the Horus figure Ra-Hoor-Khuit whose statue he had seen in the Boulak Museum. In Egyptian mythology the deities Nuit (female-the circle-passive) and Hadit (male-the point-active) were said to have produced a divine child, Ra-Hoor-Khuit, through their sacred union. According to Crowley this combination of the principles of love and will brought into incarnation the "magical equation known as the Law of Thelema." The principal magical dictum contained in *Liber Al vel Legis* is "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." The concluding instruction in *Liber Al vel Legis* reads as follows: "There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt. Love is the law, love under will."

Crowley's notion of the will, or Will—he usually capitalized it to denote its special significance—is central to his magical philosophy. Crowley understood that one should live according to the dictates of one's true Will because "a man who is doing his True Will has . . . the Universe to assist him." An individual's True Will is that person's authentic spiritual purpose and it also confers a sense of identity. "The first principle of success in evolution," wrote Crowley in his key work, *Magick in Theory and Practice* (1929), "is that the individual should be true to his own nature."

Crowley believed that in terms of his own individual spiritual purpose, his unique personal destiny had been made manifestly clear by the communications received from Aiwass in *Liber Al vel Legis*. As Crowley's magical disciple Kenneth Grant has written, from a Thelemic perspective the revelations in Cairo in 1904 represented nothing less than the birth of a new aeon in the history of humanity's spiritual evolution:

> According to Crowley the true magical revival occurred in 1904, when an occult current of cosmic magnitude was initiated on the inner planes. Its focus was Aiwaz and it was transmitted through Crowley to the human plane . . . The initiation of this occult current created a vortex,

> the birth-pangs of a New Aeon, technically called an Equinox of the Gods. Such an event recurs at intervals of approximately 2000 years. Each such revival of magical power establishes a further link in the chain of humanity's evolution, which is but one phase only of the evolution of Consciousness.[28]

In cosmological terms, Crowley believed he had now been recognized by the transcendent powers of the ancient Egyptian pantheon as the "divine child" brought into being through the sacred union of Nuit and Hadit. There could be no doubting the importance of this event and its dramatic outcome. In *Liber Al vel Legis* we read "Ra-Hoor-Khuit hath taken his seat in the East at the Equinox of the Gods."

Previously, according to Crowley, there had been two other aeons: one associated with the Moon and the other with the Sun. The first of these, the aeon of Isis, was a matriarchal age characterized by the worship of lunar deities; the second epoch, the aeon of Osiris, was a patriarchal age associated with incarnating demi-gods or divine kings. John Symonds, Crowley's first biographer,[29] describes this historical process in his introduction to Crowley's *Confessions*:

> The cosmology of *The Book of the Law* is explained by Crowley thus: there have been, as far as we know, two aeons in the history of the world. The first, that of Isis, is the aeon of the woman; hence matriarchy, the worship of the Great Mother and so on. About 500 B.C. this aeon was succeeded by the aeon of Osiris, that is the aeon of the man, the father, hence the paternal religions of suffering and death—Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. This aeon came to an end in 1904 when Aleister Crowley received *The Book of the Law*, and the new aeon, that of Horus, the child, was born. In this aeon the emphasis is on the true self or will, not on anything external such as gods or priests.[30]

There can be no doubting the position of *Liber Al vel Legis* with regard to the religious traditions that preceded the 1904 revelation. "With my Hawk's head," proclaims Ra-Hoor-Khuit (i.e., Horus) in stanzas III: 51–54:

> I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the Cross. I flap my wings in the face of Mohammed and blind him. With my claws I tear out the flesh of the Indian and the Buddhist, Mongol and Din. Bahlasti! Ompedha! I spit on your crapulous creeds.[31]

Quite apart from the iconoclastic tone adopted by *Liber Al vel Legis* in dismissing earlier religious traditions like Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam, the sexual implications of the revelation were also made clear. The received doctrine of the aeon of Horus would now supersede

Christianity and all the other outmoded religions that had constructed barriers to spiritual freedom, and the way this would be achieved was through the power of sexuality. *Liber Al vel Legis* summons the Scarlet Woman to "raise herself in pride!" and calls for uninhibited sexual freedom:

> Let her work the work of wickedness! Let her kill her heart! Let her be loud and adulterous; let her be covered with jewels, and rich garments, and let her be shameless before all men. Then will I lift her to the pinnacles of power: then will I breed from her a child mightier than all the kings of the earth. I will fill her with joy.[32]

As Kenneth Grant has explained, with reference to *Liber Al vel Legis* and its call for sexual freedom, Crowley came to believe that the so-called Great Work—sacred union, or the attainment of Absolute Consciousness—would be achieved through the sexual union of the Great Beast with the Whore of Babalon: "The Beast, as the embodiment of the Logos (which is Thelema, Will) symbolically and actually incarnates his Word each time a sacramental act of sexual congress occurs, i.e., each time love is made under Will."[33] A review of Crowley's subsequent career shows that he would spend much of his life from this time onward seeking lovers and concubines who could act as his Divine Whore. While he would be frustrated in his numerous attempts to find a suitable and enduring partner, there were many who filled the role temporarily.

In relation to the practice of sex magic, quite apart from defining Crowley's spiritual destiny as the High Priest of Thelema, *Liber Al vel Legis* also contained instructions relating to ceremonial offerings associated with sacramental sex magic, specifically the preparation of what later came to be known as "cakes of light." Preparation of this ritual offering as specified by Ra-Hoor-Khuit, is outlined in III: 23–25 of *Liber Al vel Legis*:

> For perfume mix meal and honey and thick leavings of red wine: then oil of Abramelin and olive oil, and afterward soften and smooth down with rich fresh blood. The best blood is of the moon, monthly: then the fresh blood of a child, or dropping from the host of heaven: then of enemies; then of the priest or of the worshippers; last of some beast, no matter what. This burn: of this make cakes and eat unto me.[34]

As one of Crowley's most recent biographers, Lawrence Sutin, has noted:

> There is no evidence that Crowley ever used the fresh blood of a child or an enemy in preparing the cakes. Indeed, in his comment on this verse,

> written during the period, Crowley was careful to specify that the "child" was "Babalon and the Beast conjoined"—that is, the elixir of sexual magic.[35]

The magical elixir itself consisted of the "ingredients" of sexual congress itself: semen from the male, gluten from the woman's vagina, and preferably fresh menstrual blood, as specified in stanza 24 of Book III of *Liber Al vel Legis*. These ingredients were included in the preparation of the "cakes of light," which were then consumed by participants as a ritual offering to Ra-Hoor-Khuit. It is clear that Crowley placed great emphasis on the magical elixir because it is later referred to as "the germ of life" in *The Book of the Unveiling of Sangraal*—part of the "Secret Instruction of the Ninth Degree" in the O.T.O., which Crowley was able to gradually transform into a Thelemite order after joining it in 1910. In the ninth degree of the O.T.O., which employs veiled sexual references, the candidate is instructed as follows:

> Now then, entering the privy chapel [the vagina], do thou bestow at least one hour in adoration at the altar, exalting thyself in love toward God, and extolling Him in strophe and antistrophe [sexual lovemaking]. Then do thou perform the Sacrifice of the Mass [ejaculation of semen]. The Elixir [a mixture of semen and female sexual secretions] being then prepared solemnly and in silence, do thou consume it utterly.[36]

The ritual consumption of a sexual magical elixir was not part of the magical teachings of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which tended to downplay any references to sexual symbolism in its rituals, and since Crowley had established his own unique connection with Aiwass and Ra-Hoor Khui, he had little need for an ongoing relationship with the Golden Dawn after his revelation in Cairo. In deciding to enact the magical procedures dictated by *Liber Al vel Legis*, Crowley had, in any case, already laid the foundation for a quite different sort of magical practice based not on advancing through the *sephiroth* of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life but instead on utilizing the magical energies of sexuality. Crowley's approach to Thelemic sex magic is described in detail in the next chapter.

## MAGICAL WILL AND THE SENSES

In Crowley's essay "The Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magic" published in 1889,[37] specific mention is made of the fact that magical ritual is intended to stimulate each and every one of the physical senses. "Magical phenomena," he writes, "... are willed, and their

cause is the series of 'real' phenomena called the operations of ceremonial Magic. These consist of (1) Sight: The circle, square, triangle, vessels, lamps, robes, implements etc. (2) Sound: The invocations. (3) Smell: The Perfumes. (4) Taste: The Sacraments. (5) Touch: As under (1). (6) Mind: The combination of all these and reflection on their significance."[38]

Crowley's list can be expanded as follows:

*Sight*: Ritual robes, actions, and implements are a visual representation relevant to the specific end that is sought (e.g., invoking a particular deity). In this drama carefully chosen colors and symbols play a paramount role. The ritual magician's vestments, and also the motifs mounted upon the wall of the Temple, are intended to stimulate the mythic imagination and help consolidate the spiritual connection with the gods and goddesses to whom the ritual is addressed.

*Sound*: This involves the vibration of sacred god-names, chants, or invocations (predominantly derived from the Kabbalah) whose auditory rhythms have a profound impact on the consciousness of the participant.

*Taste*: This can take the form of a sacrament that relates symbolically to the nature of the god or goddess in the ritual.

*Smell*: Incense and perfumes are used to increase the sense of rapport with a specific deity within the magical cosmology.

*Touch*: The magician endeavors to develop a sense of tactile awareness beyond the normal functions of the organism since assimilation with "god-forms" involves a heightened state of awareness.

## THE POWER OF THE SACRED NAME

In the Western esoteric tradition, the magical power of the sacred word or name is widely recognized. From a Kabbalistic perspective the Word, or *Logos*, was said to permeate the entire mystical act of Creation,[39] and ritual magicians from both the Right-Hand and Left-Hand paths have held similar views on the intrinsic power of the magical utterance. According to the influential Czechoslovakian ritual magician Franz Bardon (1909–58), "the divine names are symbolic designations of divine qualities and powers,"[40] and Crowley makes a similar point when he writes: "Every true name of God gives the formula of the invocation of that God."[41] In many ancient religious traditions, the sacred name was regarded as the very essence of *being*. According to the Ethiopian Gnostic text *Lefefa Sedek*, God created Himself and the Universe through the utterance of His own name, and therefore "the Name of God was the essence of God [and] was not only the source of His power but also the seat of His very Life, and was to all intents and purposes His Soul."[42] Similarly, in the *Egyptian*

*Book of the Dead*, the deceased newcomer to the Hall of Maat (Hall of Judgment) says to the presiding deity Osiris: "I know thee. I know thy name. I know the names of the two-and-forty gods who are with thee."[43] For it follows that he who knows the secret name strikes home to the very heart of the matter, and has the ability to liberate his soul: he is in control, for the essence of the god is within his very grasp. According to the distinguished Egyptologist Sir Wallis Budge, in ancient Egypt "the knowledge of the name of a god enabled a man not only to free himself from the power of that god, but to use that name as a means of obtaining what he himself wanted without considering the god's will."[44] While he was a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Aleister Crowley took the magical name *Perdurabo* ("I will endure to the end") as an expression of his magical will. As he notes in *Book Four* (1913): "Words should express will; hence the Mystic Name of the Probationer is the expression of his highest Will."[45]

## DARK MAGIC

During his controversial career as a ceremonial magician Crowley was labeled "Satanic" by hostile journalists from the popular press and also by some of his disaffected followers, and to some extent this has colored his magical legacy. While Crowley's proclamation of *Thelema* has nothing to do with modern Satanism per se, Crowley and his writings have strongly influenced the major branches of contemporary Satanism, and this in turn has consolidated Crowley's alignment with the Left-Hand Path. As Jean La Fontaine has observed in a recent academic overview of twentieth-century magic and witchcraft:

> There are only two long-standing, well-established groups of Satanists and each is largely the creation of one man . . . The founder of the Church of Satan died only in October 1997 and the founder of the Temple of Set is still its leader . . . Both organizations have an international membership but it is not clear whether all the groups outside the USA are affiliated to the original organizations, have been founded with their agreement as independent off-shoots, or are simply imitations.[46]

The Church of Satan was founded in San Francisco in 1966 by Anton LaVey (1930–97). LaVey chose Walpurgisnacht—April 30—as the date for establishing his Church because it was traditionally associated with the ascendancy of the Powers of Darkness. LaVey shaved his head and declared 1966 to be Year One, *Anno Satanas*—the first year of the reign of Satan.[47]

Prior to establishing the Church, LaVey had begun holding weekly classes in his tightly shuttered house at 6114 California Street, San Francisco. LaVey's so-called Magic Circle meetings included lectures on vampires, werewolves, haunted houses, extrasensory perception, zombies, and other related subjects, and were attended by a diverse range of people including avant-garde film producer Kenneth Anger.[48] LaVey also lampooned the Roman Catholic Church with a "Black Mass," which involved desecrating the Host, using an inverted cross and black candles, and reciting Christian prayers backward.

LaVey's Church of Satan celebrated sensual indulgence and personal empowerment; its ceremonies were conceived as a means for channeling magical power into an expression of intense carnal desire. LaVey's ritual altar room was completely black with an inverted pentagram[49] mounted on the wall above the fireplace: LaVey believed that this particular pentagram represented the Sigil of Baphomet, a symbol allegedly adapted from the Knights Templars in the fourteenth century. Services began and ended with satanic hymns and a ritual invocation to Satan. A naked woman—a human symbol of lust and self-indulgence—was used as an "altar." The following contemporary account describes a typical service in the Church of Satan:

> A bell is run nine times to signal the beginning of the service, the priest turning in the circle counter clockwise, ringing the bell to the four cardinal points. The leopard-skin cover is removed from the mantelpiece, revealing the nude body of the female volunteer altar for the evening. The purification is performed by one of the assistant priests, who sprinkles the congregation with a mixture of semen and water, symbolic of creative force. LaVey then takes a sword from its sheath, held by Diane, his wife and high priestess, and invokes Satan in his cardinal manifestations. Satan, in the South, represents Fire; Lucifer in the East, is symbolic of Air; Belial, in the North, represents Earth; and Leviathan, in the West, is his watery aspect. The officiating priest then drinks from the chalice, which is filled with any liquid he may desire, from lemonade to 100-proof vodka, making a symbolic offering to Satan. The chalice is then placed on the pubic area of the girl-altar, where it stays for the remainder of the evening.[50]

LaVey believed in celebrating Christian "sins" as virtues and formulated the following satanic statements for his key work, *The Satanic Bible* (1969), as an expression of his occult approach:

> Satan represents indulgence instead of abstinence.
>
> Satan represents vital existence instead of spiritual pipe dreams.
>
> Satan represents undefiled wisdom instead of hypocritical self-deceit.

> Satan represents kindness to those who deserve it instead of love wasted on ingrates.
>
> Satan represents vengeance instead of turning the other cheek.
>
> Satan represents responsibility to the responsible instead or concern for psychic vampires.
>
> Satan represents man as just another animal . . . who, because of his "divine spiritual and intellectual development' has become the most vicious animal of all.
>
> Satan represents all of the so-called sins as they all lead to physical, mental or emotional gratification.
>
> Satan has been the best friend the Church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years.[51]

LaVey believed that the Church of Satan presented a clear and uncompromising challenge to the conventional Christian mores of Middle America—there was no place in his magical credo for humility, weakness, or "turning the other cheek."[52] However, LaVey did not regard his Church as anti-Christian, arguing instead that Christianity was irrelevant because it failed to address humanity's basic emotional needs, denied man's carnal nature, and placed its devotees in a position of dependence on "an unmerciful God who cares not whether we live or die."[53] LaVey similarly had no illusions about vows of poverty as a means of gaining spiritual redemption, maintaining instead that magic was essentially about power, and that wealth was a type of power.[54] LaVey reserved the right to divert funds otherwise intended for the Church of Satan across for his own personal use, and it was this particular issue that would result in a split in the Church leadership in 1975. At this point, contemporary American Satanism would divide into two opposing camps: those remaining loyal to LaVey and those who would depart, establishing the Temple of Set.

By 1975 it had become evident that there were significant rifts within the Church of Satan. According to LaVey's colleague Michael Aquino—editor of the Church's newsletter, *The Cloven Hoof*—the Church was attracting far too many "fad-followers, egomaniacs and assorted oddballs whose primary interest in becoming Satanists was to flash their membership cards for cocktail-party notoriety."[55] At the same time LaVey was also complaining that the $10 annual fee levied for Church membership was not yielding him sufficient personal income.[56]

In early 1975, LaVey sent out advice in the Church newsletter advising that, forthwith, all higher degrees of initiation would be available for contributions in cash, real estate or valuable objects of art. According to Aquino, the effect on many Church members was shattering:

> If there had been a single unifying factor that had brought us to Satanism, it was the Church's stand against hypocrisy. So when we learned of this policy, our reaction to it was that Anton LaVey was betraying his office, betraying everything that he had worked for, for so many years.[57]

In June 1975 an act of desertion took place: key members of the priesthood resigned from the Church of Satan, at the same time making it clear that they were not leaving the priesthood itself. "In fact," Aquino has stated, "we had a sacred responsibility to take it with us."[58] A doctoral graduate from the University of California at Santa Barbara with a strong interest in comparative religion and philosophy, Aquino had joined the Church of Satan in 1969.[59] At the time of the split within the Church of Satan, he was a Priest of the fourth degree and the senior member of the splinter group. Nevertheless, in a manner somewhat comparable to Crowley's revelatory communication from Aiwass in 1904, Aquino now sought new instructions from Satan. On the evening of June 21, 1975, in a ritual magic ceremony, Aquino summoned the Prince of Darkness, "to tell us what we may do to continue our Quest."[60] The result, according to Aquino, was an act of automatic writing: "a communication from a god to a human being."[61]

In a document titled *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*, Satan revealed himself as the ancient Egyptian god Set, and named Michael Aquino as LaVey's replacement.[62] Aquino was described in the script as the successor to Aleister Crowley, and Magus, fifth degree, of the new aeon of Set. *The Book of Coming Forth by Night* also identified a new name for both Church and deity: "Reconsecrate my Temple and my Order in the true name of Set. No longer will I accept the bastard title of a Hebrew Fiend."[63] There were also other instructions for the new magical epoch:

> When I came first to this world, I gave to you my great pentagram, timeless measure of beauty through proportion. And it was shown inverse, that creation and change be exalted above rest and preservation.
>
> With the years my pentagram was corrupted, yet time has not the power to destroy it. Its position was restored by the Church of Satan, but its essence was dimmed with a Moorish name, and the perverse letters of the Hebrews, and the goat of decadent Khar. During the Age of Satan I allowed this curious corruption, for it was meant to do me honor as I was then perceived.
>
> But this is now my Aeon, and my pentagram is again to be pure in its splendor. Cast aside the corruptions, that the pentagram of Set may shine forth. Let all who seek me be never without it, openly and with pride, for by it shall I know them.

> Let the one who aspires to my knowledge be called by the name Setian.[64]

Set also announced a sacred magical word for the new era:

> The Word of the Aeon of Set is *Xeper*—"become."

Aquino claims that the revelation from Set led the priesthood of the former Church of Satan into new areas of inquiry:

> The founders of the Temple of Set knew very little about Egyptology and we had to go and find out who Set was, and why something like this should be happening. We found out some very interesting things. The usual understanding of Set is that he was an evil god in the old Egyptian system—the benevolent father-god being Osiris and his evil antagonist, Set, who murdered him.
>
> In our research we discovered that this was in fact a much later corruption, and that the initial identity of Set had been that of the god of night, of the darkness, as opposed to the god of the day, the sun. Set symbolised the *isolated psyche*, the spark of life within the self, a creative force in the universe rather than an enemy figure, an inspiration for the individual consciousness.[65]

The magical word "xeper" also became central to the philosophy of the Temple of Set. Pronounced *khefer* and translated as "I have come into being," its associated symbols were the scarab beetle and the dawning sun. In a recent statement exploring the significance of "xeper," senior Temple of Set member Don Webb has written that this word

> generates the Aeon of Set, and is the current form of the Eternal Word of the Prince of Darkness. To know this word is to know that the ultimate responsibility for the evolution of your psyche is in your hands. It is the Word of freedom, ecstasy, fearful responsibility, and the root of all magic.[66]

Webb describes xeper as "the experience of an individual psyche becoming aware of its own existence and deciding to expand and evolve that existence through its own actions."[67] Because the Temple of Set emphasizes the magical potential of the individual, the focus of the entire organization reflects this orientation: all Setians are on an individual, self-determined magical journey, and the consequences are entirely up to them. According to Webb,

> Xeper is the experience of an individual psyche becoming aware of its own existence through its own actions. Xeper has been experienced by anyone who has decided to seek after his or her own development.[68]

Although the Temple of Set recognizes a system of initiatory degrees,[69] there are no prescribed rituals or dogmas and no specific

vows. According to Lilith Sinclair, Aquino's wife and fellow priestess in the Temple of Set, the rituals in the Church of Satan used to be presented "on a very self-indulgent, materialistic level," and Satan himself was "more a symbol than an actual reality."[70] However, Sinclair maintains that her relationship with Satan within the context of the Temple of Set has evolved to a new level. Her ongoing personal contact with the Prince of Darkness is now both tangible and powerful—"a very quiet, serene, beautiful touching of minds."[71]

While most forms of mysticism advocate the surrender of the ego in a state of transcendent union with the infinite Godhead—an act described earlier by members of the Dragon Rouge as "melting into God"—according to the Setian perspective an awareness of the personal self should be maintained at all times. According to Sinclair, when a Temple member is communicating with Set, "you retain your individuality . . . but at the same time you are linked with the essence of the Prince of Darkness. It's a natural exchange and flow of energy, of mind awareness."[72]

As both the first and current High Priest of the Temple of Set,[73] Michael Aquino remains its leading advocate: the Temple reflects both his intellectual background and his emphasis on rational thought. The activities of the Temple are also far removed from LaVey's earlier focus on carnality and sensual indulgence. As Aquino observes in *The Crystal Tablet of Set*, "The Church [of Satan] had been arrogantly sensationalistic; the Temple [of Set] was cautiously philosophical."[74]

Aquino's principal text on the nature of magical consciousness is a lengthy essay titled "The Black Magical Theory of the Universe," which is included in a collection of writings assembled in *The Crystal Tablet of Set* (1983, revised 1986).[75] Here Aquino distinguishes between what he calls "Lesser Black Magic" and "Greater Black Magic." In the first of these two approaches, the magician "applies his knowledge to entities and events in the objective universe . . . in accordance with his Will."[76] Greater Black Magic, however, involves what Aquino refers to as "the theory and practice of non-natural interaction with the subjective universe"[77] and is based on the concept of the Magical Link between the objective and subjective universes.[78] Aquino defines Greater Black Magic as "the causing of change to occur in the subjective universe in accordance with the Will. This change in the subjective universe will cause a similar and proportionate change in the objective universe."[79] Aquino also draws on the philosophical writings of

Johann Fichte (1762–1814), who postulated the existence of a "mental essence" encompassing the objective world:

> [Fichte] postulated the original existence of a mental essence divided into the ego (the sensation of the self) and the non-ego (sensations of things not perceived as the self). This mental essence is . . . a sort of "supermind" which transcends all particular ego and non-ego manifestations.[80]

Applying Fichte's concept to a magical context, Aquino maintains that the "concentrated energies" of the ego can be used to bring about changes in the "non-ego" part of the "mental essence . . . which defines and binds together the laws of consistency in the objective universe."[81] According to Aquino every individual is essentially *separate* from the universe, and it therefore follows that "any conscious act relative to that universe . . . is an exercise in that separateness. Hence to be aware of one's disconnection from that universe is to remain disconnected from it."[82]

Aquino rejects Christianity on philosophical grounds because he believes its doctrines are essentially irrational and are not based on an authentic understanding of the nature of the soul:

> Jesus Christ is reputed to have said that, to enter Heaven, one must be "as a little child." To put it another way, such a person would have to radiate an innocent, selfless passion for the harmony of the Universe; *he would be unable to conceive himself as apart from it* [my italics]. The irony of Christ's admonition, however, is that neither innocence nor selflessness are products of the rational intellect . . . One can conduct one's life as though one were innocent and selfless [but] beneath all appearances, all affectations, the actual state of the soul remains as it is: either animal/natural or human/enlightened, either asleep and ignorant or awake and all too aware.[83]

Aquino's magical conception is clearly based on a form of *gnosis*, but it is a type of *gnosis* grounded also in a notion of human existential *separateness* that sets it apart, for example, from the Gnostic transcendentalism of the Kabbalah where all aspects of creative manifestation merge eventually into *Ain Soph Aur*, the Limitless Light. Aquino rejects the mystical concept of "melting into God," which he associates with the Right-Hand Path,[84] defining this type of occult approach as a form of "white magic." According to Aquino, white magic "embraces not only all conventional religions, but all pagan and nature-worship ideologies as well. To the Temple, the only distinction between them is one of style and imagery, not of underlying substance."[85] Aquino maintains that Satanism provides a unique approach to the objective

and subjective universes because it advocates personal behavior *that is entirely self-determined*:

> All conventional religions, including the pagan ones, are simply a variation on the theme of reunion and submergence of the self within the natural universe. So from our point of view, it really makes no difference whether you pray to a Father god or to a Mother goddess—or to an entire gaggle of gods and goddesses! You are still wishing for their acceptance. You are waiting for them to put their arms around you and say: "You belong. You are part of us. You can relax. We will take care of you. We approve of you. We endorse you . . ." The Satanist, or Black Magician, does not seek that kind of submergence of the self. We do not seek to have our decisions and our morality approved or validated by any higher god or being. We take responsibility unto ourselves.[86]

According to Aquino,

> it is in the process of making the preliminary exploration of the subjective and objective universes that the Black Magician begins to discover and ultimately to know how things really work. He exists wholly in neither the subjective universe (like a mystic) nor the objective universe (like a materialist) . . . He moves back and forth between the two with increasing ease and expertise, influencing the Magical Links between them and thus causing changes in accordance with his Will [capitals in the original text].[87]

Lilith Sinclair claims that the unique magical quest undertaken by members of the Temple of Set justifies the elitist attitude that sets them apart from other occult practitioners: "We regard ourselves very highly because we feel we are superior beings. We feel that we are gaining the knowledge of a deeper universe."[88] Don Webb similarly supports Sinclair's elitist perspective, maintaining that the Setian approach allows its initiated members to think and act like gods:

> If we want to participate in the cultural revolution/evolution of the New Cycle, the best method is to transform ourselves. To actively seek, every day, those experiences and perform those deeds that lead to wisdom. If the magician transforms himself or herself, the actions of the magician lead to a transformation of the world around them. If one becomes as a god, one's words and deeds will have the effect of gods.[89]

Webb also argues that practitioners of the Left-Hand Path have a unique approach to sacred awareness that sets them apart from more conventional religious devotees:

> Magic is the way that the follower of the Left Hand Path can have the *lived experience* of being a god, rather than praying to an image of a god created by his or her imagination.[90]

In addition to claiming that the Setian practitioner can journey "back and forth" between the objective and subjective worlds and impose his or her magical Will in both domains, Aquino also endorses the classic Gnostic perspective that the psyche is neither dependent on nor imprisoned by the physical body. According to Aquino, the mind of the Setian magician is capable of reaching out "towards the limitlessness of its conscious existence."[91] This, for Aquino, is what "xeper" really implies. For the master Setian, the conscious universe literally has no boundaries. Aquino developed this idea from a statement contained in *The Book of Lucifer* in Anton LaVey's *Satanic Bible*:

> If a person has been vital throughout his life and has fought to the end for his earthly existence, it is this ego which will refuse to die, even after the expiration of the flesh which housed it . . . It is this . . . vitality that will allow the Satanist to peek through the curtain of darkness and death, and remain earthbound.[92]

What, then, of the darkness and death referred to in this extract from *The Book of Lucifer*? Paradoxically, the answer emerges in the Setian response to self-determination. Setians regard the image of Set—the Egyptian God of the Night—as a dynamic force for change. Set is the "separator" or "isolator"—the God who slew stasis (represented by Osiris) and overcame chaotic mindlessness (represented by Apep).[93] In this context Set represents the elimination of obsolete thought patterns and social conditioning—a "dethroning of those internal gods that we have received from society"[94]—and as Don Webb explains in his essay on the sacred word "xeper," the nature of the Setian quest, as he sees it, is "to become an immortal, potent and powerful Essence."[95] Webb has also stated quite specifically that the mission of the Temple of Set "is to recreate a tradition of *self-deification*."[96] According to Webb, the quest for self-deification and the attainment of immortality are intimately connected:

> We choose as our role model the ancient Egyptian god Set, the archetype of Isolate Intelligence, rather than the somewhat limiting Hebrew Satan, archetype of the Rebel against cosmic injustice . . . We do not worship Set—only our own potential. Set was and is the patron of the magician who seeks to increase his existence through expansion. . . . Black Magic is to take full responsibility for one's actions, evolution and effectiveness.[97]

In ancient Egyptian mythology Set was the only God who overcame death, and this is of special significance to Setians because they believe it is possible to transcend physical death through the potency of the magical will. As Michael Aquino explains in his essay "Satanism and the Immortality of the Psyche" (1996):

> The essence of the psyche . . . is such that its existence is neither dependent upon the material not imprisoned in it . . . Rather, the physical body provides a vehicle in which the psyche can become aware of itself and reach out towards the limitlessness of its consciousness existence . . . It is all too easy to perceive "life" as only the active functioning of one's material body. Such an attitude fosters a disease of the psyche far worse than any of the body. It numbs you to that immortality which is inherent in the Gift of Set.[98]

## VARIATIONS WITHIN THE LEFT-HAND PATH

Clearly, Aleister Crowley's doctrine of *Thelema*—which includes the practice of sex magic—was a radical departure from the Hermetic magic of the Golden Dawn and moved twentieth-century Western esotericism in the direction now associated with the Left-Hand Path. Nevertheless, while there is clear agreement among many of the subgroups associated with the Left-Hand Path with regard to the principles and practices that unite them, it is also apparent that there are significant differences as well. For example, Anton LaVey emphasized sensual indulgence and carnality as the path to self-empowerment in the Church of Satan, whereas the Temple of Set under its leadership from Aquino is clearly more philosophical and restrained in its approach and has moved away from hedonistic and libertine sexuality toward a more meditative and inner-directed association with the Prince of Darkness. According to Zeena Schreck, a onetime High Priestess of the Temple of Set, the practice of sex magic is not specified within the curriculum of the Temple and no emphasis is placed upon it,[99] thus differentiating the approach of Aquino and his associates from the sex magic of *Thelema* and the Typhonian O.T.O. Meanwhile, the Dragon Rouge and Kenneth Grant's Thelemic practitioners emphasize the significance of the so-called Draconian current in which sexual energies are awakened through Tantra and Kundalini Yoga—thereby introducing a notably Eastern influence to the Western esoteric tradition. This is in stark contrast to the Temple of Set, which directs its spiritual focus specifically toward the ancient Egyptian figure of Set, who is perceived as the "Principle of Isolate Intelligence" and "the patron of the magician who seeks to increase his existence through expansion,"[100] a magical concept vastly different from the Hermetic assertion that both the universe and self are located within the mind of God. The antinomianism and self-deification associated with the Left-Hand Path are similarly far removed from the Hermetic perspective.

The *Qliphothic* orientation of the Typhonian O.T.O. and Scandinavian Dragon Rouge is also quite specific. In *Cults of the Shadow* (1975), Kenneth Grant makes specific reference to the *Qliphoth* in distinguishing the path of the mystic (Right-Hand Path) from that of the Typhonian magician (Left-Hand Path):

> The ascent of the Tree of Life is achieved by "rising on the planes" until consciousness is merged with the Highest (i.e. Kether). In order to reify this state in Malkuth (i.e. to "earth" magical consciousness) the process has to be reversed and the Tree descended *via* the *back* of the Middle Pillar . . . The Mystic retains consciousness in the *Brahmarandra* (the topmost *chakra*, at the region of the cranial suture) but the Magician brings it down again to earth. It is the formula of Prometheus, who brought down fire from heaven . . . Thus also the Tantric Adept brings down the Light to manifest in Maya—the shadow-world of illusory images. . . . The Secret Pathway through the realms of the *Qliphoth* at the back of the Tree follows the downward path and comports the assumption of animal forms which correspond to the "gods" of the Qabalistic [Kabbalistic] system. This is a valid explanation of the *were-animal* and its relation to pre-human atavisms.[101]

While Grant perceives the grounding of mystical consciousness via the *Qliphoth* essentially as a redirected flow of Tantric energy, the Dragon Rouge is somewhat more assertive in proclaiming the strengths and virtues of the *Qliphoth*. According to the Dragon Rouge, "the Qliphothic Qabalah [Kabbalah][102] uses the forces of destruction to free the adept from the limitations of creation,"[103] and its Draconian initiations have the potential to lead the adept "down into the darkness where he or she can become a god."[104] In contradistinction to the principle of Hermetic transcendence and union with the Divine Mind, the Dragon Rouge maintains that the "dark forces [of the *Qliphoth*] . . . make a free will and *an individual existence outside God possible*." As a magical organization that openly aligns itself with what it calls the "nightside tradition," the Dragon Rouge also supports the practice of *Goetic* magic through which "the magician conjures and evokes personified dark forces in the shape of different demons."[105] Interestingly, the demonic aspects of the *Qliphoth* are also addressed in a Golden Dawn document titled *The Book of the Black Serpent*. Here the *Qliphoth* are described as "unclean and evil," and the *Qliphothic* planetary rulers and their "arch-daemon servitors" are identified as evil spirits similar to those associated with the *Goetia* and medieval grimoires.[106]

Despite these variations in modern Left-Hand Path magic, we can nevertheless summarize the key characteristics that distinguish this

magical perspective from the more mystical form of ceremonial magic practiced in the Golden Dawn:

- There is an emphasis in all forms of Left-Hand Path magic on *individual* mastery and *self*-empowerment. In Left-Hand Path occult practice, it is the *self* that is finally triumphant, as in the Dragon Rouge where the "created" becomes the "creator," or in the Temple of Set where the "isolated psyche" achieves immortality. This magical *self* does not "merge" or "experience union" with the Godhead, as in the Hermetic and mystical traditions, but remains *distinct* and *separate* from God, and may even become a god in its own right (see "self-deification" below).
- There is a distinct orientation toward the "dark" side of magic. Goetic (demonic) evocation may be employed to conquer fears and limitations (as in the Dragon Rouge), and "Greater Black Magic" may be practiced in order to subjugate the universe to the will of the individual in his or her quest for "infinite potential" (as in the Temple of Set). The Kabbalistic *Qliphoth* can also be considered potentially demonic.
- "Antinomianism," or the act of "going against the grain," is an overriding defining principle of the Left-Hand Path in magic. In the modern magical context, this includes "heretical" or "blasphemous" ritual acts (e.g., LaVey's naked female "altar") or the use of ritual elements "feared and loathed by conventional culture" (e.g., the consumption of semen, vaginal secretions, and menstrual blood as advocated by Crowley and practiced in the O.T.O.). Most modern magical or "occult" groups, by their very nature, would be regarded in Christian circles as "heretical," "heathen," or "demonic" and therefore, by definition, *antinomian*.
- There is an emphasis on the spiritual quest for "self-deification" or the act of "becoming a god." This magical aspiration is most clearly expressed in the Temple of Set and the Dragon Rouge but is also inferred in other contemporary magical practices.

# Chapter 8

# Magic and Sexuality

As we saw in the previous chapter, modern Western sex magic is associated primarily with the Left-Hand Path and the Crowleyan proclamation of sexual "love under will." Although one could easily conclude that the Thelemic revelation was essentially an anti-Christian embrace of lust and wantonness—directly related to Crowley's rejection of his strict Plymouth Brethren upbringing and characterized by his embrace of the Whore of Babalon—for Crowley the appeal of sexual magic appears to have had a much deeper meaning. In Crowley's writings on sex magic, there is the sense that the magician who masters the energies of sexuality and who understands the mysteries of semen is effectively a master of the universal life force itself.

While the Golden Dawn was fragmenting around the turn of the century as a consequence of MacGregor Mathers's authoritarian leadership,[1] Crowley took it upon himself to establish a new magical order and in 1907 formed the Argenteum Astrum (A.A.), or Silver Star. Two years later he commenced production of a semiannual periodical titled *The Equinox* as its official publishing arm. Some of the early issues of *The Equinox* contained Crowley's first writings on sex magic rituals. In these writings Crowley identified three types of sexual activity—autoerotic, heterosexual, and homosexual—as a way of raising magical energy, and he also formulated the notion that sex magic rituals could be dedicated to achieving specific results like financial gain, attaining personal creative success, etc. His central idea was that sex magic could enable the practitioner to focus on a specific goal or outcome. The magician would dedicate the sexual activity to the goal of the magical ritual and would hold the image of that goal in his mind at the peak of sexual climax: at that very moment the energy raised during the ritual would be directed to the goal by the magical will.

In this way the sex magic practitioner would be able to "wed the image and the magical power."

Initially, the A.A. drew primarily on borrowed sources from the Golden Dawn. Crowley had begun rewriting MacGregor Mathers's Kabbalistic rituals, employing an amended form of the Golden Dawn grades as well as including some yogic and oriental material of his own. The A.A. gradually developed as a vehicle for Crowley's increasingly explicit bisexuality, thereby complicating the apparently clear sex-role distinction between the Beast and the Scarlet Woman delineated in *Liber Al vel Legis*.

One of the early members of the A.A. was Victor Neuburg, a young poet who, like Crowley, had studied at Trinity College, Cambridge. Crowley heard about Neuburg from another A.A. member, Captain J. F. C. Fuller, and invited him to his magical retreat in Boleskine, Scotland. Crowley quickly recognized in Neuburg a kindred spirit, and they would soon enter into a homosexual magic liaison tinged with sadomasochistic tendencies, which would last until 1914. Following a painful divorce from his wife, Rose, in 1909, Crowley went with Neuburg to Algeria where they intended exploring the Enochian magic of the sixteenth-century Elizabethan occultists Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelley.[2] This process involved the magical evocation of 30 so-called Aethyrs or Aires—a group of metaphysical spirit entities that included Choronzon, the demon of Chaos. Deep in the Algerian desert, Crowley summoned the different Aethyrs in turn, and transcripts of these visionary evocations would later form the basis for one of his most significant books, *The Vision and the Voice*.[3] While in the Algerian desert, Crowley and Neuburg also engaged in homosexual sex magic. Crowley writes in his *Confessions* that on one occasion they climbed a mountain named Da'leh Addin and felt an intuitive command to perform a magical ceremony on the summit:

> We accordingly took loose rocks and built a great circle, inscribed with the words of power; and in the midst we erected an altar and there I sacrificed myself [submitted to anal sex]. The fire of the all-seeing sun [Neuburg's penis] smote down upon the altar, consuming every particle of my personality. I am obliged to write in hieroglyph of this matter, because it concerns things of which it is unlawful to speak openly under penalty of the most dreadful punishment.[4]

After Crowley returned to England, the A.A. began to grow modestly, building on its core membership, which included Captain J. F. C. Fuller and Crowley's Golden Dawn teacher George Cecil Jones. The A.A. would in due course initiate around a hundred of Crowley's

followers, among them Neuburg's friend and fellow poet Pamela Hansford Johnson, Australian violinist Leila Waddell, mathematics lecturer Norman Mudd from Bloemfontein, and the visionary English artist Austin Osman Spare.[5] However, events took a strange turn in London in May 1912 when Crowley was contacted one evening at his Fulham flat by a man named Theodor Reuss. Reuss identified himself as Brother Merlin, head of the German branch of the O.T.O. Crowley would already have been familiar with the O.T.O. because according to occult historian Francis King, he had been admitted to its lower grades a year earlier.[6] What surprised the British occultist was Reuss's claim that Crowley had published a statement that revealed the most prized secret of the Order's ninth degree—the sacrament of sex magic.[7] Crowley was initially perplexed by Reuss's accusation and wondered which publication he was referring to. Reuss then reached across to Crowley's bookshelf and pulled down a copy of his recently published work *The Book of Lies*, a collection of magical commentaries and reflections. The offending lines were contained in Chapter 36 titled "The Star Sapphire," which begins with the words: "Let the Adept be armed with his Magick Rood and provided with his Mystic Rose." Further on Crowley's text reads as follows: "Let him drink of the Sacrament and let him communicate the same."

Crowley pointed out to Reuss that he had not yet been admitted to the ninth degree of the O.T.O, so he was not in a position to reveal its secrets. In "The Star Sapphire" Crowley had used the Old English word *rood* to mean a cross, and Reuss had assumed that he was referring to the phallus. Reuss had also assumed that the Mystic Rose was a reference to the vagina. Then there was the issue of what "drinking the Sacrament" could actually be referring to. As they were speaking Crowley realized intuitively that sexual intercourse between priest and priestess must be a culminating event in the ritual of the O.T.O's ninth degree, and he now engaged Reuss in a discussion about sex magic that lasted for several hours. The outcome was that Crowley would in due course become the head of a new magical order to be called the Mysteria Mystica Maxima, effectively an English subsidiary of the German O.T.O.[8] Sometime later—in 1922, following Reuss's retirement—Crowley replaced Reuss as the head of the O.T.O. itself, a position he held until his death in 1947.[9]

## CROWLEY'S WRITINGS ON SEX MAGIC

During his magical career Crowley produced several short texts on sex magic, some of which are written in veiled symbolic language.

These texts include *De Arte Magica* (written in 1914 and also translated and published in Reuss's German-language O.T.O. magazine, *Oriflamme*, in the same year); *Liber Agape*; *Energized Enthusiasm: A Note on Theurgy*, and the notorious, but blandly titled *Emblems and Modes of Use*. Crowley's *Gnostic Mass* and the *Mass of the Phoenix* also con tain sex magic references. Despite their often discursive language and veiled symbolism, these texts provide intriguing insights into Crowley's philosophy and practice of sex magic.

*De Arte Magica* was intended as a document for IX° O.T.O candidates. After reminding the reader that "the Phallus is the physiological basis of the Oversoul"[10]—a statement with which Reuss would surely have agreed—Crowley goes on to describe sex magic methods drawn from both the Jewish Kabbalah and the Hindu spiritual tradition. With regard to the former, Crowley states that "in the semen itself . . . lies a creative life which cannot be baulked'." According to Jewish teachings, says Crowley, conjugal love should be a holy act, preceded by ablutions and prayer: "All lustful thoughts must be rigidly excluded, the purpose must be solely that of procreation [and] the blessing of God must be most earnestly invoked." However, Crowley was also interested in the magical consequences of other types of sexual act:

> All other sexual acts involving emission of semen . . . attract other spirits, incomplete and therefore evil . . . nocturnal pollutions bring succubi, which are capable of separate existence and of vampirising their creator. But voluntary sterile acts create demons, and (if done with concentration and magical intention) such demons . . . may subserve that intention.[11]

Crowley also makes reference to the Hindu concept that *prana* or life force "resides in the *Bindu*, or semen." Certain yogic practitioners, writes Crowley, are able to

> stimulate to the maximum its [i.e., sperm's] generation, and at the same time vigorously withhold by will. After some little exercise they claim that they can deflower as many as eighty virgins in a night without losing a single drop of the Bindu. Nor is this ever to be lost, but reabsorbed through the tissues of the body. The organs thus act as a siphon to draw constantly fresh supplies of life from the cosmic reservoir, and flood the body with their fructifying virtue . . . in the semen itself exists a physical force which can be turned to [the] magical or mystical ends of the Adept.[12]

Here we have a clear expression of the concept that the individual human will can harness the life force in semen and direct it to a specific magical purpose. Writings like *Liber Agape* and *Energized Enthusiasm: A Note on Theurgy*, on the other hand, are much more obscure:

they contain veiled symbolism and require more detailed scrutiny. *Liber Agape* is also known as *The Book of the Unveiling of the Sangraal* and was intended as "a secret instruction of the ninth degree" in the O.T.O.[13]

*Liber Agape* begins with a prayer, a salutation to Baphomet,[14] and a statement inferring that the ninth degree of the O.T.O. will reveal occult secrets hitherto associated with the Knights of the Temple (Knights Templar) and the "Brethren of the Rose Crosse." The rite itself is described as a "High Mass to be celebrated in the Temple of the Holy Ghost." Crowley employs alchemical imagery in his text, making reference to the "Medicine of Metals," "the Philosopher's Stone," "Tinctures White and Red," and "the Elixir of Life." However, the latter are clearly intended as sexual images. The Elixir of Life refers to the sexual fluids produced and comingled in the vagina through sexual intercourse. The white tincture is also described elsewhere in Crowley's sex magic writings as the "Gluten of the White Eagle"[15] and is a reference to the sexual fluids (and sometimes also the menstrual blood) of the female participant in sex magic. The red tincture is the "Blood of the Red Lion," a reference to the semen generated by the male participant (Crowley often linked blood symbolically with semen).[16]

Interestingly, *Liber Agape* incorporates within its structure the text of *The Star Sapphire*—the short work that Theodor Reuss believed betrayed the innermost secret of the ninth degree of the O.T.O. We are fortunate that a commentary on *The Star Sapphire* has recently been made available by American ceremonial magician Frater Osiris, a former member of the O.T.O., who was privy to the inner-Order *Thelemic* interpretation of the text.[17] While it is clear at the outset that *The Star Sapphire* is intended as a sex magic tract, and it comes as no surprise that the *Magick Rood* is the phallus and the *Mystic Rose* is the vagina, it is perhaps less obvious that the reference to "make the Holy Hexagram" is an instruction that the man and woman should interlock their heads and bodies in a mutual oral sex position to form the shape of a hexagram.[18] Crowley provides a clue in the aptly numbered Chapter 69 of *The Book of Lies* where he refers to the Holy Hexagram and the "Double Gift of Tongues." According to Frater Osiris, "Making the Rosy Cross" is also a reference to sexual intercourse, and the participants should utter the magical exclamation "*Ararita*" three times at the moment of orgasm. The instruction "Let him drink of the Sacrament and let him communicate the same" is an instruction that the "sacrament"—the "elixir" or fluids arising from sexual intercourse—should be consumed by both participants, each providing

this elixir to the other. As Frater Osiris notes, "It is suggested elsewhere in Crowley's writings that the Sacrament be dissolved and absorbed in the mouth to obtain the fullest effect."[19]

*Energized Enthusiasm: A Note on Theurgy* (*Liber DCCCLX*)—a work dedicated to "IAO, the supreme One of the Gnostics, the true God"[20]—is one of Crowley's most interesting writings on sex magic, combining didactic content with a seemingly autobiographical, yet highly symbolic, narrative written in the first person. Crowley begins by introducing the reader to the idea that divine consciousness is "reflected and refracted" in works of Genius and in turn feeds on "a certain secretion . . . analogous to semen, but not identical to it."[21] Later Crowley claims that he can always trace a connection between his sexual state and "the condition of [his] artistic creation" and that what he calls "energized enthusiasm" is "the lever that moves God."[22] In other words, there is a technique of ecstasy, heightened by sexuality, which is directly related to artistic creativity and Genius, and this is a technique that subjects God to the artistic intent and human will. In *Energized Enthusiasm* Crowley writes quite specifically that through "the sacramental and ceremonial use of the sexual act, the divine consciousness may be attained."

Later in the same work—which consists of 16 short chapters—Crowley describes a sex magic ceremony of the Rose Croix. The ceremony is presented in Crowley's text as taking place in a mystical vision—a High Mass conducted in a private chapel. The altar is covered by a cloth that displays the symbols of the Rose and Cross, and at the entrance of the chapel stand a young man and woman "dressed in simple robes of white silk embroidered with gold, red and blue." The High Priest presiding over the ceremony is a man of about 60, with a white beard, and he is accompanied by a High Priestess. Both wear richly ornamented robes, have a "stately" presence, and embrace each other. Knights and Dames make up the congregation. The chapel is consecrated, the litany begins, and the High Priest takes from the altar a flask that resembles a phallus—an indication that the ceremony about to be performed has a sexual orientation. The High Priestess then kneels and presents a boat-shaped cup of gold (the cup, as a receptive vessel, being traditionally perceived in the Western esoteric tradition as a "female" symbol, especially in the sexual sense). The High Priest's flask contains wine that looks like fire but that is cool to drink. Crowley somehow receives this as a sacrament—he is an onlooker at the ceremony and feels he is experiencing this sacred rite while in a mystical out-of-the-body state. Crowley writes that he "trembles" as he consumes this sacred drink,

as do other members of the congregation—for the ritual is charged with sacred meaning. In due course the celebrants move down the chapel aisle, and the Knights and Dames rise up and give the secret sign of the Rose Croix. The High Priestess discards her robe, stands naked before the congregation, and begins to sing: "Io Paian! Io Pan!" A sacred mist now rises up around the participants, heightening the sense of mystery as organ music wafts through the chapel, and the High Priest joins his partner at the altar of the Rose Croix where they both lie down. The celebrants, meanwhile, stretch forth their arms in the shape of a cross.

Presumably the "Great Rite" is about to be performed by the High Priest and High Priestess—Crowley does not provide us with the details of what happens next. However, given that in the O.T.O. "Making the Rosy Cross" is a reference to ritual sexual intercourse, it would seem that Crowley's High Mass of the Rose Croix is analogous to the mystic marriage of the alchemical King Sol and Queen Luna who consummate their sacred union and thereby create the "Elixir of Life."[23]

Crowley's Thelemic sex magic ritual, the *Gnostic Mass* (*Liber XV, Ecclesiae Gnosticae Catholicae Canon Missae*), composed in 1913, is linked thematically to *Energized Enthusiasm* and was written around the same time. The *Gnostic Mass*—Crowley's *Thelemic* (and perhaps also blasphemous) response to the Roman Catholic Eucharist—employs specific sexual motifs and draws on the theme of transubstantiation. Although other minor characters play a part, the Mass focuses on two central figures, the Priest, who bears the Sacred Lance (a symbol of the phallus) and the Priestess, who in this ritual context is deemed to be "Virgo Intacta" and is identified symbolically with the Holy Grail (the sacred Cup). During the "Consecration of the Elements," the Priest gives a blessing and oversees the transubstantiation of the "cakes of light" ("By the virtue of the Rod/Be this bread the Body of God!") and wine ("By the virtue of the Rod/Be this wine the Blood of God"), and during the "Mystic Marriage and Consummation" the Priest and Priestess jointly lower the Sacred Lance into Cup in a symbolic expression of sexual union. All congregants then partake of the consecrated "cakes of light," which contain the sexual elixir and which are said to embody "the essence of the life of the Sun."

*The Mass of the Phoenix (Liber XLIV*), by way of contrast, is a simplified form of the Eucharist intended for daily life by the practicing Thelemic magician. Despite its simpler form, Crowley nevertheless considered it to be just as significant as the *Gnostic Mass*.[24] *The Mass of the Phoenix* derives its name from the mythical phoenix, an alchemical symbol of transmutation and resurrection. The phoenix was said to

feed its young on blood drawn from its own breast. First published as Chapter 44 of *The Book of Lies*, the Mass is performed only at sunset and is undertaken as a solitary ceremonial activity. At the climax of the ritual, the magician makes the Mark of the Beast [25] on his (or her) breast, drawing blood either directly with a burin (a small sharp knife) or by cutting a finger, and then inscribing the sign in blood. A cake of light is used to staunch the blood and is then ritually consumed.[26]

Crowley's most controversial work on sex magic, however, is a short four-page article titled "Emblems and Modes of Use," which was intended as a "secret" text for the ninth degree of the O.T.O.[27] Once again, Crowley utilizes alchemical imagery, writing that the "Egg" (Emblem 1) is borne by the "menstruum [that] the Alchemists call the Gluten [capitals in Crowley's text]." The Egg will be fertilized by the "Serpent" (Emblem 2). Crowley says that the Serpent is "the principle of immortality, the self renewal through incarnation, of persistent will, inherent in the 'Red Lion' *who is, of course, the operator*" (note: Crowley generally presents his magical texts from the viewpoint of the male practitioner, even when a woman is involved). Crowley writes that "both Lion and Eagle must be robust, in good health . . . overflowing with energy, magnetically attracted to one another, and in absolute understanding [and] harmony about the object of the operation." According to Crowley, the sex magic operation has to be sufficiently intense that it creates a state of "Black-Out" where "the Ego-consciousness itself is abolished'"[28] At this stage, according to Crowley,

> the Will should still continue to create, stopping only when "the blood of the Red Lion" [i.e., semen] is one with the "Gluten of the White Eagle" and the "Serpent" and the "Egg" have fused completely. The result of this fusion is called the Elixir—and numerous other names, e.g., The Stone of the Philosophers, the Medicine of the Metals etc., especially the Quintessence.[29]

It would seem from this statement that Crowley believes the symbolism of medieval Alchemy—a key branch of the Western esoteric tradition—should be interpreted primarily in sexual terms. For him the elixir itself has innate magical potency. From a purely pragmatic point of view, it can be used to achieve specific magical outcomes and therefore becomes useful in the practice of sorcery:

> The Lion must collect it—the best method is by suction [i.e., sucking it out of his partner's vagina] so as to avoid waste, and share it with the Eagle. It should be absorbed by the mucous membrane [i.e., through the upper palate of the mouth, rather than swallowed]. A portion is

> reserved and placed in physical contact with the magickal link, or with a talisman specially prepared for the Operation, and consecrated accordingly. At the very least, some suitable symbol, e.g. if you are making an opus for $$ smear the Elixir on a gold coin, or ring; if for health, touch the bare earth, or the patient with it. In any case, be careful to consume it by absorption for it restores with interest any virtue that may have been expended in the work itself.[30]

This is not the only occasion where Crowley refers to the idea of the elixir, or semen, being used to achieve specific magical outcomes. In another short text, *Liber A'Aash vel Capricorni Pneumatici* (*Liber CCCLXX*)—which is specified as a major (Class A) sex magic document by members of the O.T.O.[31]—Crowley makes a veiled reference to masturbating on demonic sigils by using the magical utterance as a metaphor for ejaculation:

> Let him sit and conjure; let him draw back the hood from his head and fix his basilisk eye upon the sigil of the demon. Then let him sway the force of him to and fro like a satyr in silence, until the Word burst from his throat . . . that which floodeth him is the infinite mercy of the Genitor-Genitrix of the Universe, whereof he is the Vessel.[32]

*Liber A'Aash vel Capricorni Pneumatici* is not the only reference linking Crowley and sex magic and magical sigils. After Crowley succeeded Theodor Reuss as Outer Head of the O.T.O. in 1922, he expanded the Order's original nine 9 to 11. The 8th, 9th, and 11th degrees focused on nonreproductive sexual acts including masturbation, the consumption of sexual fluids—referred to earlier as the "magical elixir"—and homosexual intercourse.[33] According to O.T.O. historian Peter Koenig, other elements of Crowleyan sex magic, in addition to the ritual consumption of semen and vaginal fluids, were incorporated into the rites of the O.T.O. at this time. They included various forms of sexual visualization and the act of masturbating on magical sigils:

> Crowley's VIIIth degree unveiled . . . that masturbating on a sigil of a demon or meditating upon the image of a phallus would bring power or communication with a [or one's own] divine being . . . The IXth degree was labelled heterosexual intercourse where the sexual secrets were sucked out of the vagina and when not consumed . . . put on a sigil to attract this or that demon to fulfil the pertinent wish . . . In the X1th degree, the mostly homosexual degree, one identifies oneself with an ejaculating penis. The blood (or excrements) from anal intercourse attract the spirits/demons while the sperm keeps them alive.[34]

## SEX MAGIC PRIOR TO THE O.T.O.

Sex magic in the Western esoteric tradition did not begin with the establishment of the O.T.O. Several researchers have drawn attention to the unique contribution made by the influential nineteenth-century American occultist Paschal Beverly Randolph. Randolph is significant because, as religious scholar J. Gordon Melton puts it: "Like Crowley, Randolph discovered the essential aspect of sex magick by suddenly combining long-term interests in sexuality and the occult."[35] The bridging link between Randolph and the O.T.O. is provided by two esoteric orders, the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor and Randolph's Brotherhood of Eulis.

Born in New York in 1825, Paschal Beverly Randolph was the son of a wealthy Virginian named William Randolph, and a slave woman named Flora Beverly who was of mixed East Indian, European, and Madagascan descent. Flora raised her son by herself in a gloomy house on Manhattan Island, but when Randolph was five, his mother died during an epidemic and he was placed in an orphanage. Essentially growing up on his own, Randolph taught himself to read and write by copying letters from printed posters and billboards. Classified as a "free man of color," he trained as a natural physician and also studied spiritualism and Franz Anton Mesmer's theory of "animal magnetism," a precursor of modern hypnosis. During the late 1840s he traveled widely in Europe, visiting England, Scotland, Ireland, France, and Malta as well as also visiting Egypt, Turkey, and Palestine. Intent on seeking out the sources of esoteric wisdom wherever he could find them, Randolph maintained that he received many high initiations while he was in Europe. During his travels he met the famous French Kabbalist and magician, Eliphas Lévi, whose writings and occult ideas would later greatly influence the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. He also met the notable Rosicrucian occultists Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie and Edward Bulwer-Lytton and the eccentric cleric and Rosicrucian historian Hargrave Jennings, who was interested in ancient phallic worship. After returning to the United States, Randolph founded the Fraternitas Rosae Crucis in 1858, the oldest Rosicrucian organization in North America—currently headquartered in Beverly Hall, Quakertown, Pennsylvania. In 1861, after returning to Europe, Randolph was initiated into the Order of the Rose, a group headed by Hargrave Jennings. He then traveled on to Syria where he was inducted as a Hierarch of the Ansaireh before returning to the United States in 1863.

Randolph explored clairvoyant scrying with magic mirrors and also wrote a treatise on the use of hashish as an aid to trance possession. However, he became a controversial figure largely because of his ideas on occult sexuality, expressed publicly at a time when such issues were a taboo subject. Randolph's Rosicrucian activities were interrupted during the Civil War period, but in 1870 he reestablished his Rosicrucian organization in Boston, calling it the Brotherhood of Eulis and using it as a vehicle to explore sex magic.[36] Three years later Randolph published one of his best-known and most controversial books, *Eulis! The History of Love: Its Wondrous Magic, Chemistry, Rules, Laws, Modes, Moods and Rationale, Being the Third Revelation of Soul and Sex*.[37] In *Eulis!*—which derives its title ultimately from the Greek *eos*, meaning "the dawn, the gate of light"—Randolph provides an account of how he was first initiated into the mysteries of sex magic while traveling in the Middle East:

> One night—it was in far-off Jerusalem or Bethlehem, I really forget which—I made love to . . . a dusky maiden of Arabic blood. I of her and that experience learned . . . the fundamental principle of the White Magic of Love; subsequently I became affiliated with some dervishes and fakirs by whom . . . I found the road to other knowledges . . . I am became practically . . . a mystic and in time chief of the lofty brethren . . . discovering the ELIXIR OF LIFE, the universal Solvent . . . and the philosopher's stone.[38]

Basing his ideas substantially on the ritual sex practices of the Islamic Nusairi sect in Syria, Randolph came to believe that the sexual instinct was a fundamental force in the cosmos. Randolph maintained that "the pellucid aroma of divinity" suffuses the sex act, but he also believed that sexual union could become a metaphysical and sacred ritual *only* between married loving couples and *only* when it resulted in full and complete orgasms for both partners. Many years before Crowley and the O.T.O., Randolph proposed that the sexual orgasm could be used to gain practical and tangible outcomes; that is to say, *subject to willed intent, the power of sexuality could be harnessed to produce specific magical results*:

> It follows that as are the people at *that moment* [orgasm] so will be that which enters into them from the regions above, beneath, and round about; wherefore, whatsoever male or female shall truly will for, hopefully pray for, and earnestly yearn for, when love, pure and holy, is in the nuptive ascendent, in form, passional, affectional, divine and volitional, that prayer will be granted, and the boon given. *But the prayer must precede* [the moment of orgasm].[39]

In another text, *The Ansairetic Mystery: A New Revelation Concerning Sex!* (ca. 1873–74), which was circulated privately to his Rosicrucian followers, Randolph lists over a hundred outcomes that he believed could be achieved or resolved through this type of sex magic. They include topics and issues relating to money matters, marital discord, prolonging life, eliminating disease, and charging amulets with life force. Randolph was unstinting in proclaiming the potency of sexuality but warned that it could lead to both highs and lows in the quest for spiritual awakening:

> The ejective moment . . . is the most divine and tremendously important one in the human career as an independent entity, for not only may we launch Genius, Power, Beauty, Deformity, Crime, Idiocy, Shame or Glory on the world's great sea of Life, in the person of the children we may then produce, but we may plunge our own souls neck-deep in Hell's horrid slime, or else mount the Azure as coequal associate Gods; for then the mystic Soul swings wide its Golden gates, opens its portals to the whole vast Universe and through them come trooping either Angels of Light or the Grizzly Presence from the dark corners of the Spaces. Therefore, human copulation is either ascentive and ennobling, or descensive and degrading.[40]

Superficially, Randolph's theories of sex magic and tangible outcomes mirror those of Aleister Crowley. However, Randolph's interpretation of sex magic was actually very different from Crowley's. Randolph deplored masturbation and homosexuality and other forms of nonreproductive sexuality and believed that sacred sex could occur only between a loving heterosexual husband and wife. Randolph's approach essentially involved love among *equals*, whereas Crowley sometimes employed prostitutes or other available women who were not personally committed to his magical purpose and who were used purely for sex. Crowley's magical episode with Victor Neuburg in Algeria involving homosexual anal sex, referred to earlier, was also an act of ritual sexual *submission* by Crowley and would therefore have failed Randolph's criteria on at least two counts.

Randolph seems to have been far more averse than Crowley to the negative, or *Qliphothic*, realms of primal consciousness that could be unleashed through what Randolph regarded as misplaced acts of sex magic. Nevertheless, Randolph and Crowley would certainly have agreed that the orgasm itself was among the most powerful and profound of all human experiences, and Randolph would also have agreed with Crowley's statement in *Energized Enthusiasm* that through "the sacramental . . . use of the sexual act, the divine consciousness

may be attained."[41] For both men, sexuality was a vital key to potency and transcendence.

Robert North, who contributed an introduction to the 1988 edition of Randolph's *Sexual Magic*, maintains that many of the O.T.O. teachings derived directly from Randolph's instructions for the Brotherhood of Eulis. However, it now appears more likely that the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor—which in turn drew on Randolph's sex magic teachings—was probably the specific link connecting Randolph and the O.T.O.

The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor was founded in 1870 by the Polish mystic Max Théon who was interested in Hermeticism and looked to ancient Egypt as the source of the Western esoteric tradition. However, he was also highly eclectic, embracing the Kabbalah, the Rig-Veda, Tantrism, and elements of Freemasonry. For a time he lived in Algeria, where he formulated what he referred to as the Cosmic Tradition and took the mystical name Aia Aziz ("the beloved"). In 1873 Théon recruited the Scottish occultist and Freemason Peter Davidson, a close friend and colleague of Dr. Gerard Encausse (also known as Papus), to join him in administering the Brotherhood. As an initiatory organization the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor first became public in London in 1884, even though it had been in existence since 1870,[42] and its initiations—based on Rosicrucian and Masonic principles—resembled those of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, established several years later. Théon took the role of Grand Master of the Exterior Circle of the Order while Davidson was appointed Provincial Grand Master of the North (Scotland) and later also the Eastern Section (America). Together, Théon and Davidson made extensive use of ancient Egyptian symbolism in their magical ceremonies. This symbolic emphasis was further developed by Thomas H. Burgoyne, who joined the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor in 1883 and helped Théon and Davidson run the organization from this time on. The early curriculum of the Hermetic Brotherhood also included selections from the writings of the Rosicrucian author Hargrave Jennings as well as Paschal Beverly Randolph. During the 1880s and 1890s Davidson and Burgoyne adapted Randolph's *The Mysteries of Eros* and *Eulis!*, placing more emphasis on practical sex magic in the Brotherhood's curriculum. It seems likely that it is through the reworking of Randolph's sex magic concepts in the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, and in particular through Davidson's close association with Papus in Europe, that Randolph's sex magic teachings eventually attracted the attention of Theodor Reuss and his colleague Carl Kellner. According to Peter Koenig, Reuss first made contact with Papus in 1901.[43]

Nevertheless, as indicated earlier, there is something of a gulf between Randolph's version of sex magic as the "White Magic of Love" and the homoerotic approach to sex magic advocated by Reuss and Crowley in the O.T.O. Clearly, Randolph cannot be considered the only major precursor of Crowley's Thelemic sex magic since there are major aspects of Crowley's occult doctrine that are entirely absent in Randolph's writings and philosophy. It is necessary to explore other sources entirely—sources much closer to the origins of the Western esoteric tradition itself—and it comes as no surprise that some of Crowley's libertine mystical and sex magic ideas are mirrored quite specifically in the ritual practices of certain heretical Gnostic sects whose origins date back to the early centuries of the Christian era.[44] These include the Gnostic sects that religious scholar Mircea Eliade refers to as *Pneumatikoi* and Peter Koenig calls "Spermo-Gnostics."[45]

One of the most intriguing elements in the rise of Gnosticism during the early Christian era was the concept that spiritual redemption could be attained by collecting, salvaging, and carrying to heaven the sparks of divine light that were buried in living matter—primarily within the human body. Eliade notes that

> the equation divine light = *pneuma* [Greek: "spirit"] = semen plays a central role only among the Phibionites (and sects related to them) and among the Manichaeans. But while the latter, on the ground of this very equation, scorned the sexual act and exalted a severe asceticism, the Phibionites extolled the most abject sexual orgies and practiced the sacramental absorption of *semen virile* and menstrual fluids, careful only to avoid pregnancy.[46]

Despite the overt sensuality of their sexual rituals, the Syrian Phibionites regarded themselves as Christian Gnostics: they believed that the divine power of the crucified Son had been trapped within the physical confines of the material world. The Phibionites also believed they were giving true expression to their Christian beliefs by releasing this spiritual power during their sacred rituals without creating more children in the process—from their perspective, pregnancy and the act of giving birth would trap more souls within the painful constrictions of physical existence. For them, consuming semen and menstrual blood during the Eucharist was a purer form of ritual communion than the more conventional symbolism of blood and wine. The practices of the Phibionites are described in the *Panarion*, written by the fourth-century Christian writer Epiphanius:

> The power, which is in menstruation and in the sperm they called *psyche*, which would be gathered and eaten. And whatever we eat, flesh

> or vegetables or bread or anything else, we do a favour to the creatures because we gather the psyche from everything . . . And they say that it is the same psyche which is dispersed in animals and beasts, fishes, snakes, men, vegetables, trees and anything that is produced.[47]

Epiphanius was clearly horrified by what he describes as the "shameless" sexual practices of the Phibionites:

> They serve rich food, meat and wine even if they are poor. When they thus ate together and so to speak filled up their veins, from the surplus of their strength they turn to excitements. The man, leaving his wife, says to his own wife: "Stand up and make love with the brother" ("Perform the *agapē* with the brother"). Then the unfortunates unite with each other, and as I am truly ashamed to say the shameful things that are being done by them . . . nevertheless I will not be ashamed to say those things which they are not ashamed to do, in order that I may cause in every way a horror in those who hear about their shameful practices. After they have intercourse in the passion of fornication they raise their own blasphemy toward heaven. The woman and the man take the fluid of emission of the man into their hands, they stand, turn toward heaven, their hands besmeared with the uncleanness, and pray as the people called *Stratiotikoi* and *Gnostikoi*, bringing to the Father of the Nature of All, that which they have on their hands, and they say: "We offer to thee this gift, the body of Christ." And then they eat it, their own ignominy, and say: "This is the body of Christ and this is the Passover for the sake of which our bodies suffer and are forced to confess the suffering of Christ." Similarly also with the woman: when she happens to be in the flowing of the blood they gather the blood of menstruation of her uncleanness and eat it together and say: "This is the blood of Christ."[48]

The Phibionite ritual of consuming menstrual blood and semen is mirrored in Crowley's sex magic practice of consuming "cakes of light," which contained precisely the same key ingredients (based on the instructions conveyed to Crowley by Aiwass in 1904, as recorded in *The Book of the Law*). As with the Phibionites, Crowley included the consumption of sacramental "cakes of light" in both his *Gnostic Mass* and the *Mass of the Phoenix*, and it is clear that Crowley intended that in these magical ceremonies the "cakes of light" should serve as an alternative to the Body of Christ consumed by congregants during Christian communion. Although Crowley does not mention the Phibionites specifically in his writings, he nevertheless believed he was perpetuating the Gnostic tradition through such ceremonies, and for him the ritual consumption of blood and semen was a sacred act. As noted earlier, according to the text of the *Gnostic Mass* consecrated

"cakes of light" contained the sexual elixir and represented "the essence of the life of the Sun."

In the Western esoteric tradition, and in Crowleyan *Thelema* in particular, acts of sacred ritual sex evoke the energies of the life force itself. In this context sexuality is regarded as a vital key that opens a path to magical illumination.

# Chapter 9

# Modern Trance and Meditative Magic

When practitioners of modern Western magic describe their "inner-plane" activities they commonly employ such terms as "astral projection," "path-workings," or "the body of light" to describe their visionary processes. Based on the experiential accounts of the magicians themselves, most modern techniques of magical trance involve a transfer of consciousness to the visionary world of symbols through an act of willed imagination.

In modern magical practice trance states are generally induced through techniques combining bodily relaxation with mental acuity, in which the magician focuses increasingly on his or her inner perception. Usually the visionary magician seeks to conjure specific images to mind while at the same time relaxing the body and restricting the outer vision. Sometimes visionary symbols like the Major Arcana of the Tarot or the Hindu *Tattvas*—which will be described later—serve as "visionary doorways" to the inner planes. Occasionally, magical trance methods may also involve the use of "sigils," which act as a focusing device. Magical visualization is usually undertaken in the dark: the modern magician applies a technique of sensory deprivation by shifting attention away from outer visual stimuli and instead adopts an inner, meditative perspective. The task is then to reinforce the sense of the "alternative reality" provided by the mythological images or visionary landscapes that arise in the meditator's mind as a result of willed concentration.

Senior initiates of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn documented their exploration of trance states, mystical experiences, and out-of-body experiences in a series of documents known as "Flying

Rolls," which, according to historian Francis King, were privately circulated among the Adepti of the pre-1900 Golden Dawn.[1] The Flying Rolls were not included in Israel Regardie's monumental four-volume collection of Golden Dawn rituals (first published 1937–40)[2] and did not become widely known in esoteric circles until the early 1970s.[3]

In *Flying Roll XI*, MacGregor Mathers provides specific instructions relating to a magical method known as "rising in the planes"—a meditative technique used to facilitate mystical awareness. The technique involved "rising" through different symbolic spheres on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life:

> Rising in the Planes is a spiritual process after spiritual conceptions and higher aims; by concentration and contemplation of the Divine, you formulate a Tree of Life passing from you to the spiritual realms above and beyond you. Picture to yourself that you stand in Malkuth—then by use of the Divine Names and aspirations you strive upward by the Path of Tau towards Yesod, neglecting the crossing rays which attract you as you pass up. Look upwards to the Divine Light shining down from Kether upon you. From Yesod leads up the Path of Temperance, Samekh, the arrow cleaving upwards leads the way to Tiphareth, the Great Central Sun of Sacred Power.[4]

MacGregor Mathers's account makes it clear that within the Golden Dawn, magical "ascent" was achieved by visualizing oneself coursing like an arrow toward the higher realms of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. The *sephiroth* (emanations) on the Tree of Life—like Malkuth, Yesod, and Tiphareth—were perceived as magical domains that could be explored in an altered state of consciousness, and the act of "rising in the planes" itself involved "rising" or "ascending" meditatively from one sphere to the next, culminating initially in the spiritual rebirth experience associated with Tiphareth and then in seeking mystical union with the Godhead. Such acts of high magic were associated fundamentally with mystical light and transcendence. An internal Golden Dawn document warning against the dangers of the "dark" or "negative" energies lurking on the reverse side of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life—a work titled *The Book of the Black Serpent* (ca.1900)—encouraged all initiates in the Order to "banish thou therefore the Evil and seek the Good . . . let thy countenance be raised up towards the Light of the Holy One to invoke the Divine Brightness."[5]

Sacred names of power—god-names associated with each *sephirah*—also provided protection and reinforced the sense of magical purpose. MacGregor Mathers believed that the magical practitioner could incorporate Hebrew letters of the alphabet—each of which were ascribed in

the Golden Dawn to the Major Arcana—as a means of intensifying and authenticating trance visions:

> There are three special tendencies to error and illusion which assail the Adept in these studies. They are Memory, Imagination and actual Sight. These elements of doubt are to be avoided, by the Vibration of Divine Names, and by the Letters and Titles of the "Lords Who Wander"—the Planetary Forces, represented by the Seven double letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
>
> If the Memory entice thee astray, apply for help to Saturn whose Tarot Title is the "Great One of the Night of Time." Formulate the Hebrew letter Tau in Whiteness.
>
> If the Visions change or disappear, your memory has falsified your efforts. If Imagination cheat thee, use the Hebrew letter Kaph for the Forces of Jupiter, named "Lord of the Forces of Life." If the Deception be of Lying—intellectual untruth—appeal to the Force of Mercury by the Hebrew letter Beth. If the trouble be of Wavering of Mind, use the Hebrew letter Gimel for the Moon. If the enticement of pleasure be the error, then use the Hebrew letter Daleth as an aid.[6]

In the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, the first three *sephiroth* (emanations from the Godhead) transcend the imaginal realm of forms: they are located above the Abyss that separates them from the seven lower *sephiroth* associated with Creation. MacGregor Mathers makes it clear that the initiate's task in "rising in the planes" is to "Look upwards to the Divine Light shining down from Kether"[7]—the spiritual aspiration of the Hermetic magician is ultimately toward the highest point on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life representing transcendent union with the Godhead.

## BUILDING THE "BODY OF LIGHT"

In addition to their practice of "rising in the planes," the Golden Dawn magicians also developed a technique of willed imagination that employed what was known as the "body of light." The body of light has been described within an occult context as a "magical personality" that is "deliberately built for a purpose [and] acquired through practice and concentration."[8] In a magical context it is the vehicle of conscious awareness through which the magician interacts with "thought-forms," spirit entities, and archetypal beings on the inner, or "astral" planes.[9] The contemporary American occultist Dr. Michael Aquino has described the role of this "magical double" in quasi-Egyptian terms as follows:

> The magician constructs within his subjective universe a magical double or *ka*. (Goethe's *Doppelgänger*). This is an idealized entity whose

> precise characteristics may vary from Working to Working. He then, by an act of Will, transfers his soul or *ba* to the vehicle of this *ka* and then executes his Will in the subjective universe. This may be completely dissociated from the physical body of the magician, or it may be closely aligned with it . . . At the conclusion of the Working, the *ba* is redirected to the physical body and the *ka* is disintegrated. The elements of the subjective universe specifically summoned for the Working are released into their normal contexts, there to influence their objective counterparts.[10]

Transferring consciousness to a magical simulacrum or "body of light" through willed concentration and visualization is central to the practice of visionary magic in the Western esoteric tradition, and this experience of "consciousness-transfer" is described in *Flying Roll XXV*, written by *Frater Sub Spe*—aka Dr. John W. Brodie-Innes—who was a prominent figure in the Golden Dawn's Amen-Ra temple in Edinburgh. Dr. Brodie-Innes describes the shift in consciousness that occurs when a practitioner focuses meditatively on a Major Arcana Tarot card or one of the *Tattva* symbols of the elements, thereby switching personal awareness to the inner world of magical perception:

> Gradually the attention is withdrawn from all surrounding sights and sounds, a grey mist seems to swathe everything, on which, as though thrown from a magic lantern on steam, the form of the symbol is projected. The Consciousness then seems to pass through the symbol to realms beyond . . . the sensation is as if one looked at a series of moving pictures . . . When this sensitiveness of brain and power of perception is once established there seems to grow out of it a power of actually going to the scenes so visionary and seeing them as solid, indeed of actually *doing things* and producing effects there . . . The sensation . . . is first to become, as it were, dimly conscious of a figure walking among the scenes of the new country—or the Astral Plane—gradually to become conscious that it is my own figure that I am looking at—gradually, as it were, to be able to look through the eyes—and feel with the sensations of this *doppelganger*. Further to be able consciously to direct its motions, to control it, to inhabit it . . . It is as though my Consciousness had extruded from my own body to take possession of a body which I had either created for the purpose, or invoked out of the Astral Sphere as a vehicle for myself.[11]

The visionary process involved concentrating the mind on a specific magical symbol, such as a Major Arcana Tarot card image or a *Tattva* motif, and then using this symbol as a meditative "doorway" to bring about a transfer of consciousness to the inner, imaginal realm of perception. Some magicians have also used ritual utterances (e.g., intoning sacred god-names or their personal magical name) to reinforce the sense of a transfer of awareness. According to Dion Fortune, who was a member of the Alpha and Omega Temple of the Golden Dawn,[12]

the act of projecting her "body of light" was greatly assisted by uttering her magical name. As she notes in her book *Applied Magic* (1962):

> In my own experience of the operation, the utterance to myself of my Magical name led to the picturing of myself in an idealised form, not differing in type, but upon an altogether grander scale, superhuman in fact, but recognisable as myself, as a statue more than life-size may yet be a good likeness. Once perceived, I could re-picture this idealised version of my body and personality at will, but I could not identify myself with it unless I uttered my Magical name. Upon my affirming it as my own, identification was immediate.[13]

Following the transfer of consciousness, the magician was then able to experience the contents of the visionary realm as perceptually "real"—including mythic landscapes populated by gods, spirit beings, and various other entities. According to *Frater Sub Spe*:

> At first it seems as though everything thus perceived were just the product of one's own imagination . . . But a little further experience generally convinces one that the *new country one has become conscious of* has its inviolable natural laws just as the physical world has: that one cannot make or unmake at will, that the same causes produce the same results, that one is in fact merely a spectator and in no sense a creator. *The conviction then dawns on one that one is actually perceiving a new and much extended range of phenomena; that in fact, which is known as the Astral World or Astral Plane* [my emphasis in italics]. [14]

## TAROT AND TATTVA VISUALIZATIONS

Tarot cards have been traditionally associated with gypsy fortune-telling and divination rather than magical visualization, and it was not until the nineteenth century that the French occultist Eliphas Lévi (1810–75) proposed combining the Major Arcana of the Tarot with the Kabbalistic symbol of the Tree of Life.[15]

The 22 Major Arcana cards of the Tarot contain a number of archetypal male and female images, including the Magus, the Emperor, the Charioteer, the High Priest, the High Priestess, the Empress, Justice, and the Moon. There are also cards that are symbolically "neutral"—that is to say, neither "male nor "female"—like Death and the Wheel of Fortune.

Employed magically, the Tarot cards of the Major Arcana represent symbolic paths to spiritual transcendence upon the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. However, while the Kabbalah itself is central to the Jewish spiritual heritage, modern Tarot decks incorporate imagery from other spiritual and esoteric traditions. In some Tarot packs there are

Egyptian motifs—the Wheel of Fortune, for example, is sometimes shown with the jackal-headed god Hermanubis, and the High Priestess is invariably shown seated between Egyptian temple pillars. The Hebrew letters Yod and Beth on these pillars in turn refer to Jachin and Boaz, allusions to Freemasonry and the two pillars placed at the entrance of King Solomon's temple.[16]

Meanwhile, the Magus is essentially Gnostic in tone. In most Tarot packs the Magus is shown directing spiritual energy from a higher source—the Infinite World of Light—down to the manifested world of form, represented in turn by the symbols of Earth, Water, Fire, and Air.

Although there are various combinations in the occult literature the usual sequence of Tarot paths upon the Kabbalistic Tree of Life (Figure 9.1) is as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| *The World* | Malkuth-Yesod |
| *Judgment* | Malkuth-Hod |
| *The Moon* | Malkuth-Netzach |
| *The Sun* | Yesod-Hod |
| *The Star* | Yesod-Netzach |
| *The Tower* | Hod-Netzach |
| *The Devil* | Hod-Tiphareth |
| *Death* | Netzach-Tiphareth |
| *Temperance* | Yesod-Tiphareth |
| *The Hermit* | Tiphareth-Chesed |
| *Justice* | Tiphareth-Geburah |
| *The Hanged Man* | Hod-Geburah |
| *The Wheel of Fortune* | Netzach-Chesed |
| *Strength* | Geburah-Chesed |
| *The Chariot* | Geburah-Binah |
| *The Lovers* | Tiphareth-Binah |
| *The Hierophant* | Chesed-Chokmah |
| *The Emperor* | Tiphareth-Chokmah |
| *The Empress* | Binah-Chokmah |
| *The High Priestess* | Tiphareth-Kether |
| *The Magus* | Binah-Kether |
| *The Fool* | Chokmah-Kether |

A Tarot-based trance vision recorded in November 1892 by *Soror Sapientia Sapienti Dona Data* (Mrs. F. Emery) and *Soror Fidelis* (Miss Elaine Simpson, later the mistress of Aleister Crowley) has been documented in *Flying Roll IV*.[17] It is particularly interesting because it indicates the trance magician's direct sense of encounter with the deities upon the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. A blend of Christian and Egyptian elements is apparent, the Grail Mother is seen as an aspect of Isis, and a ritual gesture appropriate to the Roman goddess Venus is also

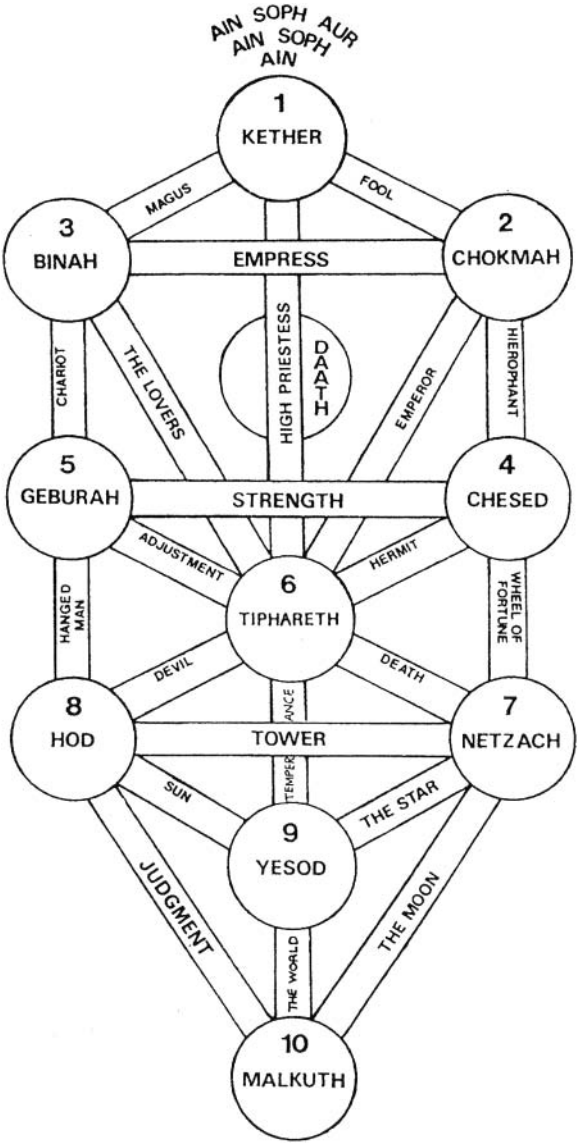



**Figure 9.1** Kabbalistic Tree of Life showing Tarot paths

included, indicative of the eclectic blending of cosmologies found in modern magical practice:

> The Tarot Trump, The Empress was taken; placed before the persons and contemplated upon, spiritualised, heightened in colouring, purified in design and idealised.

> In vibratory manner pronounced Daleth. Then, in spirit, saw a greenish blue distant landscape, suggestive of medieval tapestry. Effort to ascend was then made; rising on the planes; seemed to pass up through clouds and then appeared a pale green landscape and in its midst a Gothic Temple of ghostly outlines marked with light. Approached it and found the temple gained in definiteness and was concrete, and seemed a solid structure. Giving the signs of the Netzach Grade [because of Venus] was able to enter; giving also Portal signs and $5° = 6°$ signs in thought form.[18] Opposite the entrance perceived a Cross with three bars and a dove upon it; and besides this, were steps leading downwards into the dark, by a dark passage. Here was met a beautiful green dragon, who moved aside, meaning no harm, and the spirit vision passed on. Turning a corner and still passing on in the dark emerged from darkness on to a marble terrace brilliantly white, and a garden beyond, with flowers, whose foliage was of delicate green kind and the leaves seemed to have a white velvety surface beneath. Here, there appeared a woman of heroic proportions, clothed in green with a jewelled girdle, a crown of stars on her head, in her hand a sceptre of gold, having at one apex a lustrously white closed lotus flower; in her left hand an orb bearing a cross.
>
> She smiled proudly, and as the human spirit sought her name, replied:
>
> "I am the mighty Mother Isis; most powerful of all the world, I am she who fights not, but is always victorious, I am that Sleeping Beauty who men have sought, for all time; and the paths which lead to my castle are beset with dangers and illusions. Such as fail to find me sleep — or may ever rush after the Fata Morgana leading astray all who feel that illusory influence—I am lifted up on high, and do draw men unto me, I am the world's desire, but few there be who find me. When my secret is told, it is the secret of the Holy Grail."

Hindu *Tattvas* were also used by the Golden Dawn magicians as "symbolic doorways" facilitating access to various realms of visionary consciousness and were among the few specifically Eastern motifs incorporated within their ritual practices. In their basic form the *Tattvas* are associated with the five traditional elements as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Tejas*, a red equilateral triangle | Fire |
| *Apas*, a silver crescent | Water |
| *Vayu*, a blue circle | Air |
| *Prithivi*, a yellow square | Earth |
| *Akasha*, an indigo or violet egg | Spirit[19] |

*Flying Roll XI* describes a vision by Mrs. Moina Mathers (*Soror Vestigia*), which arose as she sat in her ceremonial robes, meditating on a *Tattva* card combining *Tejas* and *Akasha*—a violet egg contained within a red triangle (Spirit within Fire).[20] Following her projection

of the body of light, the *Tattva* symbol seemed to grow before her gaze, enabling her to pass into a "vast triangle of flame." She felt herself to be in a harsh desert of sand. Intoning the god-name *Elohim*, she then perceived a small pyramid in the distance and, drawing closer, noticed a small door on each face. She then vibrated the magical formula *Sephariel* and a warrior appeared, leading a procession of guards. After a series of tests involving ritual grade signs, the guards knelt before her and she passed inside:

> dazzling light, as in a Temple. An altar in the midst—kneeling figures surround it, there is a dais beyond, and many figures upon it—they seem to be Elementals of a fiery nature . . . She sees a pentagram, puts a Leo in it [i.e., a Fire sign], thanks the figure who conducts her—wills to pass through the pyramid, finds herself out amid the sand. Wills her return—returns—perceiving her body in robes.[21]

In this account and others like it, it is clear that the visionary landscape is experientially "real" to the meditator undertaking the projection of the body of light. However, the contents of the visionary journey itself are also closely related to the meditative symbol that the magician has used in the transfer of consciousness: the magical entities Moina Mathers perceived in her "spirit vision" were fire elementals—anthropomorphic figures embodying the *essential* properties of Fire.

On another occasion, Moina Mathers employed the *Tattva* symbols for Water and Spirit. Once again her account demonstrated the connection between the meditative symbol and the visionary beings present in the ensuing vision:

> A wide expanse of water with many reflections of bright light, and occasionally glimpses of rainbow colours appearing. When divine and other names were pronounced, elementals of the mermaid and merman type [would] appear, but few of the other elemental forms. These water forms were extremely changeable, one moment appearing as solid mermaids and mermen, the next melting into foam.
>
> Raising myself by means of the highest symbols I had been taught, and vibrating the names of Water, I rose until the Water vanished, and instead I beheld a mighty world or globe, with its dimensions and divisions of Gods, Angels, elementals and demons—the whole Universe of Water. I called on HCOMA and there appeared standing before me a mighty Archangel, with four wings, robed in glistening white and crowned. In one hand, the right, he held a species of trident, and in the left a Cup filled to the brim with an essence which he poured down below on either side.[22]

In this example, in addition to using the *Tattvas* for Water and Spirit as her meditative symbols, Mrs. Mathers also uttered the sacred

Enochian name HCOMA,[23] thereby causing an archangel to appear in her visions. Angelic Enochian names were an additional element in Golden Dawn trance workings and it may be helpful at this point to provide some background information on their origin and use.

## ENOCHIAN MAGIC

The so-called Enochian magical system derives from the work of Elizabethan occultists John Dee and Edward Kelley, who met in 1581. Dee had already established his reputation as a classical scholar at Cambridge and was also a noted astrologer; he was invited to calculate the most beneficial date for Queen Elizabeth I's coronation. Kelley possessed an alchemical manuscript that was of considerable interest to Dee, and Kelley also claimed to be able to undertake journeys in the spirit vision. Dee and Kelley made use of wax tablets called almadels engraved with magical symbols, and also a large number of squares measuring 49 × 49 inches, filled with letters of the alphabet. Nearby on his table Kelley had a large crystal stone upon which he would focus his concentration until he saw "angels" appear. They would point to various letters on the squares in turn and these were written down by Dee as Kelley called them out. When these invocations were completely transcribed, Kelley would reverse their order, for he believed that the angels communicated them backwards to avoid unleashing the magical power that they contained. Dee and Kelley believed these communications formed the basis of a new language—Enochian—and these magical conjurations were subsequently incorporated into magical practice by the Golden Dawn magicians who used them as focusing stimuli to induce trance visions.

Each square was ruled by an Enochian god-name and was bound by the four elements in different combinations. The visualization technique involved imagining the square as a three-dimensional truncated pyramid with the appropriate god-name superimposed above. The magician imagined himself rising through the pyramid on a beam of white light that streamed down through the apex.[24] For example, the Enochian square ruled by "Amesheth" has a large elemental ingredient of Water and Fire. In the following vision, which the Golden Dawn magician *Soror Fortiter Et Recte* (Miss Annie Horniman) regarded as initiatory, a dominant figure appeared with characteristics pertaining to these two elements: an angel with a lunar crescent upon her head and carrying a cup (symbols of Water) but with a Fire pentagram upon her breast. In her hand were symbols of each element:

> I made the Signs and called on the Names and begged to be allowed to see the Angel. She appeared with a blue lunar crescent on her head and brown hair which was very long. Her robe was pale blue with a black border, and a pentagram in red on her breast: her wings were blue also, and so was the Cup in her left hand, in her right hand she bore a red torch. Around her was a diamond of red yods.[25] She told me her office was "Change and purification through suffering such as spiritualises the material nature." I told her that her pale face and blue eyes had a sad and tender expression as she spoke. The elementals were like blue maids, bearing flames and their robes were black bordered. Some wore blue winged helmets and cloaks, red breastplates and Swords and black leg-armour. I was told that only through my Knowledge of Amesheth was all this shown unto me.[26]

The magician then experienced a series of visions which for her pointed to the attainment of spiritual knowledge:

> On this World the effect is that of the floods of water mingling with submarine volcanoes and so disturbing the Earth under the Sea. The animal life is that represented by the fish who rest hidden among the rocks in warm climates. I seemed to see them, blue with black or red specks. The plants are water-lilies, a root in the black mud, the leaves resting on the surface of the water, living the Sun. In regard to minerals I saw a great blueish opal with red lights playing in it; it rested in a black marble basin, and from all sides radiated a lovely light.
>
> On man the effect of the Square is restlessness, like waves of the sea, carrying him on with enthusiasm to some completed work. I seemed to see a nervous [highly strung] person with a pale face, dark deep-set eyes, and thin white hands, making a great effort, willing to pass through fire to reach his goal, a solid black pedestal from which I knew that he could begin to rise to the Higher. But hot clouds of steam and great water tried to hinder him from even reaching the fire. The lesson seemed to me that severe criticism, social difficulties, and heredity must all be overcome before we can reach the purifying fire of Initiation and, through that, the solid ground of spiritual knowledge.[27]

Visionary Enochian experiences were not confined to trance workings within the Golden Dawn. In 1909, several years after he had left the Order, Aleister Crowley and his disciple Victor Neuburg conducted a series of initiatory experiments in the Algerian desert involving Enochian magic. Crowley and Neuburg used a series of conjurations transcribed by Dee and Kelley to invoke a series of 30 so-called Aethyrs or Aires. According to Israel Regardie, who helped Crowley prepare the Enochian manuscript *The Vision and the Voice* in 1929, Crowley carried with him a large golden topaz set in a wooden cross decorated with ritual symbols and recited each Enochian conjuration in a place of solitude.[28] Crowley then used his topaz as a focusing glass to concentrate

his attention. As a result of his meditations, Crowley had a number of visionary experiences, which were then transcribed by Neuburg who wrote down the trance utterances in sequence. Although Crowley had already invoked two of the Aethyrs in Mexico in 1900, the bulk of the Enochian workings took place in the isolation of the Algerian desert at locations such as Aumale, Am El Hajel, Bou-Saada, Benshrur, Tolga, and Biskra.

Crowley's Enochian entries have distinctive visionary characteristics. The Aethyr called NIA involves magical flight through the aeons in a chariot, a theme that is familiar in early Kabbalistic Merkabah texts like *The Book of Enoch*. Another Aethyr, LIT, transports Crowley to a magical mountain beyond, which is a sacred shrine where worshippers of God have gathered. The following are excerpts from these records:

> **NIA (*Aethyr 24*)**
>
> An angel comes forward into the stone like a warrior clad in chain-armour. Upon his head are plumes of gray, spread out like the fan of a peacock. About his feet a great army of scorpions and dogs, lions, elephants, and many other wild beasts. He stretches forth his arms to heaven and cries: In the crackling of the lightning, in the rolling of the thunder, in the clashing of the swords and the hurling of the arrows: by thy name exalted!
>
> Streams of fire come out of the heavens, a pale brilliant blue, like plumes. And they gather themselves and settle upon his lips. His lips are redder than roses, and the blue plumes gather themselves into a blue rose, and from beneath the petals of the rose come brightly coloured humming-birds, and dew falls from the rose—honey-coloured dew. I stand in the shower of it.
>
> And a voice proceeds from the rose: Come away! Our chariot is drawn by doves. . . . I look to see who was with me in the chariot. It was an Angel of golden skin, whose eyes were bluer than the sea, whose mouth was redder than the fire, whose breath was ambrosial air. Finer than a spider's web were her robes. And they were of the seven colours.[29]

Crowley's vision of NIA has several symbolic components which are linked through the system of "magical correspondences" to the Tree of Life cosmology. The hurling of arrows is linked magically to the Path of Sagittarius (Tau) on the so-called Middle Pillar of the Tree, a path often identified with the magical act of "rising on the planes." The "fan of a peacock" Crowley understood as a reference to Juno, while hummingbirds and doves were traditionally sacred to Venus and recorded in the tables of magical correspondences as such. Although the Aethyr NIA refers to a warrior clad in armor, there are also

decidedly feminine components in his vision. The warlike roles of the chariot are transmuted into a chariot drawn by doves; the rose angel proposes to take the magician to a paradise world of flower meadows and is herself identified with the seven colors of the rainbow.

In a later part of his visionary account Crowley describes the ecstatic nature of his trance:

> I see through those eyes, and the universe, like whirling sparks of gold, blown like a tempest. I seem to swell out again. . . . My consciousness fills the whole Aethyr, I hear the cry of NIA ringing again and again from within me. It sounds like infinite music, and behind the sound is the meaning of the Aethyr.[30]

His vision now twists around and takes a more hostile form:

> I cannot describe to you the joy and the exhaustion of everything that was, and the energy of everything that is, for it is only a corpse that is lying on the moss. *I am the soul of the Aethyr.*
>
> Now it reverberates like the swords of archangels, clashing upon the armour of the damned; and there seem to be the blacksmiths of heaven beating the steel of the worlds upon the anvils of hell, to make a roof to the Aethyr.[31]

**LIT *(Aethyr 5)***

There is a shining pylon, above which is set the sigil of the eye, within the shining triangle. Light streams through the pylon from before the face of Isis-Hathor, for she weareth the lunar crown of cows' horns, with the disk in the centre; at her breast she beareth the child Horus.

And there is a voice: thou knowest not how the Seven was united with the Four; much less then canst thou understand the marriage of the Eight and the Three. Yet there is a word wherein these are made one, and therein is contained the Mystery that thou seekest, concerning the rending asunder of the veil of my Mother.

Now I come to the top of the mountain, and the last pylon opens into a circular hall, with other pylons leading out of it, each of which is the last pylon of a great avenue; there seem to be nine such pylons. And in the centre is a shrine, a circular shrine, supported by marble figures of men and women, alternate white and black; they face upwards, and their buttocks are almost worn away by the kisses of those who have come to worship that supreme God, who is the single end to all those diverse religions. But the shrine itself is higher than a man may reach.

But the Angel that was with me lifted me, and I saw that the edge of the altar, as I must call it, was surrounded by holy men. Each has in his right hand a weapon—one a sword, one a spear, one a thunderbolt, and so on but each with his left hand gives the sign of silence. I wish to see what is within their ring. One of them bends forward so that I may whisper the pass-word. The Angel prompts me to whisper: "There is no god." So they let me pass, and though there was indeed nothing

> visible therein, yet there was a very strange atmosphere, which I could not understand.
>
> Suspended in the air there is a silver star, and on the forehead of each of the guardians there is a silver star. It is a pentagram—because, says the Angel, three and five are eight; three and eight are eleven. [There is another numerical reason that I cannot hear.]
>
> And as I entered their ring, they bade me stand in their circle, and a weapon was given unto me. And the password that I had given seems to have been whispered round from one to the other, for each one nods gravely as if in solemn acquiescence, until the last one whispers the same words in my ears. But they have a different sense. I had taken them to be a denial of the existence of God, but the man who says them to me evidently means nothing of the sort: What he does mean I cannot tell at all. He slightly emphasised the word "there."
>
> . . . He says some more: I cannot catch it properly, but it seems to be the effect that the true God is equally in all the shrines, and the true I in all the parts of the body and the soul. He speaks with such a terrible roaring that it is impossible to hear the words: one catches a phrase here and there, or a glimpse of the idea. With every word he belches forth smoke, so that the whole Aethyr becomes full of it.[32]

In his vision of LIT, Crowley perceives the magical symbol of the eye in the triangle, which is identified as the eye of Horus. The triangle also links the source of light to the first three *sephiroth* upon the Tree of Life, which form the Triangle of the Supernals. LIT thus begins with a reference to high spiritual authority. It also contains familiar cosmological motifs: pylons that reach up to the heavens and a mountain that is at the center of the world: "All the gods of all the nations of the earth are shown, for there are many avenues, all leading to the top of the mountain."[33]

The vision acquires its revelatory nature at the top of the mountain. Initially, the magician is told that there is no God, but he later discovers that his own misconceptions have led him to a wrong conclusion. He discovers amidst a mighty roaring sound that God is present "equally in all the shrines and the true I in all the parts of the body and the soul." The magician thus discovers the source of his sacred connection with the cosmos. Later the "supreme being" reveals itself as "the Great Dragon that eateth up the Universe." In Hermetic magic the dragon with its tail in its mouth is a symbol of totality embracing the whole universe; in this context the dragon presents itself as a magical rite of passage: "Unless he pass by me, can no man come unto the perfections."[34]

Crowley's Enochian conjurations—documented with commentaries in *The Vision and the Voice*—are impressive visionary accounts and serve as a reminder that sometimes modern magicians enter

altered states of consciousness remarkably similar to those explored by traditional shamans. However, meditative approaches utilizing the Major Arcana, the *Tattvas*, and the Enochian "Aethyrs" were not the only methods adopted by initiates of the Golden Dawn. In her Fraternity of the Inner Light, another former member of the Golden Dawn—Violet Firth, otherwise known as Dion Fortune—developed guided meditations known as path-workings, which also helped to facilitate states of visionary, mythic awareness.

## THE PATH-WORKINGS OF DION FORTUNE

Violet Firth (1890–1946) grew up in a family influenced by Christian Science and seems to have had an early inclination toward psychism and metaphysics. Strongly influenced by the theories of Freud, Adler, and Jung, Firth became a lay psychoanalyst in 1918, and in Jung's thought, especially, she found correlations between his archetypes of the collective unconscious and a realm of inquiry that would increasingly fascinate her—the exploration of sacred mythological images invoked by occultists during their rituals and visionary encounters.

In 1919 Firth was introduced to the Golden Dawn Temple of the Alpha and Omega by a close friend, Maiya Curtis-Webb. Based in London, the Alpha and Omega temple was a southern offshoot of the Scottish section of the Golden Dawn headed by J. W. Brodie-Innes. Firth found the magical ceremonies powerful and evocative, but also felt that there was a certain gloom about this particular group: "The glory had departed . . . for most of its original members were dead or withdrawn; it had suffered severely during the war, and was manned mainly by widows and grey-bearded ancients."[35] In the Alpha and Omega temple, Firth took the magical name *Deo Non Fortuna*—"by God and not by luck"—which also happened to be the Latin motto inscribed upon the Firth family crest, and she now became known in esoteric circles as Dion Fortune, a contraction of her magical name.

In 1922 Dion Fortune formed her own meditative group. Originally known as The Christian Mystic Lodge of the Theosophical Society, it would later become The Fraternity of the Inner Light. Dion Fortune felt a strong psychic and spiritual connection with Madame Blavatsky's Theosophists, who offered esoteric perspectives comparable to those in the Alpha and Omega. In her mind the two organizations did not need to compete with each other, but were complementary. However, the Christian reference in the name of her mystical group is initially

more puzzling. In her posthumously published book *Applied Magic* (1962), Dion Fortune reveals that she held an esoteric view of Jesus Christ, describing him as "a high priest after the Order of Melchizedek" and comparing him to other "saviours" like Orpheus and Mithra. Dion Fortune was especially drawn to a cosmic being called Manu Melchizedek—"Lord of the Flame and also of Mind"—who would become her guiding force on the inner planes.[36]

Dion Fortune established The Fraternity of the Inner Light in 1927, and it is here that her unique contribution to visionary magic really begins. In the Inner Light Fortune increasingly engaged herself in the mythological dimensions of magic, venturing into what she now came to regard as the collective pagan soul of humanity. Anticipating the rise of contemporary Goddess Spirituality by several decades, Dion Fortune committed herself completely to the magical potency of the archetypal Feminine, and began exploring Goddess images in the major ancient pantheons. Her two novels *The Sea Priestess* and *Moon Magic* contain allusions to what appears to be a Rite of Isis:

> Those who adore the Isis of Nature adore her as Hathor with the horns upon her brow, but those who adore the celestial Isis know her as Levanah, the Moon. She is also the great Deep whence life arose. She is all ancient and forgotten things wherein our roots are cast. Upon earth she is ever-fecund: in heaven she is ever-virgin. She is the mistress of the tides that flow and ebb and flow, and never cease. . . .
>
> In the heavens our Lady Isis is the Moon, and the moon-powers are hers. She is also priestess of the silver star that rises from the twilight sea. Hers are the magnetic moon-tides ruling the hearts of men. . . .
>
> In the inner she is all-potent. She is the queen of the kingdoms of sleep. All the visible workings are hers and she rules all things ere they come to birth. Even as through Osiris her mate the earth grows green, so the mind of man conceives through her power.

She also began to explore the symbolic and sexual polarities in magic, including those of the Black Isis. Isis is best known as the great goddess of magic in ancient Egyptian mythology, as the wife of the sun god Osiris and the mother of Horus. It was Isis who succeeded in piecing together the fragments of Osiris's body after he had been murdered by Set, and it was she who also tricked Ra into revealing his secret magical name. However, Dion Fortune was interested in a different aspect of Isis—a dimension associated with what occult writer Kenneth Grant has called the "primordial essence of Woman (*sakti*) in her dynamic aspect." While Isis was a lunar goddess and the Moon is traditionally considered symbolically passive—a receptacle or reflector of light—the Black Isis was said to destroy all that

was "inessential and obstructive to the soul's development." This in turn led to an exploration of the magic of sexuality. According to Kenneth Grant, who met Fortune in the 1940s, the basis of her work at this time involved "the bringing into manifestation of this *sakti* by the magically controlled interplay of sexual polarity embodied in the priest (the consecrated male) and the specially chosen female. Together they enacted the immemorial Rite" . . . and this formed a vortex on the inner planes "down which the tremendous energies of Black Isis rush(ed) into manifestation."[37] If Grant is correct, this was some form of pre-Wiccan visionary magic that ventured into new realms, encompassing the use of transcendent sexual energies and the fusion, in ritual, of male and female polarities. It seems to have involved Western magical *tantra*, and was a clear departure from the ritual approaches utilized in the Golden Dawn, a magical order that tended to downplay the sexual dimensions of magic.

While one can only speculate on the sexual aspects of the most secret Inner Light rituals, it is clear that Dion Fortune's main emphasis was not so much on physical magical activities as on astral encounters with the mythic archetypes of the mind. The Fraternity of the Inner Light continued the experimental work with magical visualization that had first been undertaken in the Golden Dawn during the 1890s, and the Inner Light magicians now developed a practical approach to magical "path-workings"—mythic meditations involving guided imagery—as a direct means of exploring the subconscious mind. An important essay titled "The Old Religion," written by an anonymous senior member of Dion Fortune's group,[38] confirms that the Inner Light members believed that astral ventures of this kind could arouse "ancient cult memories" from previous incarnations. Dion Fortune believed that a significant key to understanding human life and achievement lay in understanding the nature of reincarnation,[39] and the archetype of the Great Mother, in particular, could be thought of as a symbolic embodiment of the World Memory—a concept that has a parallel in the Theosophical concept of the Akashic records.[40]

Through the universal potential of the Great Mother, one could access details of one's earlier lives on earth, and in this way could divine one's sacred purpose. According to the author of "The Old Religion":

> Most of the members of these groups have, in the past, served at the altars of Pagan Religions and have met, face to face, the Shining Ones of the forests and the mountains, of the lakes and seas . . . In the course of these experiments it was discovered that if anyone of the members of a group had in the past a strong contact with a particular cult at a certain period, that individual could communicate these

> memories to others, and could link them with cult memories that still lie within the Earth memories of Isis as the Lady of Nature.[41]

In many mythic traditions the magical journey to the ancient gods and goddesses begins on a path that leads through a gateway to the Underworld. The Golden Dawn magicians conceived of Malkuth, the 10th emanation upon the Tree of Life, as the doorway to the subconscious mind, and this was like entering the Underworld of the human psyche. Utilizing classical Roman mythology, members of the Inner Light drew on the imagery of the Cumaean Gates, which, according to legend, were located near Naples and were guarded by the Sibyl attending the Temple of Apollo. It was through these gates that Aeneas was said to have passed, after deciphering the labyrinth symbol inscribed upon them. Aeneas sought safe passage in the mythic world by first obtaining the golden bough, which would be given as a gift to Proserpine. He also encountered evil spirits, supernatural monsters, and former colleagues, numbered among the dead. Then, having been reunited with his father, Anchises, he perceived the "great vision"—a panorama of past and future Roman history—and was granted access to mysterious secrets of the universe.

The Inner Light members had a special interest in visionary journeys of this sort and incorporated them into their guided-imagery meditations, although under Dion Fortune's leadership they tended to focus primarily on the feminine aspects of the underworld encounter. Reflecting Dion Fortune's early interest in the psychological concepts of Carl Jung, there is more than a hint here of Jung's concept of the *animus* and *anima*:

> It is the woman that holds the keys of the inner planes for a man. If you want to pass the Cumaean Gates you must become as a little child and a woman must lead you . . . It was Deiphobe, daughter of Glaucus, priestess of Phoebus, and of the Goddess Three-wayed who, for King Aeneas, opened the keyless door and drew the veil that hides life from death and death from life.[42]

The Inner Light guided meditations helped heighten personal awareness of specific mythic imagery and facilitated a switch of consciousness toward specific symbolic, mythic locales. The author of "The Old Religion" describes a series of inner journeys—"The By-Road to the Cave in the Mountain," "At the Ford of the Moon," "The High Place of the Moon," and "The Hosting of the Sidhe"—the culminating experience being a merging of one's awareness with the ethereal Isis in her "green" aspect as Queen of Nature. The following

account is given from the viewpoint of a male occultist who is initiated by the feminine archetype:

> As he watched, the green of the beech-leaves and the faint silver colour of the bole seemed to merge in a form that was not the tree, and yet it was the tree. He was no longer seeing the tree with his eyes—he was feeling it. He was once again in his inner, subtler, moon-body, and with it he saw and felt the moon-body of the tree. The appeared the tree spirit, the *deva*, the shining one who lives through the trunk and branches and leaves of the beech tree as a man lives through his torso, limbs and hair. That beech was very friendly and moon-body to moon-body they met, and as his moon-body merged into that of the lady of the beech tree, the sensation of the nature of the season of the caress of the sunlight, of the stimulation of the bright increase of the waxing moon, and of the sleep-time that comes with the decrease of the waning moon, were his.
>
> "You can merge thus into all life," he was told; and then he saw, as the fairy sees, the flowers, the waterfalls, the rivers, and the brightly coloured holy mountain of Derrybawn, which means the home of the Shining Ones. He merged himself into the roaring life that was at the summit of that great and sacred mountain and in so doing he took the initiation of the lady of Nature—the Green Isis—in her temple on the heather-clad hill-top that is above the deep ravine.[43]

Dion Fortune died in 1946, but her unique approach to magical consciousness did not end with her death. The work of The Fraternity of the Inner Light, including its unique approach to path-working, has been further developed by a contemporary magical order known as the Servants of the Light, a group whose headquarters are currently located in St. Helier on the island of Jersey. The present head of the Servants of the Light, Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki, has also written practical sourcebooks on path-working, thereby continuing Dion Fortune's approach to visionary meditation.[44]

## SIGILS AND ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS: THE TRANCE MAGIC OF AUSTIN OSMAN SPARE AND ROSALEEN NORTON

Another form of trance and meditative magic involves the use of sigils to facilitate ASCs. In this context the magical sigil acts both as a meditative focusing symbol and also as a specific "directive" to the subconscious mind—much in the same way as the Major Arcana and *Tattva* symbols referred to earlier. Notable modern-day trance magicians who have employed sigils include the British visionary occultist Austin Osman Spare (1886–1956) and the Australian witch and pantheist Rosaleen Norton (1917–79).

Spare's use of magical sigils, which he began to develop into a workable system from 1906 onward, was based on the understanding that the dynamics of the subconscious mind depend entirely on symbols and images, that the "language" of the subconscious is pictorial rather than verbal. As Spare observes in his essay "Mind to Mind and How":

> There is a Grimorium of graphic symbology and vague phonic nuances that conjoin all thought and is the language of the psychic world. Mind is a continuant [sic] and all concepts are relatable to perceptions and contact, therefore real; the continuum of all aspects of memory and learning is consciousness—the past again becoming explicit.[45]

Spare was probably the first modern occultist to develop a practical approach to magical consciousness that did not involve the paraphernalia of traditional rituals and magical implements. He developed a unique cosmology around the twin concepts of Kia and Zos, and his use of magical sigils was an extension of this approach. Spare used the term "Kia" to describe the primal, cosmic life force and believed that the spiritual and occult energies inherent in Kia could be channeled into the human organism, which he called "Zos." His technique of arousing these primal energies—a magical process he termed *atavistic resurgence*—involved focusing his attention on individualized symbols of the magical will.

According to Spare it was only in a state of mental "vacuity"—or ultimate openness—that Kia became "sensitive to the subtle suggestion of the sigil." When the mind was in a "void" or open state—achieved through meditation, exhaustion, or at the peak of sexual ecstasy—this was the right time to direct a magical sigil into the subconscious. Here, according to Spare, the sigil would "grow" in the seedbed of the mind until it became "ripe" and reached back down into the conscious mind, producing a tangible outcome. Spare used magical sigils to harness his own personal reserves of energy and to recover what he believed were his former "karmas"—psychic impressions of his previous incarnations on earth. He also incorporated elements from these impressions into his visionary art (Figure 9.2).[46]

Spare believed that all sentient beings had their ultimate origin in the mystical Godhead—the universal source of life—and he therefore argued that it should be possible to track back through the mind to the First Cause. Spare believed in reincarnation and regarded the subconscious mind as the "potential" source of all his own earlier physical embodiments or personalities, right back to the Beginning. The psyche, as it were, consisted of a number of different layers—the

**Figure 9.2** *Stealing the Fire from Heaven* – a drawing from Austin Spare's *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love)*: *The Psychology of Ecstasy* (1913) that shows magical atavisms retrieved from the depths of the psyche (Austin Spare's *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*. Cooperative Printing Society Limited, Tudor Street, E.C. 1913.).

cumulative impressions of successive lives, most of which remained subconscious. Spare's intention was to gain knowledge of his concealed mental states through "regression" and eventually to lose his sense of self in an indescribably ecstatic union with Kia—whose energy he had now come to consider as basically sexual.

The dark void of the mind, emptied of thought-forms through an act of mental concentration, could be penetrated by employing a suitable magical sigil. As Spare notes in *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* (1913): "By sigils and the acquirement of vacuity, any past incarnation, experience, can be summoned into consciousness." Spare's sorcery—he himself labeled it as such—utilized the process of atavistic resurgence in order to summon "elementals," or karmic "automata," from the subconscious mind for magical purposes. Even when he lived alone in a small run-down flat in South London, Spare claimed he was always surrounded by elemental forces and that these "spirits" were his "familiars."[47]

Spare had long been fascinated by medieval magical grimoires like the *Goetia* and *The Greater Key of Solomon* and was intrigued by the magical seals ascribed to various elemental spirits. It has been suggested that these magical seals may have been a source of inspiration for the "cryptic letter-forms and devices" found in *The Book of Pleasure*.[48] Spare was almost certainly influenced by the magical scripts found in Cornelius Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic*, a work first published in 1533—he appears to paraphrase the Renaissance magician's writings on sigils and also transcribed two of his signs in a page of sketches for the *Book of Pleasure* vignettes.[49] However, whereas the magical seals in medieval grimoires were linked either to specific demons like those identified in the *Goetia* or to planetary spirits (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, etc.) like those referred to in Cornelius Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic*, Spare's great innovation was in realizing that magical seals or sigils could be personalized. As occult historian Gavin Semple has noted:

> While the grimoires dictate the use of specific magical seals for the binding and control of spirits and demand a high degree of faith (i.e. consciously formulated belief) in their efficacy, and in the theurgic system of which they form a part, Spare realized that *any* symbols must be effective provided they are congruent with the patterns of the operator's innate beliefs and personal aesthetic. This is certain to be the case if they are drawn from his or her own subconsciousness.[50]

Spare's method for creating individualized sigils is described in *The Book of Pleasure*.[51] Since the degree of effectiveness of any physical or mental action is related to a thorough understanding of the command behind the action, Spare developed a way of condensing his will to make it more potent. He did this by writing his "will" (= desire) in sentence form and by combining the basic letters, without repetition, into a pattern shape, or *sigil*. The sigil could then be simplified and

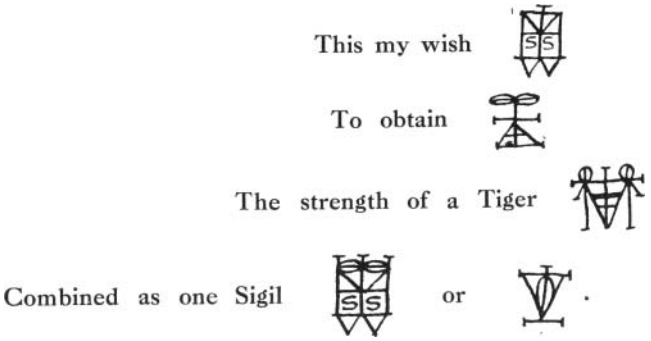
impressed upon the subconscious mind through an act of visualization. Spare describes the process as follows:

> Sigils are made by combining the letters of the alphabet simplified.
>
> the word "Woman" in Sigil form is  or  or 
>
> etc. The word tiger  or  . Hat  . Come  .
>
> . . . The idea being to obtain a simple form which can be easily visualised at will.[52]

Spare's system of implanting sigils was capable of different levels of application, and from an occult perspective could be applied to both high and low magic. While Spare often used his sigils to embody transcendent commands, his system could also be used for comparatively mundane purposes. The occult writer Kenneth Grant, who knew Spare well, has described a situation where the artist had to move a heavy load of timber without assistance. A sigil was required that involved great strength, so Spare constructed a suitable sentence to encapsulate his intent: "This is my wish, to obtain the strength of a tiger." To create the appropriate sigil the sentence then had to be modified as follows:

Grant goes on to say:

> Spare closed his eyes for a while and visualised a picture which symbolised a wish for the strength of tigers [i.e., the final sigil above]. Almost immediately he sensed an inner response. He then felt a tremendous upsurge of energy sweep through his body. For a moment he felt like a sapling bent by the onslaught of a mighty wind. With a great effort of will, he steadied himself and directed the force to its proper object. A great calm descended and he found himself able to carry the load easily.[53]



Grant makes it clear from his account that in the first instance dormant energy was awakened through the sigil and it was then focused into a specialized activity. This was not always Spare's method, however, for in his more far-reaching atavistic resurgences he allowed the influx of Kia to obsess him. His mind would become flooded with preternatural influences and there was no semblance of control. Spare, nevertheless, considered this type of atavistic activity to be an act of bravery: "Strike at the highest . . . death is failure. Go where thou fearest not. How canst thou be great among men? *Cast thyself forth!* Retrogress to the point where knowledge ceases in that Law becomes its own spontaneity and freedom . . . This is the new atavism I would teach: Demand of God equality—Usurp!"[54]

Spare's cosmology and occult trance techniques are unusual because he believed in metaphysical regression, rather than the more conventional mystical concept of "conscious spiritual evolution." In Spare's cosmology, because more and more manifestations of Kia are appearing in the world all the time through reincarnation, as the Source of Creation expands "outwards," the true magical direction is "inwards" or, more specifically, "backwards" to the First Cause.

As mentioned earlier, Spare believed that it was crucially important that once a magical sigil was dispatched into the subconscious at the moment of "vacuity" (the "void moment"), the instruction then had to be forgotten so that the process of manifesting desire could become "organic." As Spare explains:

> Belief to be true must be organic and subconscious. The desire to be great can only become organic at the time of vacuity and by giving it (Sigil) form. When conscious of the Sigil form (any time but the magical) it should be repressed, a deliberate striving to forget it; by this it is active and dominates at the unconscious period; its form nourishes and allows it to become attached to the subconscious and become organic; that accomplished is its reality and realization.
>
> Now by virtue of this Sigil you are able to send your desire into the subconsciousness (which contains all strength); that having happened, it is the desire's realization by the manifestation of the knowledge or power necessary.
>
> First, all consciousness of the Sigil has to be annulled; do not confuse this with concentration—you simply conceive the Sigil any moment you begin to think. Vacuity is obtained by exhausting the mind and body[55] . . . the time of exhaustion is the time of fulfilment. At the time of exhaustion or vacuity, retain only and visualize the Sigil form—eventually it becomes vague, then vanished and success is assured . . . the desire for identification carries it [i.e., the Sigil] to the corresponding subconscious stratum, its destination. . . . Hence the mind, by Sigils,

> depending upon the intensity of desire, is illuminated or obsessed (knowledge or power) from that particular Karma (the subconscious stratum, a particular existence and knowledge gained by it) relative to the desire . . . Knowledge is obtained by the sensation, resulting from the unity of the desire and Karma. Power, by its "actual" vitalization and resurrection.[56]

As we have seen, Austin Spare's distinctive approach to magical sigils was to formulate them as specific individual commands to the subconscious mind. Spare once wrote: "Out of the flesh of our Mothers come dreams and memories of the Gods."[57] Spare's visionary art, teeming with atavistic forms and spirit creatures from the nether regions, embodies its own sense of magical authenticity: it is the unique vision of an artist who was also a sorcerer, and who was highly aware of the permutations of human form and expression. We can summarize his sigil process as follows:

- A magical sigil may be employed to embody a desire or command in relation to what a person wishes to do or become.
- Latent karmic potentials already reside within the psyche of the individual and lie dormant in the subconscious.
- Once dispatched through willed concentration, the magical sigil activates "elementals" or "karmic automata" related to the magical "wish" or "desire."
- The wish or desire then becomes "organic" in the atavistic realms of the subconscious. It automatically loses its effect if consciously remembered.
- The powers activated by the sigil finally manifest in the realm of consciously perceived "reality," as either events or personal attributes.

## NORTON'S APPROACH TO TRANCE STATES

The Australian witch Rosaleen Norton also used magical sigils, although in her case they were employed primarily to invoke gods and spirits on the "inner planes." Like Spare, Norton was also a visionary artist, and her magic similarly informed her creativity: Norton claimed that her drawings were based on direct encounters with metaphysical beings from other dimensions of reality.

Born in 1917, Norton was well known in Sydney during the 1950s and '60s as "the Witch of Kings Cross" and was portrayed in the popular media as a colorful and "wicked" bohemian figure from the inner-city red-light district. The public at large was astounded by Norton's risqué paintings and drawings, which depicted naked hermaphroditic beings, phalluses transforming into serpents, and passionate encounters with black panthers. As a result of her bohemian art, Norton was

involved in numerous legal hearings relating to charges of alleged obscenity, and these controversies would hound her for most of her adult life.[58]

Norton's interest in "multiple consciousness" and "other planes or dimensions of being" led her to experiment with self-hypnosis in 1940, when she was 23 years old. According to a magazine article published in March 1950, Norton believed that hypnotic trance states offered practical experiential access to a vast realm of heightened inner awareness that she wanted to explore firsthand.[59] She began her experiments by meditating in a darkened room, restricting her normal consciousness in an effort to induce automatic drawing and allowing what she called an "abnormal mode of consciousness" to take over. According to Norton this produced "a number of peculiar and unexpected results and some drawings which were later exhibited." Norton's experiments in states of consciousness culminated in what she referred to as "a period of extra-sensory perception, together with a prolonged series of symbolic visions." Commenting on this process, Norton noted: "As for drawings done in a state of trance, I use the word 'trance' roughly to cover any abnormal mode of consciousness."[60]

Norton's technique of exploring trance states and producing automatic drawings was documented by a psychologist, L. J. Murphy, in 1949, shortly after Norton had been involved in a controversial art exhibition at the University of Melbourne. During her interview sessions Norton described her trance method in detail, explaining how she combined ritual elements and meditative techniques in order to facilitate an ASC.

> I decided to experiment in self-induced trance; the idea being to induce an abnormal state of consciousness and manifest the results, if any, in drawing. My aim was to delve down into the subconscious and, if possible, through and beyond it . . .
>
> I had a feeling (intuitional rather than intellectual) that somewhere in the depths of the unconscious, the individual would contain, in essence, the accumulated knowledge of mankind: just as his physical body manifests the aggregate of racial experience in the form of instinct or automatic reaction to stimulus.
>
> In order to contact this hypothetical source, I decided to apply psychic stimulus to the subconscious: stimulus that the conscious reasoning mind might reject, yet which would appeal to the buried instincts as old as man, and would (I hoped) cause psychic "automatic reflexes" (Religious cults use ritual, incense etc. for the same reason). Consequently, I collected together a variety of things such as aromatic leaves, wine, a lighted fire, a mummified hoof, etc. . . . all potent stimuli to the part of the subconscious that I wished to invoke. I darkened the

> room, and focusing my eyes upon the hoof I crushed the pungent leaves, drank some wine, and tried to clear my mind of all conscious thought. This was the beginning (and I made many other experiments which were progressively successful).[61]

Norton told Murphy that over a period of around five months spent exploring self-hypnosis, her consciousness became "extremely exalted" and her dissociative states of mind gave rise to increased perceptual acuity and feelings of enhanced personal power:

> I seemed, while experiencing a great intensification of intellectual, creative and intuitional faculties, to have become detached in a curiously timeless fashion from the world around me, and yet to be seeing things with a greater clarity and awareness than normally. I was working day and night, having very little sleep or rest, yet a supply of inexhaustible power seemed to flow through me.[62]

Norton now experienced a sense of detachment accompanied by an enhanced feeling of clarity and potency. She began to combine magical techniques of invocation with her trance method of self-hypnosis, resulting in the spontaneous creation of a magical symbol, or *sigil*, which she associated with the ancient Egyptian figure of Thoth.

> One night I felt impelled, quite apart from conscious volition, to perform a kind of ritual of invocation; after which I executed a peculiar waking "automatic" drawing, the composition of which assumed the form of the symbol 
>
> The upper figure is the sign of Thoth—impersonality and balanced force—while the lunar crescent can represent several things, but chiefly (as applied to the individual) receptivity to occult powers; the personality; and, according to the Kabbalists, an emblem of the sphere of magic. I once read of magic defined as "The science and art of causing supernormal change to occur in conformity with will," which seems a fairly comprehensive description.[63]

Norton was well aware that the personal *will* could be used to effect changes both within the physical world and also in the imaginal or mythic realms of the astral plane. She quickly became interested in the possibility of transferring her "soul-consciousness" or "astral body" into metaphysical domains that were not normally accessible in everyday experience.

> I made several attempts at separating myself from my body. My conception of the process was a hazy one and very different from actuality, since I imagined that my physical body would temporarily have to die, later to be re-animated on my return.
>
> Once during one of these attempts I succeeded in inducing a type of cataleptic trance. Gradually over the space of about an hour my heart

> beat became slower and slower—I was very aware of this in a detached fashion—and I could feel my breathing lessening until both heart-beat and breath had practically ceased; and then an extraordinary sensation ran over my entire body, which I can describe only as "cessation." There was an inward hush as though my body's mechanism had come to a pause—and then a light frothing bubbling sensation spread through my veins as though my body were dissolving into foam. I do not know what the result would have been had I not been disturbed. However, at this moment my husband[64] entered the room. Thinking I was ill, he felt my pulse and exclaimed in alarm. The dissolving stopped, there was a sense of shock, and with a slight jerk my breathing started again very slowly. I tried to reassure him, but could not speak at first, as my lips and vocal organs seemed extraneous and difficult to control. It took me another hour to resume normal functioning, after which he told me that my skin had felt icy and slightly damp (I had not been aware of this).

One of Norton's earliest findings in relation to what she referred to as "the Other Realm of Being" was that the contents of this domain seemed to be directed by thought itself, almost as if one were consciously entering a dream world. According to Norton, in the magical realm thoughts become tangible and visible and often assume an anthropomorphic form. Visual images and metaphysical "entities" also morph from one form into another, subject to conscious or "willed" intent:

> "Thought" in those realms is very different from that which is normally understood by the word. There, "thought"—or rather the energy generated by such—is felt as a tangible thing, a current of living force which assumes palpable and visual form. I had been told, earlier, that "entities in the Plane assumed form at will." This is literally true; one actually changes shape very frequently, since the new "sense" referred to is that which could be described as "being."[65]

According to Norton, many of the familiar "god-forms" and mythic images from the world's various mythological and religious traditions could be regarded as projections of human consciousness. However, this did not make them any less "real" when experienced in an ASC; these powerful mythic images would still have a tangible presence on the magical plane when an individual encountered them in trance via what she referred to as "the plasmic body." Norton maintained that *the actual gods or "intelligences" themselves* could not be constrained by the cultural forms imposed by mythological or religious traditions because these were only human constructs; that is to say, the gods were "greater" than the "god-forms" through which they manifested (Figure 9.3). In this regard Norton emphasized that many metaphysical

**Figure 9.3** *Nightmare* – a drawing by Rosaleen Norton from the 1940s that shows the artist contacting a God-form while in a state of trance. (Courtesy of the estate of Walter Glover.)

entities perceived in the trance realm were projections from intelligences whose origins lay far beyond the sphere of human awareness:

> In the other Realm . . . Intelligences are not confined to one form as here; also the consciousness pertaining to each type of form bears a far closer relationship to its material vehicle. The latter, as I have said, being fluid plasmic matter can and does alter its form to any image appropriate to circumstances. . . .
>
> Generally, the more primitive the mind, the more it anthropomorphizes the attributes of its God, since it is less capable of a detached survey. So with the group: in fact the individual subconscious God-conception generally flows along the group thought channel most appropriate to it, hence all of the Gods of man. Hence also all the demons, spirits, and other representations of forces that have influenced him.
>
> I have spoken of individual mind working upon and moulding plasmic material. Consider the power, then, of this unconscious mass-concentration of human beings, throughout the ages, upon certain idealisations of forms—the God-forms (a generic name for all such forms, including Demons, Faery creatures, "angels" etc.). This unconscious creative thought concentration has built up images in the aether,

> moulding raw plasmic matter to the form of these images, and providing vehicles for other intelligences to manifest through, relative to humanity. I do not mean that these intelligences are either confined to any or all of these forms, or that they are the product of human thought, conscious or otherwise. The vehicles, or God-forms, yes, or largely so, but not the intelligences themselves. These vehicles, however, form a useful medium of communication, but naturally their visual form is, to a certain extent, anthropomorphic.[66]

According to Norton, the fluid nature of the astral realm allowed metaphysical entities and intelligences from higher planes of existence to manifest themselves on lower levels of the astral plane—at this time they would appear in anthropomorphic god-forms culturally appropriate to the consciousness of the beholder. Norton believed that the god-forms themselves provided a mediating link between different levels of reality—the metaphysical and the human—and that human beings could approach the gods by "rising" through the astral planes toward the manifested god-forms while in a state of trance. Conversely, the gods could "incarnate" or "descend" into the astral realms by manifesting in an appropriate form:

> Taking the abstract state of consciousness known as "Humanity" or Human Consciousness (including all Uni-Planal [*sic*] variations) as belonging to one Realm of Being—and the next level of consciousness (i.e., Deva consciousness, I have used a Sanskrit term, failing any English equivalent) as belonging to another Realm of Being, and as such, completely different from state one, the God-forms comprise a link, or half-way state between the two. Human consciousness, then, can move up into these God-forms during trance, or other exceptional conditions; likewise Deva consciousness can descend into the same form. The inhabiting, or temporary animation of these forms by entities can be likened to an ectoplasmic "incarnation," during which the entity assumes both the form and the mode of intelligence and perception associated with that form.[67]

These extracts from Norton's interview sessions with L. J. Murphy reveal that within a magical context Norton regarded the astral plane as a type of "mediating domain" between the gods and goddesses on the one hand, and human consciousness (functioning through the vehicle of the "plasmic body") on the other. Norton formed the view—on the basis of her trance experiences in the plasmic body—that a number of inner-plane "intelligences" pervaded all aspects of the known universe. These intelligences in turn confirmed the nature of their existence through a range of anthropomorphic images, manifesting as gods and goddesses, demons and archangels—as portrayed in the world's various religions and mythologies. However, a key

discovery made by Norton herself and that distinguishes her from many other occultists operating within the Western esoteric tradition—especially those espousing the philosophy that magic is based, essentially, on directing the will—was that she did not believe she was fully in control of the magical energies she was encountering. Norton maintained that the archetypal gods and cosmic beings she contacted in trance existed *in their own right*. In their own particular magical realms, they held the upper hand—*not she*. To this extent Norton differed from thinkers like Carl Jung, who regarded the sacred archetypes as universal forces deep within the collective human psyche, and not as entities with their own separate existence beyond the mind. While Norton admitted to being influenced by Jung and refers to Jungian archetypes in the L. J. Murphy transcripts, for Jung, the archetypes—the ancient gods and goddesses of religion and mythology—were ultimately sacred personifications of the self.[68] On the basis of what she experienced during her trance explorations, Norton did not share this view. For her, the magical beings she encountered on the inner planes were not projections or extensions of her own spiritual consciousness, but powerful—and sometimes terrifying—entities that would grace her with their presence *only if it pleased them*, and not as a consequence of her own personal will or intent. Norton also claimed she could depict in her paintings and drawings only those qualities and attributes that the god or goddess in question *chose to reveal*, and that those energies would filter through her "like a funnel." Norton maintained she did nothing other than transmit the magical current. If the gods and goddesses were alive *in her* and manifesting *through her* while she was in a state of trance, their presence would flow through to her art and ceremonial practice.

# Part V

# The Earth and the Internet

# Chapter 10

# Sacred Earth Mysteries

> Gray moss-covered boulders scatter the water's edge. Brown and green bushes mask the trunks of the tall evergreens that secure the banks. The fog lifts from the Cascades revealing crisp, snow-covered peaks and soppy-looking brown and green foothills. The beauty makes me realize I've noticed little beyond the confines of my mind for a very long time, and I feel arrogant and small. Rivers and mountain trails have always led me to places where truth means less and there exists a simple clarity. I come here to know my own life and transform it . . . The pull of the land, the texture of its body, the slow rhythms of growth and death—these things teach me grace.[1]

The earth itself is now regarded as a sacred place, and as well as indigenous "caretakers" of the earth, whose practices, ceremonies, and songs have existed for millennia, there has been a move within some contemporary new religious movements to view the earth as sacred and to act accordingly. The people in these spiritual communities have been referred to as Deep Ecologists, Pagans, Wiccans, Druids, Goddess groups, Animists, and in general, the "listening people";[2] what they are "listening to" is the natural world in which they find themselves, and they are developing a deep respect and reverence for that world. The interconnectedness of humans, animals, plants, the mountains, and the waterways all form part of the earth's sacredness, and rituals and ceremonies become a way of life that celebrates those links and informs daily lives. Both traditional indigenous and contemporary beliefs and practices begin to merge as people become increasingly aware of the importance of looking after our planet.

With the catastrophic events that occurred in 2011—massive floods in Australia, devastating earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand, and the triple horrors in Japan of earthquakes, tsunamis, and nuclear leakages—we might do more than ponder the way that indigenous

people view the earth and our connection with it. Although not all indigenous traditions are homogenous with regard to the "sacredness" of the earth, and since contact, colonialism, and globalization there are also different orientations toward exploitation of land, there is universally a traditional way of approaching the relationship between humans and the land on which they live that more often than not is of a kinship and reciprocal nature.

In the upper Klamath River in northwestern California, the Karuk people have a dialectical relationship to their particular environment that has shaped their religious traditions, and in turn, had important effects on their environment. Waterways, fishing, and hunting formed a large component of their lifestyle, and they were always careful not to exploit sources of food to extinction or to decimate food and fish populations. The Karuk understand humans and the landscape as a "complex and dynamic system of relationships in which the land and the people continually recreate and perpetuate each other."[3] Karuk tribal anthropologist John Salter talks about their spiritual connection to land:

> Among the Karuk, the spiritual emerges from a contemplation of the nature of Nature. This is not a sense of nature which is a narrow projection of rich and powerful mentalities. It is nature understood as a corrective process. With us the relationship to the land is an inclusive way of life in which the spiritual link is constantly re-emerging and making clear consequences which cannot be ignored. That linkage is part of every consideration.[4]

The needs of the whole system and their links with larger ecological systems and human beings are taken into account. The Karuk work cooperatively with the U.S. Forest Service, blending traditional Karuk methods with Western ecological practices to manage and sustain the land, recognizing that sharing life on our planet is of primary and global concern.

Native Americans see religious life as a negotiation between humans and other kinds of personal beings. The Native American Ojibwa people view humans and "other-than-human persons"[5] as sharing characteristics such as intelligence, knowledge, wisdom, and a moral code. As well, these "other-than-human persons" communicate and empower human beings through dreams and visions, act as kinfolk, and engage humans in everyday life as well as in ritual performances. Ojibwa people view animals, plants, the sun, moon, stars, and other objects as "persons" because they behave like persons, and all "persons" are interdependent, having mutual responsibility toward

one another.[6] With this view of the world, hunting is viewed by the Ojibwa as necessitating communication between the hunter and the hunted. The hunter needs to persuade the hunted "person" to allow the hunter to take its body. In the Ojibwa worldview, reality includes interpersonal encounters with other-than-human persons that manifests particularly during dream states.

The notion of mutual responsibility and the interconnected nature of humans and nonhumans, sentient and nonsentient is mirrored in traditional Aboriginal Australia. Deborah Bird Rose calls it a "reflexive moral relationship of care."[7] There is a reciprocal cycle to the way everything in nature is interconnected, and everything in the cycle needs every other thing in order for a state of equilibrium to be maintained. Without sun, the earth would be inundated with rain; without rain, there would be no water supply. Birds and animals move from place to place as the heat of the sun becomes too intense. Certain animals "tell" others, simply by their presence, that it is time to move on. Life for all creatures is maintained as long as there is balance.

Aboriginal people talk about "country" the way they might talk about a person. They say that, like people, country "knows, hears, smells, takes notices, takes care," and is even "sorry" or "lazy."[8] This notion of country is also reflected in Xavier Herbert's epic novel about Aboriginal Australia. The title, *Poor Fella, My Country*, conveys the personalized notion of country as a living, conscious entity, one deserving sympathy, in the same way that an abused person would deserve sympathy. Aboriginal Australians treated the land with great respect for millennia, and many Aboriginal elders warn of the dangers of disrespecting the earth. Indeed, they say that the sacred power of the earth can fight back, causing grave accidents and health problems to those who abuse her. Land in certain places is deemed particularly powerful and is connected to the Ancestral Beings and The Dreaming, as demonstrated by the following remark of an Aboriginal man in response to W. E. Stanner's questions about a Dreaming site:

> Old man, you listen! Something is there; we do not know what; something. Like engine, like power, plenty of power; it does hard work; it *pushes*.[9]

Sites in Australia where the power is concentrated are highly venerated; certain sites are repositories of Dreaming power, particularly, it seems, at locations where the Ancestors either emerged or went back into the earth after their travels. With the proper ceremonial performance, living descendants of the Ancestors can be coaxed into reemerging. Kimberley man Mowaljarlai tells us that when he was a

young boy in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, older men instructed him to take care of the land and to treat it with respect:

> In my youngfella time, the older people used to teach us: "Whatever law *Wandjina*[10] gave, we have to look after all these things. Don't muck around with them or that *Wunggud* [places of concentrated Earth power] will get shock, because you are damaging Wallanganda's creation. You are misusing His gift to us from the Creation Time."[11]

People are related to specific areas of "country" in Aboriginal Australia, and some sites require special care by people who have the appropriate relationship to them. If someone approaches a site who is not in appropriate relationship to the site's spirits, the spirits will "push them away." There is an "invisible power fence" that acts as a shield around certain areas of power.[12] If, however, one is in the company of a person who "belongs" to that place, especially if he is showered with the sweat of the properly related person and approaches slowly and carefully, he may be permitted to enter the area. Any unwelcome visitor who has not been prepared, however, can have an accident or be struck with extreme confusion. Mowaljarlai talks about this power in the Kimberley region as a "force" and a "life force."[13] When the *Wandjinas* walked over the land during their travels, they merged themselves with particular sites and painted themselves onto cave walls. By touching up paintings of the Wandjina, humans help to maintain their presence. *Wandjina* caves and *wunggud* pools, says Mowaljarlai, "are the doorways to the spirit regions."[14]

During Donald Thomson's sojourns to document the ritual and ceremonial life of Aborigines in Arnhem Land, he noted that the idea of a spiritual force underlies all ritual and ceremonial life, and rites to avert danger were carried out often in the 1930s.[15] Similarly, W. E. H. Stanner stated that a kinetic or impersonal force or energy is prevalent in Aboriginal Australia and that it exists in all things, both sentient and nonsentient, as well as in the land, flora, and fauna.[16] It might be referred to as "ancestral power," "spiritual power," "force," "energy," or even as "like electricity." This force or power often lies dormant and can be invoked and propitiated by the correct ritual carried out by the appropriate people.

Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara women in the Musgrave Ranges, central Australia, informed ethnomusicologist Helen Payne that the concept of spiritual power as a force exists, and that they can "summon" or "pull" ancestral spiritual forces or "supernatural forces" through ritual enactment.[17] Once these forces are released, they can be used by living Ancestral descendants in order to change aspects

of their lives—for example, to restore health or engender a sense of well-being, to avert unwanted attentions, to change weather conditions, or to redirect social behavior. Indeed, as a result of powers "pulled," any aspect of daily life can be altered. There are strict requirements and intricate procedures for absorbing and deactivating such powers, the women told her. Sites have to be demarcated and prepared; unwanted debris cleared away, and fires positioned at the extremities of the ritual area. Women prepare for the appropriate ceremonial dancing by singing to invoke the spirit and "painting up" their bodies.

The main object used in the ritual enactment is the ubiquitous woman's tool, the digging stick, which when placed upright in the soil during a ritual serves as the medium through which supernatural powers are "called up" and later transported back into the ground in order to deactivate the powers raised and absorbed during the performance, so that no harm may come to participants. These powers are very strong and are a source of great assistance to women as they can be used to bring about a desired positive end; equally, however, they can be misdirected to bring about destruction or used for malevolent purposes. For this reason their release, absorption, and manipulation are carefully controlled, and only strong, knowledgeable, and experienced women are able to conduct these ceremonies.

Ursula McConnel's early fieldwork in Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland, in 1927 also discussed the notion of powers emanating from the land, and the ability of knowledgeable people to be able to "rouse them up from the ground,"[18] and much farther away, in Central Australia, Christine Watson noted in 2003 that the Kutjungka people use dance and song to "call up" Ancestral presence. The performers' dancing feet penetrate the ground, raise dust, and thus arouse the Ancestors. "Striking the ground," writes Watson, sets up vibrations in the land and is an important part of a two-way communication process between the conscious spiritual powers that are present within the earth and humans who live on the land.[19] Both land and people contain and share this Ancestral essence or power, and it is a force that links them. Ancestral "vital powers" infused the land, and it is this that can be transferred to living people.[20] Several verbatim accounts by Aboriginal people reiterate the fact that there is energy in the land and that it is a very powerful energy:

> The land is not empty, the land is full of knowledge, full of story, full of goodness, full of energy. Earth is our mother; the land is not empty. There is the story I am telling you—special, sacred, important.[21]

> This is not a rock, it is my grandfather. This is a place where the dreaming comes up, right up from inside the ground.[22]

"Everything is written into the country," declared Mowaljarlai.[23] It seems that some power resides in land, flora, fauna, and objects; that is, it is *outside* the human being. However, it can be pulled out, absorbed, or redirected by humans. In addition to this outside power, there is a power that resides *within* human beings. This force can be evoked and used in a similar fashion. It is also discussed as an energy that is in and around people, and can be seen by those with special gifts for seeing. This pervasive sentiment about the sacredness of the land among Aboriginal Australians was taken up by an Indian scholar during the Parliament of the World's Religions in Melbourne, Australia, in 2009, who said we would need only one religion, the "religion of the environment where we unite to co-operate and act for the preservation of Mother Earth."[24]

Eco-theologian Thomas Berry echoed these same words when he said that "the universe itself is the primary divine revelation. The splendour and the beauty of the natural world in all its variety must be preserved if any worthy idea of the divine is to survive in the human community."[25] Berry also opined that religion in the future would depend on our appreciation of the natural world as "the locus for the meeting of the divine and the human."[26] In response to some of the 2011 cataclysmic natural disasters, many people expressed the notion that "the Mother is angry and is showing it," reflecting the idea that the earth is female, Gaia, a living entity that can be pleased or displeased with human behavior. "She" is not necessarily benevolent; indeed, she can be wrathful and punishing, a Kali-like figure that is a force to be reckoned with. Indeed, there is a growing Goddess consciousness, stemming from the feminist movement in the mid-twentieth century and an explosion of interest in earth-based spirituality throughout the Western world. The reference to the earth as mother is both old and new; the women's movement, Goddess spirituality, and the revival of Celtic spirituality have contributed to the burgeoning interest in nature religions and the spirituality of place.

With women questioning the inequalities between men and women in the political and social arenas, feminist theory and activism became intrinsically linked with concerns for the natural environment; connections were made between the domination of women and the domination of nature, and the Goddess movement was born. Both Merchant[27] and Easlea[28] pointed out that prior to the seventeenth century, nature was viewed as a benevolent female and nurturing mother,

but after the scientific revolution, nature was conceived in a more mechanistic manner. The move from the organic to the mechanistic model allowed the exploitation of both nature and woman, and the two were seen as equated. From the sixteenth century the European image of the earth as wild and uncontrollable became linked with the uncontrollable woman, and mastery and control of nature replaced respect for nature. Many feminists argued that the goal of the women's movement and the ecology movement were mutually reinforcing as both focused on interconnection rather than domination. The goddess symbol became an affirmation of the legitimacy of female power and independence and linked the embodied female with divinity as well as with the earth. Earth-based spirituality or theology advocated by people such as Carol Christ, Starhawk, Charlene Spretnak, Monica Sjoo, Selena Fox, and others made connections between women and nature, some conceptualizing the earth as the body of the Goddess and consequently sacred. Some suggested that the Goddess would lead to not only women's spiritual salvation but also the salvation of the Earth and proffered that the ecology movement and the women's movement were mutually reinforcing.

No longer is a sacred space seen to be confined within a human-made construction such as a church, synagogue, or temple. Sacred places and spaces are more than just buildings; they are places where the Divine or the Sacred, whether nature, spirits, or gods, are encountered. Our ancient ancestors once recognized this. Nonindigenous people who feel deeply related to the land and sensitive to the feelings of "place," though not with the same deeply intrinsic, integrated kinship relationships that Aborigines have built up over thousands of years in their specific cultural system, are becoming increasingly more aware of their emotional attachment to place. Sociologist Doug Ezzy, who grew up in Hobart, Tasmania, reflects on his childhood memories of the forests, creeks, and waterfalls in his Tasmanian environment. His memories reflect the profound effect the natural environment had on him; he speaks of feeling peace and transcendence, of profound ecstatic joy as well as many moments of terror and life confronting danger.[29]

After hiking and climbing with a heavy backpack one time for nine hours, he entered an "ancient valley of Gondwanaland" with very ancient eucalyptus trees "growing in a snowy, cold, other world," which gave him feelings of peace: "the moist caress of the cold leaves, the depth of green that surrounds, the still quietness and consistency of wind and water, the fragrance of sweetly rotting leaves." He camped at this site and dreamed of "chariots of the gods" roaring in

the trees, "as jet streams hit the side of the valley and charged down and around among the canopy."[30] When morning came he felt stunned, "as if some chthonic god had closed the portal below." He continues:

> I sit, stand, sit again and stare at the lake, at the trees. I meditate. I am a tree. I am the valley. But somehow, I am also profoundly not them. I am not one with them. They are not to be assimilated. I am not these trees. I am not this valley. Rather, they are an "other," the Other. They speak to me, through a subtle other language. Voices seen, felt, smelled, breathed, heard. I am in awe. In that relationship with nature I become human again. She calls me, demands of me, but I can never really meet her, share with her, or possess her. I am merely in her presence. . . . Nature is both my home and not my home. She comforts me and terrifies me, sustains me and threatens to kill me, takes me into her bosom and confronts me as radically other, distanced from me.[31]

Ezzy's relationship with nature articulates the wildness, danger, and terror of nature—floods, cyclones, bushfires raging out of control—but also its gentle, nurturing aspects: the warmth and comfort of a fireplace, the coolness of water on a hot day. Nature can remind us of our human mortality, the uncertainty of the future and that mere humans are not in control as we might imagine.

Many people today are reflecting upon the human causes of our planet's desecration and becoming more *au fait* with the environmental problems associated with human interference in natural cycles and habitats. There is a greening of the sacred. Some people refer to their commitment to environmental issues in shades of green—those who are not actively and passionately concerned might refer to themselves as "pale green," or a "lighter shade of green." The interface of religion and environmental issues has been termed "religious environmentalism," a topic that is covered in much detail by Bron Taylor in *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*.[32] By "dark green religion" Taylor refers to spiritual practices that view nature itself as sacred and worthy of reverent care. Many individuals, it seems, view nature in this way but they may not name it as such. The "dark" of "dark green" refers to the depth of passion that the environment holds for such individuals. "Green religion" and "dark green religion," according to Taylor, posit environmentally friendly behavior as a religious obligation. Taylor breaks "dark green religion" into further subtypes, from nature religion to radical environmentalism, the latter containing religious, political, and scientific beliefs involving a wide range of people of different backgrounds and interests, anarchistic critics, bio-regionalists, contemporary pagans,

eco-feminists, environmental historians, scientists, Native American scholars, and anthropologists, to name a few. The common theme is concern for and human commitment to the environment, and the desire to lessen the destruction of ecosystems caused by human impact.

Even within Christianity, there is a move toward reading biblical texts from a "green" perspective. Norman Habel, in *An Inconvenient Text: Is a Green Reading of the Bible Possible?*, suggests that the Bible includes both "green" texts and "grey" texts. Green texts demonstrate empathy with the earth, showing that humans are "sojourners" on the earth while gray texts suggest that humans are superior to, and have dominion over, the rest of the earth. The distinction between green and gray texts is that the former can be read as human *stewardship* of the earth, and the latter demonstrate human *dominion* over the earth thus condoning human actions that lead to earth's desecration.[33]

Appreciation of environmental issues can be promoted through ecotourism, a branch of tourism that invites the more environmentally conscious visitor to various locations of natural beauty or to mix with animals in their natural habitat. A whole industry has been built up around ecotourism, with master planners of natural resources and recreation, interpretive specialists, green travel guidebooks, eco-lodge and landscape architecture, environmental engineers, interior designers, green buildings and energy-efficient specialists, ecotourism generalists, marketing experts, and community development planners, not to mention all the service providers of food and items of clothing and material comfort. Responsible ecotourism includes programs that minimize the negative aspects of visitors, and raise awareness of the fragility of the ecosystems and the conservation of both biological and cultural diversity.

A tour group called Sentient Experientials takes visitors into the rainforests of South America. This tour combines indigenous wisdom with eco-education and rainforest conservation strategies. The ecologically minded tourist can journey to Secoya territory, on the banks of the Aguarico River in the Ecuadorian Amazon, learning from traditional healers, ethnobotanists, tropical biologists, and conservation biologist Jonathon S. Miller Weisberger. The aim is to promote intercultural understanding and an appreciation of rainforest ecology and of local culture.

Some indigenous people are welcoming visitors eager to find out more about their culture and spirituality. Kalahari Bushmen now teach visitors how to survive in the wilderness: to find water, make a fire, discern the difference between edible and nonedible plants and

those that contain medicinal properties. Tourists might even join them in a healing ritual. A Hill tribe man in Thailand transports tourists to his remote village in the hills, up narrow winding tracks in a van, to stay in small shacks that rest perilously over ravines. Visitors are willing to be accommodated in places that lack water, plumbing, and the comfort and trappings of the upmarket tour in order to experience an authentic few days with the people of a traditional village. Postmodern travelers want to *experience* for themselves, and with all the senses.

Caring and reverence for the planet and everything on it is essential, and this view necessarily leads people to value all life systems and to see their interconnectedness. The twentieth century was one of "uprootedness" for many people, with fewer and fewer remaining in the places in which they were born. And the twenty-first century has extended rather than curtailed the sense of distance from birthplace. Although contemporary lifestyles liberated individuals from the narrow controls of earlier times, and opened up limitless possibilities for travel and knowledge, modern freedom of choice also left people alienated from one another and from their natural surroundings. The human connection for many is now through the technology of the Internet, each one of us lone journeyers in the vast galaxy of electronic cables and virtual realities rather than in the open spaces and natural surroundings of our ancestors. In a world that is beset with threats of meaninglessness, many find solace in the World Wide Web, physically locked inside homes and office buildings that provide protective shells between themselves and nature.

Curiously, after a couple of hundred years of engulfing and discrediting indigenous spirituality and values, the West often turns to indigenous peoples for a glimpse of their own lost spiritual heritage. In search of their own connection to place, many embark on a search for spiritual origins that takes people back to the land, and a search for a better way of life. This longing for ancient roots is at the heart of the contemporary interest in a Celtic pagan past that honors the land and the seasonal cycles through myth and ritual.

## PAGANISM

Paganism, also known as neo-paganism, is a general umbrella term for a range of specific groups of traditions that explore different ways of being in the world that, in varying degrees and emphasis, can be described as nature religions because of their orientation toward, and

respect for, nature. The natural annual cycle of the seasons, birth, fertility, death, and regrowth are reflected in an anthropomorphized mythical narrative that is played out through ritual. Nature, therefore, is an important focus within paganism, and most if not all pagans have varying degrees of ecological concern for the planet globally. Some become impassioned active political protesters,[34] while others are content to remain locale-specific nature carers and ritual nature ceremonialists, living their spiritual lives with a strong awareness of their own place and space, nature spirits, and the other-than-human persons who share those spaces. This awareness becomes a lifestyle that is incorporated into their daily activities.

For pagans, the divine, transcendent powers are present within nature itself, and by deliberate ritual and contemplation, the devout pagan can make contact with them. Some modern pagans even call their way the path of "individually experienced religion."[35] While some would argue that specific pagan paths, such as witchcraft, are more concerned with high magic and the transformation of a person's inner nature rather than with the localized spirits of an external nature, others view nature as an integral part of witchcraft, especially about having a "right relationship" with the land on which they live, the public face of which is environmental and political activism in varying degrees. Yarrow cites groups such as the Dragon Environmental Network, Reclaiming, and others of a similar nature, which concern themselves not only with political activism but also with quietly working magic in an effort to prevent overdevelopment or ecologically inappropriate interference with nature.[36] Thus both practical and magical means of keeping a place sacred are employed.

Wicca, a branch of contemporary Western paganism, is a "reawakening" of the old religious values, ideas, and practices of a pagan past, which includes the veneration of nature, itself considered to be alive and ensouled. The divine is regarded as a "force" or "energy" as it is manifested in the world of nature.[37] The deities of Wicca are understood as embodiments of a life force in nature, and, writes Vivianne Crowley, most Wiccans would consider themselves to be pantheists, panentheists, or even animists. While Gerald Gardner, one of the founders of modern witchcraft, was more focused on witchcraft as a magical fertility cult, witchcraft has evolved into a more nature-oriented practice, especially with its Wheel of the Year involving an annual ritual cycle of festivals based on what is happening in both nature and the human cycle: the summer and winter solstices, the autumn and spring equinoxes, Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane, and Lugnasadh, and their emphasis on the natural cycle of death, fertility, growth, and rebirth.

The Goddess is sometimes described as "the soul of nature," as evidenced in what is called the "Charge of the Goddess" or the "Great Mother Charge," which forms part of Wiccan rites, part of which reads:

> I, who am the beauty of the green earth and the white Moon among the stars, and the mystery of the waters, and the desire of the heart of man, call unto thy soul. Arise, and come unto me. For I am the soul of nature, who gives life to the universe. From me all things proceed, and unto me all things must return.[38]

The intrinsic link between witches and nature is clear in this passage, and the link gained impetus as the twentieth century progressed. Now in the twenty-first century, it seems to be well ensconced in the view of Wiccans and other pagans. Starhawk's strong influence on the pagan scene highlighted the connection between paganism and nature. She viewed all things—"plants animals, stones, and stars"—as "alive" and "on some level conscious beings." "All things," she wrote, "are divine, and are manifestations of the Goddess."[39]

Environmental activism became very important to Starhawk who saw Wicca as the basis for radical active environmentalism. Demonstrating the mundane and practical approach to the ecological component of Wicca, she wrote, in 1979:

> Meditation on the balance of nature might be considered a spiritual act in Witchcraft, but not as much as cleaning up garbage left at a campsite or marching to protest an unsafe nuclear plant.[40]

The Dragon Environmental Group, a pagan organization that began in the early 1980s, combines environmental work with "eco-magic," mainly in the form of rituals and spells to combat and oppose road building that has negative impact on the environment. Many of their rituals take place at threatened sites.

Andy Letcher discusses the reality of eco-spirituality and enchanted forests to British eco-pagans. While thousands of environmental activists protested the felling of old forest for new road construction in Britain in the 1990s, actively advocating the primacy of the forest over economic rationalism, many of those living more permanently in protest camps began referring to themselves as tribes, held an animistic view of the forest, and created an "enchanted cartography" that included the location, veneration, and naming of old trees (such as Grandfather Ash or Middle Oak) and noting places inhabited by tree-dwelling elves.[41] Fantasy literature such as Tolkein's *The Lord of the Rings* and C. S. Lewis's *Narnia* stories served as inspiration for them, along with the ingestion of mushrooms and cannabis to enhance

the forest as a magical place. Some people had "amazing dreams" while living in trees, and developed meaningful relationships with speaking trees, pixies, gnomes, and other beings. They experienced nature as alive and aware, and the lifestyle and practices of the long-term protesters directly contributed to their eco-pagan worldview.

In searching for an authentic pagan past, the displaced European might have to return, in a spiritual sense, to land that is outside the country in which they find themselves. Displacement from original country, and the myths, legends, and stories that accompany the long history of people and place is exacerbated by the disjuncture between ancient narratives and new country of habitation. The problem for followers of a nature religion like modern paganism, with its northern hemisphere myths and rituals based on a seasonal cycle and relationships with nature that are quite different to those that are found in the southern hemisphere.

The early British colonialists in Australia, many of whom were unwilling settlers, remarked on the discrepancies between their homeland and their new country, and found the harsh Australian environment difficult to come to terms with. Even those who rushed out there for gold, much later on, complained of the monotony of the bush and of the historical blankness of the antipodean landscape where, it seemed to them, nothing recognizable had happened for millennia:

> There can be no walk, no journey of any kind, more monotonous that one through the bush . . . There is no association of the past connected with it. . . . There are no sacred groves. No time-hallowed fanes sanctified by the recollections of hospitable deeds . . . No fields, recalling the downfall of tyranny. Nothing whatever to visit as a spot noted as being capable of exalting the mind by the memories with which it is associated. No locality, memorable as the haunt of genius. No birthplaces of great men . . . Nothing of this kind, all is dully-dead, uninspiring mud-work.[42]

However, after several generations of European settlement in Australia, there developed a sense of belonging to the land that eluded the early settlers. Ross Terrill, for example, growing up in the 1950s in the East Gippsland area of Australia on a sheep station, wrote:

> We knew that we were Australians. We felt attached to our place, and across the continent people looked and sounded and behaved just as we did. Australia for us was indeed a "place." We loved the high wide skies. We loved the wonderful light with its range of moods that was almost like an extra circle of friends. We identified being Australian with the natural world around us. We were happy pagans.[43]

In spite of slavish adherence to British ways that meant celebrating an English Christmas dinner in the heat of a 35-degree summer December day (a practice that is still continued by some), and of having to ward off blowflies at mealtimes with floppy plastic fly swatters, Terrill and his family loved the green valleys and blue hills. Neither he nor others felt the isolation and loneliness of the bush that had been experienced by the unhappy first-comers. The continual displacement of many Aborigines from their original "country," and sense of place from the advent of the intruding colonials, created a cry for land rights that reverberated across the country; the despair of Aboriginal mothers whose children had been suddenly wrenched away from them, the despair of the dispossessed, cut deep into the Aboriginal psyche. Aboriginal poets expressed their own longing for the country from which they had been extracted, often forcefully and unwillingly, to be sent to places with which they were unfamiliar, emotionally and spiritually. It was not until well into the twentieth century that non-Aboriginal people began to sympathize with the Aboriginal spiritual connection to place and to become aware of it themselves. The early materialist view of owning and exploiting land changed into one more akin to the indigenous integrated approach of stewardship of the land. This sense of place, where all that exists in and on the land is just as important as humans, leads to a view of "place" as spiritual belonging, and to a sense of the land as sacred—a geocentric rather than anthropocentric focus.

When place and nature become mismatched, myth and bioregional particularities become important to the way people celebrate their beliefs. With a need to really think about the differences between the northern and southern hemispheres, the contemporary pagan community had to address the disjuncture between mythical cycles in the northern hemisphere and adjust their cycles and rituals to what was, in fact, occurring on the land.[44] Because the seasonal cycle of rituals and ceremonies highlights the natural rhythm of the seasons, equinoxes and solstices, and the movements of the sun and moon, the interrelationship with the environment, the seasons, the land, and the spirits is crucial. Fertile and arid times in placed in the southern hemisphere do not coincide with those in Britain, from whence paganism stemmed. In 1995, David Tacey suggested that white Australians were "spiritually bereft" and needed to remythologize and develop spiritual kinship with the land, engendering a psychic connection to the landscape in order to respect the mythopoetic bond between the land and its indigenous inhabitants.[45] A consequence of these considerations engendered a subtle shift among Pagans living in the southern hemisphere toward a more eco-pagan orientation. This in

turn promoted a more heightened awareness of the environment and the political issues surrounding ecology movements.

Scottish environmental scientist and bard Alastair McIntosh combines his role of scientist with that of activist, using techniques and practices drawn from Celtic shamanism and other forms of nature religion. His passionate composition and reading of his Gal-Gael declamation,[46] narrated at the Beltane Full Moon Wolf Festival, in Scotland on May 3, 1996, and also read at the conference on "Nature Religion Today: Western Paganism, Shamanism and Esotericism" held at Ambleside in the English Lake District in April 1996,[47] grew out of the protest against Glasgow's M77 motorway at Pollok and other related events including the move toward Scottish land reform and the protest of a national scenic area being turned into a superquarry. It powerfully demonstrates the indigenous Scottish people's spiritual associations with their land. To anyone hearing his talk, it brought home the realization of what it is to be white and indigenous.[48] It began:

> We, the Gal-Gael, being a loose association of some native peoples of Scotland, extend our hand to all other indigenous peoples in the world. By invitation of First Nation friends in North American we ask to address you with these words.

Then follows a poetically beautiful and deeply emotive plea for consideration of new understandings of what it means to be "indigenous," and the importance of recovering "near-lost traditions."[49] He uses his own native land as exemplar of the more localized desecration of nature, but places it within a global concern for nature everywhere. What Alastair McIntosh points out clearly is the inclusive nature of the resacralization and recovery of place. He had many dialogues with native peoples such as the Mi'Kmaq warrior chief Sulian Stone Eagle Herney, of the First Nations Environmental Network of Canada. McIntosh, and his declamation, calls on different native peoples to unite "in defence of the Earth" while not losing sight of local particularities, native land rights, and a "cultural soul." "This," he says, "calls for new and inclusive understandings of what it means to be "indigenous":

> What does it mean for us a rainbow spectrum
> to be a Peoples of this place?
> Fully indigenous. Fully Belonging.[50]

And so, he continues:

> Let us propose an ancient new criterion for belonging here;
> All are Indigenous, Native to this Place

All Who are Willing to Cherish
And Be Cherished
By This Place
And Its People[51]

To "those whose souls so resonate," he points out that in his own native Scotland:

Once Vikings raped and pillaged here
And then too melded
gentle with the healing power of place and time
Became us.

He is by no means advocating a generic sameness, however, suggesting instead that we can transcend "narrow nationalism" and find some way of understanding and belonging. In a final plea to all people of the World, he says:

We ask you weave our native threads
To fabric on scintillating cloth
We pledge to you support
for all work sourced in love
recovering right relation'ships your territories
And ask from you forgiveness for past injustice, ignorance and spoils
of fear or greed.
We need your help with Spirit's grace . . .
To Save this Earth.[52]

He is calling for globalization but not in the sense of homogeneity ("not to bleach out ethnic richness"), but for a global concern for the care and nurturing of the earth by those who have the "power of reverence." His is a "dark green" plea.

Common to all "nature religions" is a perspective on place and nature as a vital aspect of spirituality. Peter Beyer's less poetic but succinct way of expressing the essence of McIntosh's work is that nature religion currents "stress that genuine human existence should refer primarily to the local place, but with the explicit assumption that others around the world are doing the same with reference to their own places."[53] A global society encourages both particularity *and* exclusivity. Beyer suggests that the link between exclusivity and particularity (with regard to reverence and care for the planet) is "felt *communitas*," to use Victor Turner's term, in that individual and small groups have the same goal and function: respect and reverence for both sentient and nonsentient places—people, land, flora, fauna, rocks, waterways—which creates a global communal approach.

This is highly appealing, but perhaps not as simple as it sounds. There are issues of economy, politics, land rights, religious authority, interpretive clashes, and that thorny question of cultural appropriation among individual and/or groups who may misread such a message. But surely it is a move in the right direction if we are all to survive.

# Chapter 11

# Cybermagic

In a manner that will no doubt prove unique to the twenty-first century, ancient mythic traditions and modern technology have now fused to bring us the completely new concept of "cybermagic." The existential magical realm has now moved well beyond the concept of tangible ritual space—where ceremonies and invocations are performed in specific locations like temple chambers or sacred circles marked out on the earth—toward virtual environments where the very notion of space itself has changed.

In her book *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace* (1999), science writer Margaret Wertheim argues that the Internet is providing us with a new concept of space that did not exist before—the interconnected "space" of the global computer network.[1] When one person communicates with another online there is no sense of physicality, for cyberjourneys cannot be measured in a literal sense. "Unleashed into the Internet," she writes, "my 'location' can no longer be fixed purely in physical space. Just 'where' I am when I enter cyberspace is a question yet to be answered, but clearly my position cannot be pinned down to a mathematical location."[2] All we can really confirm about the nature of cyberspace itself is that it involves a form of digital communication where information is relayed back and forth from one computer site to another, and where people share the outpourings of each other's minds.

This is not simply a communication of *literal* information, however. As many Internet enthusiasts have discovered, the world of cyberspace is also a realm where fantasy personas can be created in *virtual* reality—where human beings can interact with each other in ways limited only by their imagination. Individuals can pose as members of the opposite sex, as fantasy beings—even as dark and evil gods—and this has become a central feature in the development of online role

play. In a very specific way, the Internet has become an extension of the human psyche—a forum for both its realities and its fantasies—facilitating interplay between advanced state-of-the-art technology and the human imagination. The tantalizing cyber-creativity that then emerges can be expressed via the simple equation *As I imagine, so I become*—and this in itself is the very essence of magic. So it comes as no surprise that neo-pagans and occultists of all descriptions have been quick to embrace the Internet as a new means of communication and fantasy role play. For many, the World Wide Web provides a pathway into the mythic conjurings of the world-at-large—an enticing and increasingly seductive means of engaging with the global imagination—and as Dr. Dave Green has observed: "Cyberspace, like ritual space, is an important site for spiritual transformation where one is able to perform, play with, deconstruct and reconstruct identity."[3]

## DIGITAL MAGIC AND THE COUNTERCULTURE

The relationship between neo-pagans and Internet technology appears to have its roots in American 1960s counterculture—it is now widely acknowledged that present-day computer technology owes a substantial debt to the psychedelic consciousness movement. The American psychedelic culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s was essentially about experiencing the psyche through mind-altering drugs—the word "psychedelic," coined by psychiatrist Dr. Humphry Osmond, literally means "mind revealing"—and this type of consciousness exploration in turn appears to have had a direct impact on the rise of the new technology. According to social theorist Mark Dery, the well-known counterculture guru Timothy Leary regarded the rise of computer technology as a clear vindication of the psychedelic revolution because without it the personal computer would not have burst onto the world scene so soon. "It's well known," he told Dery, "that most of the creative impulse in the software industry, and indeed much of the hardware, particularly at Apple Macintosh, derived directly from the '60s consciousness movement. [Apple cofounder] Steve Jobs went to India, took a lot of acid, studied Buddhism, and came back and said that Edison did more to influence the human race than the Buddha. And [Microsoft founder Bill] Gates was a big psychedelic person at Harvard. It makes perfect sense to me that if you activate your brain with psychedelic drugs, the only way you can describe it is electronically."[4] For Leary, there was a clear

relationship between the rise of the consciousness movement and the emergence of the new technology:

> What is so intriguing about our own era in history is that the human quest for knowledge and understanding in the last 25 years has seen an amazing blend of shamanic techniques, psychedelic drugs and the international global boom in resurrecting the pre-Christian, pagan, totemic and Hindu traditions. At the same time, with these computers . . . you have a situation where you can walk around in realities of your own construction. So we are very much on a threshold. I don't want to put any limits on what I'm saying, but here we have ancient techniques merging with the most modern. Computers give us the ways to communicate with the basic language of the universe—which is *quanta-electronic*. Matter and bodies are just electrons that have decided to come together, buzzing around with information.[5]

Cyberspace enthusiast Erik Davis similarly acknowledges the connection between virtual reality and the neo-pagan counterculture, explaining that "techno-pagans" can be defined as "a small but vital subculture of digital savants who keep one foot in the emerging technosphere and one foot in the wild and woolly world of Paganism."[6] Similarly, for Douglas Rushkoff, author of *Cyberia: Life in the Trenches of Hyperspace*, "the neo-pagan revival incorporates ancient and modern skills in free-for-all sampling of whatever works, making no distinction between occult magic and high technology. In the words of one neo-pagan, 'The magic of today is the technology of tomorrow. It's all magic. It's all technology.' "[7]

Neo-pagans generally regard technology and magic as interchangeable. Ever pragmatic, they seem to be primarily concerned *with what works*. If technology is effective in producing something physically useful, and if rituals and magical incantations can produce a specific spiritual or psychological outcome, for many neo-pagans this means they are compatible. According to Erik Davis, "it is this pragmatic hands-on instrumentality that allows some Pagans to powerfully re-imagine 'technology' as both a metaphor and a tool for spiritual work."[8]

Many Wiccans openly affirm the relationship between magic and the computer culture. An urban neo-pagan witch named Green Fire told Douglas Rushkoff:

> High technology and high magic are the same thing. They both use tools from inner resources and outer resources. Magic from the ancient past and technology from the future are really both one. That is how we are creating the present; we're speeding up things, we are quickening our energies; time and space are not as rigid as they used to be . . . Those of us who know how to work through time and space are using our abilities

> to *bend* time and space into a reality that will benefit people the most. . . . We humans are all shape-shifters. We just learn to access our DNA codes. It's very computer-oriented. We are computers; our minds are computers, our little cells are computers. We are bio-organic computers.[9]

Other neo-pagans regard the new technology as a type of freedom. For Californian neo-pagan writer Tom Williams,

> Far from being seen as the tool of the oppressor, technology harnessed with the proper spiritual motivation can be a blast of liberation . . . Take up the athame, the wand and the light-sound machine, the cup and the pentacle and the oscilloscope and the computer. Dedicate them to the service of the Life Force, to the *Unio Mystica* and to the praise of the Great Mother and weave their power together into ritual, song and the sacred accomplishment of the Great Work![10]

Many neo-pagan groups use computer technology and the Internet to advise their friends and members about seasonal rites, celebrations, workshops, and conferences, and they also provide information on pagan rites of passage, including handfastings (Wiccan weddings), child blessings, and funerals. The London-based Pagan Federation uses the Internet to promote neo-paganism, Druid, Wiccan, Odinic, Northern, Celtic, eco-magic, and women's spirituality groups, while its American counterparts, like the Church of All Worlds, Circle Sanctuary, and the Church of Wicca, do much the same thing for their equivalent memberships. Contemporary pagans communicate with each other through discussion forums where they can chat in real time about magical ceremonies, spells, and the occult powers of herbs. Jem Dowse also makes the point that new pagans who happen to live in the American Bible Belt make use of this new technology to access like-minded people without fear of repercussions.[11]

Some techno-pagans have sought to extend the scope of their digital magic still further, conducting entire rituals over the Internet, and even establishing "virtual" shrines in cyberspace or staging magical encounters in the virtual world of Second Life.[12] Wiccan practitioner Sara Reeder explains that "while Christians and other mainstream religions ignored the Net for years—their members had an established network of churches and clergy to turn to—we became the first religious movement to depend heavily on it for growth and cohesion. And cyberspace, in turn, became the first mass Pagan gathering place since ancient times." For her, computer technology does not eliminate the essential poetry of the ritual experience:

> Our rituals have always taken place in the realm of the imagination, so we can make effective ritual anywhere we can exercise our love for

> poetry and storytelling. I've led online rituals for thirty in chat rooms that allowed us to talk to each other two lines at a time; some of them were as memorable and powerful as any I've attended in person . . . cyberspace ritual will allow us to open up our private dreamscapes, and share our internal visions with each other in much more intimate ways. The traditional Neo-Pagan focus on individual creativity, combined with our emphasis on poetry and fluid ritual forms, may well make us the first to pioneer online altars and sacred sites, once more setting the example for other religions to follow.[13]

## MAGICAL ROLE PLAY

As neo-pagan rituals extend their reach into cyberspace, it is useful to consider the origins of magical role play—for role play often involves the use of mythic archetypes and computer technology.

Fantasy and magical role-play practices developed initially from games like *Dungeons and Dragons*, which were popular in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Here participants explored underground vaults, tunnels, and mazes, and encountered various monsters and alien entities—orcs, dwarfs, skeleton men, and the wandering souls of the dead—en route to discovering fabulous gold and jewels. Games of this sort would usually be located in a fantasy world based either in medieval Europe, on another planet, or on an "alternate Earth" where history had taken a different turn of events and magic now ruled the laws of the land. The overall pattern of the game would be determined by a gaming master, and each of the principal characters would be "designed" or created by the players themselves.[14]

For some players, though, many of these games soon proved unconvincing and unsatisfying, and some enthusiasts began creating more innovative games by drawing instead on the imagery of fantasy worlds described by fantasy writers like Michael Moorcock, Marion Zimmer Bradley, André Norton, and H. P. Lovecraft. However, as Bruce Galloway has observed, it soon became "much more challenging and a great deal more fun, to design your own world."[15]

In the more developed forms of role play, the gaming master—sometimes known as the keeper of arcane lore—has to set the rules for the adventure, build up its legends and history, and establish the main characters and magical weapons. And there are hierarchies of power. For example, in some forms of magical role play, a "cunning man" or "wise woman" can develop with time into a witch or wizard or even into a high runic sorcerer, and the characters themselves may acquire a variety of occult skills—including the ability to shape-shift,

communicate with animals, levitate, or achieve invisibility. During these games, participants also learn magical spells of "absolute command." Spells, according to Galloway, "are the building blocks of active magic" and can be used for either protection or assault.[16]

*Ars Magica: The Storytelling Game of Mythic Magic*[17] was one of the pioneering role-playing systems in this genre and offered a variety of enticing magical roles to its participants. *Ars Magica* identified three different types of characters—magi, companions, and grogs—the latter being "lower-class characters" like servants, stable hands, guards, and messengers. There were many individual characters within this threefold hierarchy, and players had to conceptualize the character they wished to play—adding specific details of their own to create a figure they could readily identify with. Nevertheless, all of the characters had acknowledged "virtues" and "flaws," and in this particular game they were accorded point scores for different attributes—intelligence, perception, strength, stamina, presence, communication, dexterity, and quickness.

The key challenge with magical role play, however, was always to move fantasy worlds of this type online so they could be accessed on the Internet. This was eventually done through the establishment of "multiuser domains"—or MUDs. Participants with a personal computer simply had to use a modem and network passwords to log on to a computer containing a MUD. Some MUDs were public, while others were restricted to a select group of role players controlled by a "wizard" or "tinker" who was essentially in charge of its mythic content and terrain. Nowadays the range of MUDs is extensive, and there are MUDs based on *Star Trek* and Frank Herbert's science-fiction *Dune* series—among many others. As Margaret Wertheim notes,

> Today's MUDs have morphed into a huge range of virtual worlds . . . MUDers are involved in an ongoing process of world-making. To name is to create, and in MUD worlds, the simple act of naming and describing is all it takes to generate a new alter ego or "cyber self" . . . The interlocking imaginative and social mesh of a MUD means that actions taken by one player may affect the virtual lives of hundreds of others. The very vitality and robustness of a MUD emerges from the collective will of the group. As in the physical world, relationships are built, trusts are established, bonds are created and responsibilities ensue.[18]

However, there is often a blurring between the worlds of "everyday" reality and "fantasy" reality. One MUDer told online researcher Mizuko Ito: "To me there is no real body. Online, it is how you describe yourself and how you act that makes up the real you." This may well be a characteristic response from many of the new cyberspace explorers.

According to Douglas Rushkoff, for some game players "all of life is seen as a fantasy role-playing game in which the stakes are physically real but the lessons go beyond physical reality." One of the role players Rushkoff interviewed for his book, *Cyberia*—Nick Walker, a game master and aikido instructor from New Jersey—believed he could pick and choose the traits of various role-play characters and incorporate them into his own personality: "The object in role-playing games is playing with characters whose traits you want to bring into your own life. You can pick up their most useful traits, and discard their unuseful ones." As Rushkoff notes, this is very much like consciously choosing one's own character traits in order to become a "designer being."[19]

Clearly, for many online role players the appeal of activities like this can be explained simply by the fact that fantasy is so much more enticing and seductive than the routines of the everyday world. According to Dr. Brenda Laurel, a specialist in the field of interactive computer systems:

> Reality has always been too small for the human imagination. The impulse to create an "interactive fantasy machine" is only the most recent manifestation of the age-old desire to make our fantasies palpable—our insatiable need to exercise our imagination, judgment, and spirit in worlds, situations, and personae that are different from those in the our everyday lives.[20]

However, there is also the possibility that for many participants fantasy role play will lead to some form of increased spiritual self-awareness, and Brenda Laurel hopes for this too. "Imagination," she says, "is the laboratory of the spirit."

## CHAOS THEORY AND OTHER INFLUENCES

There are other historical antecedents associated with the rise of cybermagic apart from magical role play. A very significant factor is the emergence of chaos magick, a radical form of contemporary magical practice that blends quantum physics, chaos theory, Taoism, and Austin Osman Spare's philosophy of magical individualism. Chaos magick—often spelt with a "k" to acknowledge its indebtedness to Thelemic magick's notion of the will—was initially associated with small, transient, loosely connected groups of magical enthusiasts that formed and splintered in Britain during the late 1970s and 1980s. There is general agreement that the two early figureheads of the British chaos magick movement were Peter J. Carroll and his friend

Ray Sherwin, who were members of a loose collective of occultists in London known as the Stoke Newington Sorcerers. In 1978 Carroll and Sherwin established a nonhierarchical magical order called the Pact of the Illuminates of Thanateros—often simply known as The Pact, or the IOT. The IOT marked the historical beginnings of chaos magick in Britain. Chaos magick soon began to extend its reach beyond London, attracting considerable interest in other parts of the country. Chaosists (as they became known) gathered in strength especially in the area around Leeds where the Sorcerers Apprentice occult bookshop was based. The shop and its clientele were early supporters of chaos magick, and there was even a strong contingent of support for chaos magick in Germany at this time.[21]

Following on from the IOT, The Circle of Chaos was formed in 1984 by Dave Lee, and during the same period Genesis P. Orridge established Thee Temple Ov Psychick Youth as a fusion of experimental performance art, punk music, and Crowleyan Thelemic magick in conjunction with Psychic TV. Ray Sherwin recalls that "our aim at that time was to inspire rather than lead magicians interested in the Chaos concept by publishing ideas of a practical nature."[22] An important influence on Carroll and Sherwin—and also on Genesis P. Orridge—was Austin Osman Spare, whose magical approach has been described in Chapter 9:

> Chaos Magick has its roots in every occult tradition and in the work of many individuals. If any one person can be said to have been responsible, albeit unintentionally, for the present climate of opinion that person would be Austin Osman Spare, whose magical system was based entirely on his image of himself and an egocentric model of the universe. He did not intend that the system he devised for his own use should be used by others since it was clear to him that no two individuals could benefit from the same system. Nor did he fall into the trap of presuming that the information revealed to or by him was pertinent to all mankind as all the messiahs did. Aleister Crowley came to look upon him as a "black brother" purely because he refused to accept Crowley's Law of Thelema, preferring instead to work beyond dogmas and rules, relying on intuition and information uprooted from the depths of self.[23]

Key principles quickly emerged: Chaos magick would reflect the randomness of the universe and the individual's dynamic relationship with it. Nothing could be conceived as permanent. There were no absolute claims to truth, and all fixed beliefs and doctrines were essentially illusory. There were no gods or demons other than those that an individual had been conditioned to accept, and one could feel free to

accept or reject beliefs according to the nature of their individual usefulness and relevance. The guiding paradigm of chaos magick soon emerged as a motto: "*Nothing is true, everything is permitted—provided it interferes with no-one*."[24]

From the start, Peter Carroll regarded chaos magick as a technology of consciousness—and a technology of *altered states of consciousness* in particular:

> Chaos Magick concentrates on technique . . . practical technique [that depends] on visualization, the creation of thought entities and altered states of consciousness achieved by either quiescent or ecstatic meditations . . . All notions of absolute truth only exist if we choose to believe them at any time. The obverse side of the principle that "nothing is true" is that "everything is permitted," and Chaos magicians may often create unusual hyperscience and sorcery maps of reality as a theoretical framework for their magic . . . the previously unsuspected parts of our brains can be even more creative than the conscious parts, and no message from the gods, no matter how extraordinary and overwhelming, should be taken as proof of anything beyond our own extraordinary powers.[25]

Chaos magicians maintain that their approach differs from conventional science only to the extent that the territory under review is different. Scientists propose paradigms and test for results in the physical, observable world whereas chaos magicians claim that they propose paradigms and test for results in the *metaphysical*, observable world. Their magical territory may be observed, experienced, and tested in ASCs, but this approach, for them, is no less real. As Carroll explains:

> To the magician, spirit and matter are both part of the same thing, and he exalts neither above the other. He rejects no part of his experience. The magician lives in a continuum beginning with the sublime and ineffable Tao/God/Chaos through the mysterious and subtle Aethers to the awesome and strange material world. To the magician, any piece of knowledge, any new power, any opportunity for enlightenment is worth having for its own sake. The only thing abhorred in this incredible existence is failure to come to grips with some part of it . . . For [the chaos magician] life is its own answer, and the way he lives it is his spirituality.[26]

Australian digital media specialist Dr. Steve Collins, who has researched the influence of quantum physics on chaos magick, argues in his article "Technology and Magick" (2007) that quantum-based magical theory views the reality in which we live as coextensive with virtual reality:

> Chaos magic does not advocate any kind of religious belief but merely provides magical technologies. Belief systems are considered as technologies, and as a result any kind of symbolism may be used as long

> as belief can be invested into it. As a system of pure techniques, the emphasis of chaos magic is placed in the embrace of all technologies. . . . Implicit in the uncertainty principle is the proposition that an observer's consciousness participates in the quantum system. Chaos magic theory proposes that magic plucks a specific reality out of a myriad of possibilities. In other words, magic is the practice of defining a state of reality through the transmission of information.[27]

Collins believes it was inevitable that chaos magicians would begin to incorporate computers into their magical rituals: "Applying Chaos magick to quantum mechanics," he writes, "we can say that data represents the material concept of particles and instructions correspond with wave functions."[28] Collins is also interested in the magical use of thought-forms, which he describes as "artificial discarnate entities'" Chaos magicians generally regard thought-forms as creations of the unconscious mind. When evoked as vehicles of magical intent these thought-forms are referred to more specifically as "servitors"—focused embodiments of the magical will that can be projected into the flux and flow of a dynamic universe. New Orleans-based chaos magician Mark de Frates (a.k.a Marik) maintains that servitors are not unlike elementals: "Servitors," he writes, "are semi-autonomous beings that are summoned from the Deep Mind and charged with the performance of some magickal task."[29]

De Frates acknowledges that the use of servitors could in some circumstances be considered acts of sorcery, and in this context he quotes Stephen Mace, author of *Stealing the Fire from Heaven*, who writes: "Sorcery is the art of capturing spirits and training them to work in harness, of sorting out the powers in our minds so we might manipulate them and make them cause changes both within our minds and beyond."[30] For his part De Frates's preference as a chaos magician is to employ sigils as vehicles of magical intent rather than servitors, especially when the latter become "maladaptive" or demonic. His personal view is that while some servitors may be perceived as a facet of "identifiable areas of the magician's psyche," there are others that "may issue forth from deeper levels of the subconsciousness and hence may not be recognizable to the magician as deriving from a property of the sorcerer's psyche."[31] To this extent Chaos Magick takes Quantum theory's Uncertainty Principle to a new level.

## GENESIS P. ORRIDGE AND THE PSYCHOSPHERE

As chaos magicians like Mark de Frates and Stephen Mace readily acknowledge, collective thought-forms sometimes appear to acquire

a potency of their own. Around a century ago the Swiss psychoanalyst Dr. Carl Jung maintained that the Collective Unconscious—the deep and profound realm of mind common to all human beings, irrespective of culture—contained mythic "archetypes" that resulted from the "constantly repeated experiences of humanity." An example of this process would be the endless passage of the sun across the sky, leading to countless myths about solar heroes traversing the heavens. Jung described mythology as a "dramatization of a series of images that formulate the life of the archetypes,"[32] and he also believed myths could be regarded as an expression of the divine life of humanity. "It is not we who invent myth," Jung once wrote; "rather, it speaks to us as a Word of God."[33] However, in more recent times the counterculture artist, chaos advocate, and mixed-media innovator Genesis P. Orridge has turned this approach on its head, suggesting that "when enough people believe in something, it becomes a deity."[34] This has now become a truism in chaos magick circles, although universal pronouncements of any kind continue to be suspect among chaos magicians because they expressly reject anything resembling a doctrine or dogma. Nevertheless, it is widely believed by practitioners of chaos magick that invocations can create completely new deities or god-forms—although the immediate relevance of these "deities" to the magician is based not on any interpretation of Jungian "archetypal" symbolism but on how useful they are in obtaining specific ritual outcomes. One particular chaos magick experiment that took place during a workshop in London involved evoking Goflowolfog—a deity charged with the duty of ensuring free traffic flows through the city! Chaos magicians often display a whimsical sense of humor and take care not to take themselves too seriously.[35]

Genesis P. Orridge uses the term "psychosphere" to refer to the creation of the "collective consciousness" that results from the conscious and unconscious actions of Internet users—in this context the psychosphere becomes a type of emergent global mind. Philip H. Farber extends Orridge's concept still further in his article "Introduction to CyberMagick"[36] where he sets out a number of postulates related to magic and cyberspace. Drawing metaphorically on the tenets of quantum theory, Farber suggests that every online experience affects the participant in varying degrees as well as the actual psychosphere itself: "The change in consciousness, however small or large," he writes, "radiates out from your actions. If your actions or words project happiness, then that happiness spreads in ripples from the point of action." But this effect can work in both directions. According to Farber, "consciously-chosen actions in relation to the Psychosphere

can change the consciousness of the collective," and acting in conformity with one's true will could theoretically help to harmonize or purify the collective consciousness of the Psychosphere. Farber also believes that at some point the psychosphere could almost be seen as autonomous—a type of group mind responsible only unto itself. He then goes on to explain what might be involved when one invokes the psychosphere as an entity in its own right:

> With the concept of the Psychosphere in place, the idea of performing magickal ritual in cyberspace becomes a little more apparent. Rather than beginning with the usual concepts and tools of offline magick, we can begin to assemble ritual components from what is actually in front us, the tools and realities of the online world, our computers, monitors, modems, phone lines, software, etc.
>
> When we conference in cyberspace, the group of people meeting in one room or channel creates a web or network that spans a portion of the planetary surface. Thus it is a web of points that suggests a sphere. This semi-spherical web can fill a place in our ritual analogous to the circle of offline ritual. The web represents a microcosm of the entire Psychosphere and the human minds that interact within it.
>
> In the microcosmic webs of our conference room rituals, we can isolate and invoke qualities, deities and mythologies just as the offline magickian fills [his or her] circle and mind with a specific invocation. My hypothesis is that such invocations can produce effects of synchronicity that can occur within the matrix of the Psychosphere . . . One may further speculate that if enough groups are invoking a great enough variety of qualities, the synchronistic effects may serve the purpose of integrating these qualities into the Psychosphere, providing the total entity with a balanced and holistic content and action. Taking that speculation even farther, each group may wake the "intelligence" of whatever quality they invoke within the Psychosphere, and enough groups working on enough kinds of qualities may serve to wake the totality of the Psychosphere. As the individual parts of the Psychosphere, human minds and ritual groups, awaken to their own True Will, perhaps the Psychosphere itself can find its own Will.[37]

Dr. Steve Collins has suggested that engaging magically with the psychosphere could theoretically lead to a belief in computer-based discarnate entities or cyber-spirits (as distinct from servitors, referred to earlier), and this could increasingly blur the distinction between magic and science:

> Magic is conducted through the utilisation of technologies, whether those technologies are computers or ancient pantheons. The traditional perception promotes magic as fanciful resurgence of a bygone, mythical age associated with supernatural powers. The developing notion of computer-based magic—accompanied by a discourse relative to

> quantum physics—may ultimately prove to augment its credibility in modern society. It certainly represents an attempt to substantiate the practice of magic based on scientific theories that were supposed to disprove its existence. In doing so, magic has appropriated the computer, the embodiment of technological progress, and turned it into a magical tool.[38]

## THE VIRTUAL MAGICAL COMMUNITY

Some observers who have charted the emergence of cybermagic and pondered its appeal have wondered how the sense of community would be affected by those replacing literal magical ceremonies with forays into the virtual world. Gregory Price Grieve, a historian associated with the Divinity School at the University of Chicago, undertook a detailed study of neo-pagan activities on an Internet website in 1993–94. Grieve had come to his research holding the view that authentic communities generally need face-to-face oral communication, and he was puzzled by the fact that so many neo-pagans who openly embraced a Nature-based religion had turned to cyberspace as a communication medium. To his great surprise Grieve discovered that many neo-pagan practitioners were able to conceive of a religious community that was not dependent on physical face-to-face presence. Instead, these neo-pagan communities were able to sustain themselves via the Internet through the notion of a religious "energy" created and circulated by "personal rituals." As Grieve has noted, writing about the neo-pagan Internet groups he studied:

> It is their shared "feeling of energy" which binds them together in cyberspace, and enables them to imagine a virtual religious community. Neo-Pagans "re-enchant" the disenchanted landscape of modernity through a religious strategy whose *myths* are patterned on an imagined pre-Christian European religion, but whose *practices* revolve around the production of an affective sentiment which neo-Pagan nomenclature labels "energy." The "feeling of energy" created by personal rituals is a religious strategy which employs a ritualized imagination. The ritualized imagination is the sanctification not of the content of specific creative acts, but of the act of creation itself. Hence, the religious strategies that surround neo-Paganism concentrate neither on written unifying myths, nor on a set of oral traditions, nor even on a ritual complex. Instead, what binds neo-Pagans together on the Internet and how they overcome its lack of presence, is through the experience of the perceived sentiment that accompanies creativity itself.[39]

This brings us back to a key point made earlier in this chapter—that in the realm of cybermagic the practitioner is inevitably drawn to

expressing the formula *As I imagine, so I become*. But magic in the contemporary world is much more than simply countering the perceived "disenchantment with modernity" that many scholars have commented on in recent times. The magical quest is essentially about self-transformation on an archetypal level of being—an ongoing process of self-discovery that engages the practitioner in a direct relationship with the sacred. Whether this involves attuning one's consciousness to gods and goddesses of light or darkness remains a matter of individual preference, but the quest itself is essentially the same. The universe is perceived as an endless source of sacred energy, and the role of the magician is to align the individual self with that energy and to revitalize one's sense of spiritual and metaphysical awareness. For some magical practitioners this means merging with "god-forms" in a state of mystical ecstasy stimulated and enhanced by magical ritual. For others—specifically those associated with the Left-Hand Path—the key task of the magician is self-deification: the magical act of transforming oneself into a deity. All of these magical activities, however, depend in turn upon the power of the imagination. The formula *As I imagine, so I become* can therefore be regarded as a key element in all forms of cybermagic, and the only constrictions facing the contemporary magician are those associated with a lack of imagination. For cybermagicians and chaos practitioners alike, the magical realm is characterized by endless permutations and infinite possibilities. By embracing the dynamic energies of the manifest Universe and the myriad possibilities made possible by the World Wide Web, these magical practitioners shift their attention toward ever-expanding horizons.

# Notes

## Introduction

1. W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Harmondsworth, UK: Viking Penguin, 1982 [1902]).
2. E. Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1972 [1913]).
3. P. A. Roth, *Meaning and Method in the Social Sciences: A Case for Methodological Pluralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).
4. L. Zusne and W. Jones, *Anomalistic Psychology: A Study of Magical Thinking* (London: Psychology Press, 1989), 13
5. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).
6. L. Lévy-Bruhl, "A Letter to E. E. Evans-Pritchard," *British Journal of Sociology* 3 (1952): 117–23.
7. S. Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld: An Anthropology* (Oxford: Berg, 2000).
8. J. Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seid-Magic: Ecstasy and Neo-Shamanism in North European Paganism* (London: Routledge, 2002).
9. Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*, 10.
10. Ibid., 4.
11. I. Regardie, *The Middle Pillar* (Chicago: Aries Press, 1945), 19.
12. H. Hubert and M. Mauss, "Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie," *L'Année Sociologique* 7 (1902–3), quoted in Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*, 14, n.25.
13. Dr. Edward Berridge, *Frater Resurgam*, in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Quoted from Flying Roll No. 5 (Golden Dawn source

document), "Some Thoughts on the Imagination," in *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, ed. F. King (London: Spearman, 1971), 39.

14. S. L. MacGregor Mathers, cofounder of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, 1888, quoted in D. Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft, Past and Present*, rev. ed. (London: Hale, 1984), 231.

15. Occultist W. E. Butler, member of the Fraternity of the Inner Light.

16. Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*, 20th anniversary ed. (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1999 [1979]), 155.

17. H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1886), 587–90.

18. C. Tart, "Discrete States of Consciousness," in *Symposium on Consciousness*, ed. R. Lee, D. Galin, A. Deikman, and C. Tart (New York: Penguin Books, 1976).

19. W. James, op. cit., p. xxi.

20. M. Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

21. R. L. M. Lee and S. E. Ackerman, *The Challenge of Religion after Modernity* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002).

22. M. Schneider, *Culture and Enchantment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

23. R. K. Fenn, "Editorial Commentary: Religion and the Secular, the Sacred and the Profane: The Scope of the Argument," in *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion*, ed. R. K. Fenn (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001).

24. See G. Harvey, "Discworld and Otherworld: The Imaginative Use of Fantasy Literature among Pagans," in *Popular Spiritualities: The Politics of Contemporary Enchantment*, ed. L. Hume and K. McPhillips (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 41–52.

25. Ibid., 49.

26. Ibid., 47.

27. *Qualia* are the very personal feelings and experiences of a mental state with a distinctive subjective character that are introspectively accessible.

28. Lynne Hume's conversation with a female student in Brisbane in 2002.

29. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

## Chapter 1

1. C. Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 24.

2. Cited in Zaleski, Ibid., 134.

3. Ibid.

4. E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (London: Penguin, 1979), 137.

5. R. Desjarlais, *Body and Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 5.

6. A. Huxley, *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971) [1954].

7. T. Lewis, *The Medicine Men: Oglala Sioux Ceremony and Healing* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 103.

8. C. Holler, Clyde Holler, *Black Elk's Religion: The Sun Dance and Lakota Catholicism* (New York: Syracuse University Press), 1995: 201.

9. K. Helminski, "The Gate of Secrets," http://www.sufism.org/society/sema2.html, accessed 5 November 2001.

10. I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (London: Routledge, 1971), 36.

11. http://www.trancedance.com/, accessed 16 May 2011.

12. C. Isherwood, *Ramakrishna and His Disciples* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 66.

13. McDonald (1990), 111–120.

14. R. A. Finke, "Levels of equivalence in imagery and perception," *Psychological* Review (1980), 87: 113.

15. W. E. Butler, *The Magician: His Training and Work* (Wellingborough, England: Aquarian Press, 1970), 61.

16. I. Regardie (1988), 36.

17. I. R. Netton, *Sufi Ritual: the parallel universe* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000), 35–48.

18. H. Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi*, translated from the French by R. Manheim, Bollingen Series XCI (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 251.

19. Cited in D. L. Eck, *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* (Cambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1985), 15.

20. P. Stoller and C. Olkes, *In Sorcery's Shadow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1987.

21. D. W. Stowe, *How Sweet the Sounds* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 3.

22. D. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 186.

23. T. R. Miller, "Mannequins and Spirits: Representations and Resistance of Siberian Shamans," in *Anthropology of Consciousness* ¸10: 4, 1999: 71–72.

24. S. Feld, "Sound as a Symbolic System: The Kaluli Drum," in D. Howes (ed.), *The Varieties of Sensory Experience* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1991), 83–90.

25. C. Ellis, "Time Consciousness of Aboriginal Performers," in J. Kassler and J. Stubington (eds), *Problems and Solutions* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1984), 167.

26. D. Turner, *After Life Before Genesis* (New York: Peter Land, 1997), 34.

27. Ibid., 62–69.

28. Ibid., 38–39.

29. Stoller and Olkes (1987), 87.

30. I. J. Prattis, *Anthropology at the* Edge (New York: University Press of America, 1997), 249.

31. W. E. Butler, *The Magician: His Training and Work* (Wellingborough, England: Aquarian Press, 1970), 60–78.

32. C. Wilson, *Poetry and Mysticism*.

33. D. Tramacchi, "Entheogens, Elves and Other Entities: Encountering the Spirits of Shamanic Plants and Substances," in L. Hume and K. McPhillips (eds), *Popular Spiritualities* (2006), 93.

34. Ibid. (2006), 91–95.

35. See for example, J. R. Baker, "Psychedelic Sacraments," in *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* (2005), 37(2): 179–187; A. Letcher, *Shroom: A Cultural History of the Magic Mushroom*, Faber and Faber, London, 2006; C. Partridge, "Sacred Chemicals: Psychedelic Drugs and Mystical Experience," in *Mysticisms East and West: Studies in Mystical Experience*. C. Partridge and Gabriel (eds) (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), 96–131; N. Saunders, A. Saunders, and M. Pauli *In Search of the Ultimate High: Spiritual Experience Through Psychoactives*, Rider (2000); B. Shanon, *The Antipodes of the Mind: Charting the Phenomenology of the Ayahuasca Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

36. A. Letcher, "Mad Thoughts on Mushrooms: Discourse and Power in the Study of Psychedelic Consciousness," *Anthropology of Consciousness*, vol. 18, Issue 2: 74–97, 2007: 89.

37. A. Letcher, op.cit.: 78.

38. D. Pinchbeck, *Breaking Open the Head: A Psychedelic Journey into the Heart of Contemporary Shamanism* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002), 293.

39. R. Strassman, *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* (Rochester, Vermont: Park Street Press, 2001), 31.

## Chapter 2

1. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

2. Sylvie C. Tourigny, " 'Yo, Bitch . . .' and Other Challenges: Bringing High-Risk Ethnography into the Discourse," in *Anthropologists in the Field*, ed. L. Hume and J. Mulcock (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

3. See G. Robinson, "Living in Sheds: Suicide, Friendship, and Research among the Tiwi," in Hume and Mulcock, *Anthropologists in the Field*; Jim Birckhead, "And I Can't Feel at Home in This World Anymore: Fieldwork in Two Settings," in Hume and Mulcock, *Anthropologists in the Field*.

4. Hume and Mulcock, *Anthropologists in the Field*.

5. I. J. Prattis, *Anthropology at the Edge: Essays on Culture, Symbol, and Consciousness* (New York: University Press of America, 1997), 63.

6. C. Classen, "Foundations for an Anthropology of the Senses," *International Social Science Journal* 49, no. 3 (1997): 401.

7. C. Classen, D. Howes, and A. Synnot, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smells* (London: Routledge, 1994), 140.

8. B. Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967).

9. M. Jackson, *Paths toward a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

10. D. Howes, ed., *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2005).

11. D. Howes, ed., *The Sixth Sense Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2009).

12. E. Searles, "Prophecy, Sorcery, and Reincarnation: Inuit Spirituality in the Age of Skepticism," in *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*, ed. J.-G. Goulet and B. Granville (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 165.

13. I. J. Prattis, *Anthropology at the Edge: Essays on Culture, Symbol, and Consciousness* (New York: University Press of America, 1997), 60.

14. M. Stephen, *A'Aisa's Gifts: A Study of Magic and the Self* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 99.

15. P. Stoller, *The Power of the Between: An Anthropological Odyssey* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 29.

16. P. Stoller and C. Olkes, *In Sorcery's Shadow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 560.

17. Ibid.

18. Cited in E. Turner, "Advances in the Study of Spirit Experience: Drawing Together Many Threads," *Anthropology of Consciousness* 17, no. 2 (2006): 33–61.

19. B. T. Grindal, "Into the Heart of Sisala Experience: Witnessing Death Divination," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 39, no. 1 (1983): 68.

20. C. Turnbull, "Liminality: A Synthesis of Subjective and Objective Experience," in *By Means of Performance*, ed. Richard Schechner and Willa Appel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 51.

21. See Jackson, *Paths toward a Clearing*.

22. See B. Grindal, "Into the Heart of Sisala Experience"; R. Willis, 1999; S. Friedson, 1996; L. Scherberger, 2005; T. Harvey, 2006.

23. E. Turner, *Experiencing Ritual: A New Interpretation of African Healing* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).

24. Ibid.

25. E. Turner, "Advances in the Study of Spirit Experience: Drawing Together Many Threads," *Anthropology of Consciousness* 17, no. 2 (2006): 42.

26. M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (Brighton, UK: Harvester Press, 1980).

27. A. L. Reader III, "The Internal Mystery Plays: The Role and Physiology of the Visual System in Contemplative Practices," *Alternative Therapies* 1, no. 4 (1995): 54–63, reprinted from *ReVision* 17 (Summer 1994): 1.

28. M. L. Kringelbach, "Emotion, Feelings and Hedonics in the Human Brain," in *The Emotions: A Cultural Reader*, ed. Helena Wulff (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 37–60.

29. A. R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon Books, 1999); and *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994).

30. Kringelbach, "Emotion, Feelings and Hedonics in the Human Brain," 38.

31. See V. Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1986); V. Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982).

32. C. N. Norbu, *Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2002).

33. Classen, Howes, and Synnot, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smells*, 155.

34. M. Stephen, "Master of Souls: The Mekeo Sorcerer," in *Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia*, ed. M. Stephen (Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1987), 76, n.8.

35. Ibid., 41–80.

36. Ibid., 73.

37. D. Young and J.-G. Goulet, *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters: The Anthropology of Extraordinary Experience* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 25.

38. B. Wilkes, "Reveal or Conceal?," in *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*, ed. Jean-Guy A. Goulet and Bruce Granville Miller (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 69.

39. Ibid., 82.

40. A. D. Napier, *Foreign Bodies: Performance, Art, and Symbolic Anthropology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 181.

41. B. Ehn and O. Lofgren, "Emotions in Academia," in *The Emotions: A Cultural Reader*, ed. H. Wulff (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 101–17.

42. J.-G. Goulet and G. Miller, eds., *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

43. Ibid., 187.

44. T. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia* (Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1997); S. Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); J. Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seid Magic: Ecstasy and Neo-Shamanism in North-European Paganism* (London: Routledge, 2001).

45. Earle, D. "Dog Days: Participation as Transformation." In Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field, edited by J.-G. Goulet & B. G. Miller, 310–320. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.

46. Young and Goulet, *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters*.

47. See, for example, J. Clifford and G. Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

48. Ibid.

49. F. Bowie, "Methods for Studying the Paranormal (and Who Says What Is Normal Anyway?)," *Paranthropology: Journal of Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal* 1, no. 1 (2010): 5.

50. T. McKenna, *The Archaic Revival* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991).

51. M. Schroll, "The Future of a Discipline: Considering the Ontological/Methodological Future of the Anthropology of Consciousness, Part I: Toward a New Kind of Science and Its Methods of Inquiry," *Anthropology of Consciousness* 21, no. 1 (2010): 1–29.

52. See, for example, E. Cardeña, S. J. Lynn, and S. Krippner, eds., *Varieties of Anomalous Experience: Examining the Scientific Evidence* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2000).

53. J. Ferrer and J. H. Sherman, eds., *The Participatory Turn: Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

## Chapter 3

1. N. L. Whitehead and R. Wright, eds., *In Darkness and Secrecy: The Anthropology of Assault Sorcery and Witchcraft in Amazonia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
2. M. Heckenberger, "The Wars Within: Xinguano Witchcraft and Balance of Power," in Whitehead and Wright, *In Darkness and Secrecy*, 195.
3. See E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985 [1937]).
4. J. Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage*, trans. Catherine Cullen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
5. I. Andreesco-Miereanu, "Magic in Eastern Europe," in *Hidden Truths: Magic, Alchemy and the Occult*, ed. L. E. Sullivan (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 116–21.
6. J. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 13.
7. F. Santos-Granero, "The Enemy Within: Child Sorcery, Revolution, and the Evils of Modernization in Eastern Peru," in Whitehead and Wright, *In Darkness and Secrecy*, 272–303.
8. P. Vitebsky, *The Shaman* (London: Baird, 2001), 46.
9. Ibid., 51.
10. P. Stoller, *The Power of the Between: An Anthropological Odyssey* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 47.
11. P. Lawrence, "*De Rerum Natura*: The Garia View of Sorcery," in *Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia*, ed. M. Stephen (Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1987), 27–28.
12. M. Stephen, "Master of Souls: The Mekeo Sorcerer," in Stephen, *Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia,* 41–80.
13. Ibid., 67.
14. P. Lawrence, *De Rerum Natura*, 27–28.
15. M. Stephen, "Master of Souls," 46.
16. Ibid., 51–52.
17. Vitebsky, *The Shaman*, 40.
18. Ibid., 20–21.
19. Ibid., 22.
20. Ibid., 24.
21. R. M. Berndt and C. H. Berndt, *A World That Was: The Yaraldi of the Murray River and the Lakes South Australia* (Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1993), 261.
22. W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines* (Brisbane, Australia: State Government Printer, 1897).
23. A. W. Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (Canberra, Australia: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1996 [1904]), 359.
24. Roth, *Ethnological Studies*, 162.

25. R. M. Berndt and C. H. Berndt, *The World of the First Australians* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1977), 230, 260.

26. A. P. Elkin, *Aboriginal Men of High Degree* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1977 [1945]), 95.

27. Berndt and Berndt, *The World of the First Australians*, 258

28. Berndt and Berndt, *A World That Was*, 251.

29. In D. Mowaljarlai and J. Malnic, *Yorro Yorro: Everything Standing Up Alive: Spirit of the Kimberley* (Broome, Western Australia: Magabala Books, 1993), 154.

30. M. Fazeldean, "Aboriginal and Christian Healing," in *The Gospel Is Not Western: Black Theologies from the Southwest Pacific*, ed. G. W. Trompf (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 102.

31. Mowaljarlai and Malnic, *Yorro Yorro*, 154.

32. M. Fazeldean, "Aboriginal and Christian Healing," 102.

33. Ibid.

34. E. Turner, *The Hands Feel It: Healing and Spirit Presence among a Northern Alaskan People* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), xxviii.

35. E. Turner, "A Visible Spirit Form in Zambia," in *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters*, ed. D. Young and J.-G. Goulet (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 71–95.

36. E. Turner, *The Hands Feel It*, 74.

37. Ibid., 74–75.

38. M. Fazeldean," Aboriginal and Christian Healing," 106.

39. E. Turner, *The Hands Feel It*, 136.

40. Ibid., xxii.

41. Ibid., 135.

42. I. White, *Paddy Compass Namadbara: Portrait of a Western Arnhem Land "Clever" Man*, unpublished manuscript in author's possession, cited in L. Hume, *Ancestral Power* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press,1997), 138.

43. B. A. Brennan, *Hands of Light: A Guide to Healing through the Human Energy Field* (New York: Bantam, 1987), 5.

44. Ibid., 7.

45. Ibid., 45.

46. R. Strassman, *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* (Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 2001).

47. A. Letcher, *Shroom: The Cultural History of the Magic Mushroom* (London: Ecco/HarperCollins, 2006).

48. B. Shanon, *The Antipodes of the Mind: Charting the Phenomenology of the Ayahuasca Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

49. N. Saunders, A. Saunders, and M. Pauli, *In Search of the Ultimate High: Spiritual Experience through Psychoactives* (London: Rider, 2000).

50. Alexander Shulgin and Ann Shulgin, *Pihkal: A Chemical Love Story* (Berkeley, CA: Transform Press, 1995).

51. D. Tramacchi, "Entheogens, Elves, and Other Entities: Encountering the Spirits of Shamanic Plants and Substances," in *Popular Spiritualities*, ed. L. Hume and J. Mulcock (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 91–104.

## Chapter 4

1. G. MacLellan, *Shamanism* (London: Piatkus, 1999), 63.
2. D. Mowaljarlai and J. Malnic, *Yorro Yorro: Everything Standing Up Alive: Spirit of the Kimberley* (Broome, Western Australia: Magabala Books, 1993).
3. M. N. Walter and E. J. Neumann Fridman, eds., *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*, 2 vols. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2004).
4. M. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (New York: Pantheon 1964).
5. Ă. Hultkrantz, "Introductory Remarks on the Study of Shamanism," *Shamanism: An International Journal for Shamanistic* Research 1, no. 1 (1993): 9–10.
6. G. Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (London: Hurst, 2005), 139.
7. Walter and Neumann Fridman, *Shamanism*.
8. J. Halifax, *Shaman: The Wounded Healer* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1982).
9. R. Hutton, *Shamans: Siberian Spirituality and the Western Imagination* (London: Hambledon and Continuum, 2001), 60.
10. P. Vitebsky, *The Shaman* (London: Macmillan, 1995), 17.
11. MacLellan, *Shamanism*, 25.
12. A. Wells, *This Their Dreaming* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1971), 55.
13. T. Lepp, "Trees," in *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*, ed. Walter and Neumann Fridman, *Shamanism*, 1:264.
14. Y. K. Harvey, *Six Korean Women: The Socialization of Shamans* (St. Paul, MN: West, 1979), 3.
15. L. Kendall, *The Life and Hard Times of a Korean Shaman* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988).
16. Sometimes culturally significant and spiritually meaningful dreams are also experienced by the acculturated anthropologist who has spent some time in the field. Laurel Kendall had a vivid dream that entailed the appearance of Yongsu's mother and other village women, and on recounting it to Yongsu's mother, she responded: "You have dreamed well," then proceeded to tell her what her dream meant (p. 118). See also D. Young and J.-G. Goulet, eds., *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), for similar accounts of culturally significant dreams in the field.
17. Kendall, *The Life and Hard Times*, 107.
18. Ibid., 63.
19. Ibid., 79.
20. M. F. Guédon, "Dene Ways and the Ethnographer's Culture," in Young and Goulet, *Being Changed*, 52.
21. Ibid.
22. J. Cawte, *Medicine Is the Law* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii 1974), 32.

23. R. M. Berndt and C. H. Berndt, *The World of the First Australians* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1977), 254.
24. Kendall, *The Life and Hard Times*, 251.
25. Ibid., 31–32.
26. K. Rasmussen, *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*, Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921–24, vol. 7, no. 1 (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1929), 118–19; quoted in M. Harner, *The Way of the Shaman* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), 22–23.
27. J. Cawte, *Medicine Is the Law*, 32.
28. A. P. Elkin, *Aboriginal Men of High Degree* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1977 [1945]), 105.
29. A. W. Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (Canberra, Australia: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1996 [1904]), 406.
30. Walter and *Shamanism*, 154.
31. Berndt and Berndt, *The World of the First Australians*.
32. R. Katz, *Boiling Energy: Community Healing among the Kalahari Kung* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1982), 45.
33. Rasmussen, 112–13.
34. A. Siikala, *The Rite-Technique of the Siberian Shaman* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1978), 184.
35. Elkin, *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*, 9.
36. Berndt and Berndt, *The World of the First Australians*, 308.
37. G. Reichel-Dolmatoff, "Brain and Mind in Desana Shamanism," *Journal of Latin American Lore* 7 (1981): 73–98.
38. Ibid.
39. H. Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi*, trans. R. Manheim, Bollingen Series XCI (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 223.
40. For more on this see L. Hume, *Portals* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 29–31.
41. I. Regardie, *Foundations of Practical Magic* (Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1979).
42. R. Noll, "The Presence of Spirits in Magic and Madness," in *Shamanism*, ed. S. Nicholson (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books/Theosophical, 1987), 47–61.
43. M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia: A Study in Social Anthropology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969 [1914]), 179.
44. Noll, "The Presence of Spirits," 7.
45. D. Riboli, "Transformation," in Walter and Neumann Fridman, *Shamanism*, 1:256.
46. Ibid., 257.
47. J. Stone, "Clothing the Body in Otherness," in *Extraordinary Anthropology*, ed. J.-G. Goulet and B. G. Miller (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 286.
48. N. B. Tindale, "Native Songs of South-East Australia," *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia* 61 (1937): 107–20.
49. M. Stephen, *A'Aisa's Gifts: A Study of Magic and the Self* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 218.
50. Ibid., 134–35.

51. Ibid., 240.

52. Berndt, R. M., and C. H. Berndt, "A Preliminary Report of Field Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia," *Oceania*, 14, no.1, 1943: 220–49.

53. Elkin, *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*.

54. D. K. Avorgbeder, "Music in World Shamanism," in Walter and Neumann Fridman, *Shamanism*, 179–80.

55. A. Gebhart-Sayer, "The Geometric Designs of the Shipibo-Conibo in Ritual Context," *Journal of Latin American Lore* 11, no. 2 (1985): 143–75. Cited in D. Lewis-Williams, *The Mind in the Cave* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985), 147.

56. M. Biesele, *Women Like Meat: The Folklore and Foraging Ideology of the Kalahari Ju/'hoan* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1993), 72.

57. Ibid., 73.

58. Note the climbing of the "thread." The notion of ascending via a thread, rope, or cord occurs in other areas, for example Aboriginal Australia, as well as in some contemporary Western accounts of a translucent cord-like connection, sometimes referred to as the "silver cord" between the sleeping physical body and the astral body.

59. Biesele, *Women Like Meat*, 74.

60. W. E. H. Stanner, *White Man Got No Dreaming* (Canberra, Australia: Australian National University Press, 1979), 135.

61. H. Payne, "The Presence of the Possessed: A Parameter in the Performance Practice of the Music of Australian Aboriginal Women," in *Rediscovering the Muses: Women's Musical Traditions*, ed. K. Marshall (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 18.

62. J. Swan, "Rolling Thunder at Work: A Shamanic Healing of Multiple Sclerosis," in *Shamanism*, ed. S. Nicholson (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books/Theosophical, 1987), 145.

63. Ibid., 145–57.

64. Elkin, *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*, 45.

65. R. M. Berndt and C. H. Berndt, *A World That Was: The Yaraldi of the Murray River and the Lakes South Australia* (Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1993), 246–47.

66. Ibid., 251.

67. N. Drury, *The Elements of Shamanism* (Shaftesbury, Dorset, UK: Element, 1989), 5.

68. Harvey, *Animism*, 139–42.

69. G. MacLellan, "Dancing on the Edge: Shamanism in Modern Britain," in *Paganism Today*, ed. G. Harvey and C. Hardman (London: Thorsons, 1995), 138–48.

70. G. MacLellan, *Shamanism* (London: Piatkus, 1999), 1.

71. Mowaljarlai and Malnic, *Yorro Yorro*.

72. MacLellan, *Shamanism*, 25.

73. Ibid., 26.

74. Ibid., 42.

75. M. Hoppăl, "Shamanism: An Archaic and/or Recent Belief System," in *Shamanism*, ed. S. Nicholson (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books/Theosophical, 1987), 92.

76. Cited in Hoppăl, "Shamanism," 90.

77. A term commonly used to refer to people who take aspects of indigenous spiritual practices without due regard for the depth of meaning those practices have for the indigenous people, and pretend that what they do is the same.

78. Greywolf, in R. J. Wallis, *Shamans and Neo-Shamans: Ecstasy, Alternative Archaeologies and Contemporary Pagans* (London: Routledge, 2003), 85.

79. Ibid., 87.

80. M. Harner and G. Doore, "The Ancient Wisdom in Shamanic Cultures," in *Shamanism*, ed. S. Nicholson (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books/Theosophical, 1987), 16.

81. Paracelsus, *Philosophia Sagax*, cited in Noll, "The Presence of Spirits," 47.

82. MacLellan, *Shamanism*, 53.

83. M. Guédon, "Dene Ways," 52.

## Chapter 5

1. See James M. Robinson, ed., "Introduction," *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), 4.

2. According to Robert M. Grant, Ptolemaeus was head of the Valentinian school in Italy and succeeded Valentinus around the year 160. See R. M. Grant, ed., *Gnosticism: An Anthology* (London: Collins, 1961).

3. R. M. Grant, *Gnosticism*, 163.

4. Ibid.

5. See D. Merkur, "Stages of Ascension in Hermetic Rebirth," *Esoterica* 1 (1999): 81.

6. See W. Barnstone, ed., *The Other Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 567, and the entry on Hermetic books in *The New Columbia Encyclopedia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 1232.

7. Ibid.

8. From W. Scott, trans., *Hermetica*, vol. 1, quoted in C. and J. Matthews, *The Western Way* (London: Arkana, 1994), 216.

9. Merkur, "Stages of Ascension," 82, 84.

10. Plotinus, "The Ascent to Union with the One," in A. H. Armstrong (ed.), *Plotinus* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1953), 137.

11. Merkur, "Stages of Ascension," 82, 84.

12. *Corpus Hermeticum XIII: 3*, quoted in Merkur, "Stages of Ascension," 85.

13. *Corpus Hermeticum XI: 19–20*, quoted in Merkur, "Stages of Ascension," 85. Note that "god" is spelled lowercase in Merkur's quotation.

14. Merkur, "Stages of Ascension," 90.

15. Ibid., 89.

16. Ibid., 90.

17. See G. G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1960), 1–3.

18. Admittedly, not all scholars agree on this point. The late Ioan P. Couliano believed that Scholem overstated the connection between Kabbalah

and Gnosticism (see Couliano's *The Tree of Gnosis* [San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992), 42 et seq.). However, Scholem states quite emphatically that the Kabbalistic text *Bahir*—which predates the *Zohar*—makes it clear that the "thirteenth century Kabbalists became the heirs of Gnostical symbolism." See G. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1961), 214.

19. G. G. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 19.

20. Ibid., 20.

21. Ibid., 21.

22. See Chapter16 of "The *Pirkei Heikhalot*: Text and Commentary," trans. L. Grodner, in *Understanding Jewish Mysticism: The Merkabah Tradition and the Zoharic Tradition*, ed. David R. Blumenthal (New York: Ktav, 1978), 59.

23. The Hekhalot texts refer to both ascending and descending to the Merkabah, and this terminology remains puzzling. The *Greater Hekhalot* repeatedly refers to the "descent" into the Merkabah, as do the "Hekhalot Fragments," cited by Ithamar Gruenwald in *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1980), 188. Another way of symbolizing the "descent" to God appears in Re'uyot Yehezkel, where Ezekiel is depicted as "standing on the River Chebar looking down at the water and the seven heavens were opened to him and he saw the Glory of the Holy One" (cited by Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 135). It has been suggested that perhaps the water serves as a mirror of the things in heaven. Another possibility is that when the Merkabah mystics meditated and entered a state of trance, they did so with their heads facing down between their legs. As Kaufmann Kohler and Isaac Broydé note in their entry on "Hekalot Rabbati; Hekalot Zutarti" in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (see http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com): "To enter the state of ecstasy in which the Merkabah-ride is taken, one must remain motionless, with the head between the knees, absorbed in contemplation and murmuring prayers and hymns." In terms of accessing an altered state of consciousness, it may be that the distinction between "ascent" and "descent" is not significant in the Merkabah literature. Either way, the encounter with the Throne of Glory was a profound visionary experience.

24. A. Kaplan, *Meditation and Kabbalah* (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1982), 41.

25. "*Pirkei Heikhalot*: Text and Commentary," 67.

26. Worthiness in this context would be earned by having studied the Torah, the Prophets, and the Holy Writings and to have "repeatedly studied Mishna, Halacha, Aggada and the rendering of legal decisions on what is permissible and forbidden"—see *Pirkei Heikhalot*, Chapter 21.

27. "*Pirkei Heikhalot*: Text and Commentary," 71.

28. Ibid., 63.

29. Ibid., Chapter 22, 73.

30. Ibid., Chapter 24, 78.

31. Ibid., 79.

32. Ibid., 91.

33. A. Unterman, ed., *The Kabbalistic Tradition* (London: Penguin, 2008), xxxi.

34. I. Regardie, *The Tree of Life: A Study in Magic* (London: Rider, 1932), 246–47.
35. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 14.
36. D. C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 1.
37. In addition to Scholem see also M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 119, for parallels between Gnosticism and the Kabbalah.
38. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 363–64, 389–90.
39. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah*, 3.
40. See Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 12.
41. See Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah*, 40.
42. See Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 209.
43. See Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 119; and also G. G. Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead* (New York: Schocken, 1991), 43.
44. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 215–16.
45. Ibid., 218–19.
46. Ibid.
47. C. Ginsburg, *Kabbalah: Its Doctrines, Development and Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), 102.
48. See Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah*, 7.
49. Ibid., 41.
50. A. E. Waite, *The Holy Kabbalah* (New York: University Books, 1960), 201.
51. See V. Crowley, *A Woman's Kabbalah* (London: Thorsons, 2000), 189; and R. Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 3rd ed. (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 116.
52. J. Bonner, *Qabalah* (London: Skoob, 1995), 23.
53. S. A. Fisdel, *The Practice of Kabbalah: Meditation in Judaism* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1996), 100.
54. Bonner, *Qabalah*, 25.
55. See V. Crowley, *A Woman's Kabbalah*, 189; and Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 32.
56. J. Ferguson, *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Mysticism and the Mystery Religions* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 99.
57. Kaplan, *Jewish Meditation*, 81.
58. Fisdel, *The Practice of Kabbalah*, 114–15.

## Chapter 6

1. The writings of St. Thomas Aquinas are available in numerous editions, but see P. Kreeft, *Summa of the Summa: The Essential Philosophical Passages of St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica* (New York: Ignatius Press, 1990); and for a very thorough study, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (New York: Ava Maria Press, 1997).
2. The term "Manichaean" was often used to describe any dualist Christian heresy. For a study of Mani and his doctrines, see G. Widengren, *Mani and Manichaeism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965).

3. J. B. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972), 3.

4. For a study of shamanic elements in medieval witchcraft, see Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1990).

5. J. B. Russell, *A History of Witchcraft* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1982), 58–59.

6. J. O'Grady, *Heresy* (Dorset, UK: Element, 1985), 69–70.

7. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, 123.

8. See M. B. Lambert, *Cathars* (New York: Wiley, 1998), for details of the Cathar heresy and the Crusade launched to overcome them in southern France.

9. This reference is from Pope John's notorious bull, *Super illius specula*, which marked a new era in the Church's response to witchcraft. See J. C. Baroja, *The World of the Witches* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001), 84.

10. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, 175.

11. Ibid., 230.

12. For details of witches' marks, see Baroja, *The World of the Witches*, 169.

13. R. H. Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown, 1959), 49.

14. Ibid., 179.

15. Ibid., 20 et seq.

16. Russell, *A History of Witchcraft*, 113.

17. Baroja, *The World of the Witches*, 203.

18. Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, 88 et seq.

19. Quoted in P. Haining, ed., *The Witchcraft Papers* (London: Hale, 1974), 139.

20. R. E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft* (New York: Facts on File, 1989), 60.

21. Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, 359 et seq.

22. Duns Scotus founded a school of thought that was opposed to some of the principles advocated by St. Thomas Aquinas. In particular he introduced Aristotelian logic to Christian theology. William of Occam also denied the "self-evidence" apparent in Christian theology and challenged Aquinas's view that the Creation was due to divine intellect. He was also strongly opposed to the political influence of the pope. See entries in *The New Columbia Encyclopedia* New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 809, 2981.

23. A. McCall, *The Medieval Underworld* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), 17–18.

24. H. M. Pachter, *Paracelsus: Magic into Science* (New York: Collier, 1961), 73.

25. K. Seligmann, *Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion* (New York: Pantheon, 1971), 145.

26. M. R. Best and F. H. Brightman, eds., *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), xxiv–xxv.

27. Ibid., 18–19.

28. Ibid., 31.

29. Ibid., 60.

30. Ibid., 61.

31. F. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 55.

32. A. M. Stoddart, *The Life of Paracelsus* (London: Rider, 1915), 269.

33. According to Henry M. Pachter, "Trithemius approved of all efforts to use the hidden forces of God's nature, so long as no demons were called in. This was legitimate 'white magic.' " See Pachter, *Paracelsus*, 76.

34. Paracelsus, *The Archidoxes of Magic* (London: Askin, [1656] 1975), 115.

35. Ibid., 94–95.

36. Recent biographies of Dr. John Dee include Charlotte Fell-Smith, *John Dee* (Lake Worth, FL: Nicolas-Hays, 2004); and Benjamin Woolley, *The Queen's Conjuror: The Science and Magic of Dr Dee* (London: HarperCollins, 2001). For details of Dee's magical thought, see G. E. Szonyi, *John Dee's Occultism: Magical Exaltation through Powerful Signs* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 2005); and Deborah E. Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

37. See "Enochian: Angelic Language or Mortal Folly," in D. C. Laycock, *The Complete Enochian Dictionary: A Dictionary of the Angelic Language as revealed to Dr John Dee and Edward Kelley* (London: Askin, 1978), 34–36.

38. Quoted in W. Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 202.

39. Ibid., 203.

40. T. Churton, *The Gnostics* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), 104.

41. Quoted in Churton, *The Gnostics*, 113.

42. Ibid., 115.

43. Ibid., 112.

44. *Corpus Hermeticum, Libellus XIII*.

45. For an overview of the transformative nature of modern Western magic, see N. Drury, *Stealing Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Modern Magic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)—especially Chapter 3 on the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

46. K. Seligmann, *Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion* [1948] (New York: Pantheon, 1971), 82–83.

47. Quoted in H. S. Redgrove, *Alchemy: Ancient and Modern* (London: Rider, 1922), 10–11.

48. Quoted in M. Berthelot, *La Chimie au Moyen Age*, vol. 2 (Paris: 1893), 262.

49. E. J. Holmyard, *Alchemy* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1957), 22.

50. Redgrove, *Alchemy: Ancient and Modern*, 14.

51. See T. Burckhardt, *Alchemy* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971), 97.

52. Ibid., 73–75.

53. Egil Asprem has distinguished between the Goetia and Neoplatonic concepts of theurgy: "Goetia was already used in antiquity to refer to ritual practices that were considered morally and theologically problematic or illicit. The 3rd–4th century Neoplatonic philosopher Iamblichus distinguished between Goetia and the more lofty practice of *theurgy* (θεουργία). The latter referred to "the work of God," ceremonial practices necessary for perfecting

the soul and ascending to the divine; goetia, by contrast, referred to ritual work that attempted to call forth, bind and subjugate lesser spirits and departed souls, a practice that was problematic among the Greeks." See E. Asprem, "Goetia and Modern Western Magic," *Aries* (forthcoming).

54. The historian and linguist E. M. Butler dates *The Testament of Solomon* to the period 100–400 CE. See E. M. Butler, *Ritual Magic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971 [1949]), 29.

55. See O. Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 12–13.

56. S. L. M. Mathers, ed., *Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon. The Book of Evil Spirits*, with an introduction by Aleister Crowley [1904] (Chicago: De Laurence, Scott & Co., 1916), 45–46 (reissued by Weiser, Boston, 1995).

57. There are several versions of the *Goetia* in the British Museum. The listing of spirits contained in the *Goetia* was first published by Johann Weyer, also known as Johannes Wier, or Wierius (1515–88), a German demonologist who chronicled the hierarchy of Hell in his *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* (1577).

58. Mathers, *Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon*, 31.

59. Ibid., 46.

60. See Butler, *Ritual Magic*, 73.

61. Ibid., 73–74. A similar conjuration, taking a slightly different form, is included in Mathers, *Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon*, 56.

62. D. Karr, "The Study of Solomonic Magic in English http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Solomon/index.php.

63. I. Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic* [1957] (London: Abacus, 1972), 9.

64. Ibid., 17.

65. See Book 2, Chapter XXII of S. L. M. Mathers, ed., *The Greater Key of Solomon* (Chicago: De Laurence, 1914), 122.

66. J. Peterson, ed., *The Lesser Key of Solomon: Detailing the Ceremonial Art of Commanding Spirits Both Good and Evil* (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 2001).

67. R. Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

68. See Ibid., 84. Hutton notes that "the rituals of the Golden Dawn trained initiates to invoke deities and angels, but with the object neither of presenting them with praise and pleas nor of making them do the will of the person invoking; with neither, in short, of the customary aims of religion and magic. They encouraged the practitioners to empower themselves with incantation, within a ceremonial setting, so that they came to feel themselves *combining* with the divine forces concerned and becoming part of them" (p. 83).

69. R. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 [1989]), 150.

## Chapter 7

1. R. Sutcliffe, "Left-Hand Path Ritual Magick," in *Pagan Pathways: A Guide to the Ancient Earth Traditions*, ed. G. Harvey and C. Hardman (London: Thorsons, 2000), 110.

2. See L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley* (New York: St, Martin's Press, 2000), 91. Crowley also acknowledged the considerable Tantric knowledge of the occultist David Curwen, who later became a high-ranking member of the O.T.O. See D. Evans, *The History of British Magick after Crowley* (London: Hidden, 2007), 288.

3. *Apollodorus*, Bibl. iii, 10, 3, 8–9, quoted in Evans, *The History of British Magick*, 177.

4. The Inner Order of the Golden Dawn was known as the Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis—the Red Rose and Cross of Gold—a clear indication of the Rosicrucian aspirations of the magical order.

5. I. Regardie, *The Middle Pillar* (Chicago: Aries Press, 1945), 46–47.

6. Ibid., 19.

7. I. Regardie, *Ceremonial Magic: A Guide to the Mechanisms of Ritual* (Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1980), 93.

8. Ibid., 93–94.

9. I. Regardie, *The Tree of Life: A Study in Magic* (London: Rider, 1932), 85.

10. Ibid., 106.

11. Ibid., 246–47.

12. V. Crabtree, "Left-Hand Path Practices in the West," 2002, http://www.dpjs.co.uk/lefthandpath.html.

13. Ibid. The La Vey quotation is from his key work, *The Satanic Bible*: "Book of Lucifer," para. 30.

14. Crabtree, "Left-Hand Path."

15. General information statement from the Dragon Rouge published online at http://www.dragonrouge.net.

16. Ibid.

17. See review of Stephen E. Flowers, *Lords of the Left-Hand Path: Forbidden Practices and Spiritual Heresies* (Smithville, TX: Runa-Raven Press, 1997), http://www.philhine.org.uk.

18. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt*, 69.

19. A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* [1929] (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), xv.

20. Ibid., xvi.

21. Ibid., xvii.

22. Ibid., 4.

23. Ibid.

24. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt*, 118.

25. Crowley's unique spelling for the Scarlet Woman of the Apocalypse, as revealed in *The Book of the Law*. The spelling "Babalon" has a Kabbalistic numerical value of 156, which, according to Crowley's disciple Kenneth Grant, equates with the number of shrines in the City of Pyramids. Grant maintains that the name "Babalon" means "Gateway of the Sun, or solar-phallic power" (see K. Grant, *Nightside of Eden* [London: Muller, 1977], 259), thereby revealing its symbolic significance to practitioners of sex magic.

26. J. Symonds, *The Great Beast: The Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley* (London: Mayflower, 1973), 82.

27. See stanzas I: 15 and 16 of *Liber Al vel Legis*, in the appendix to J. Symonds and K. Grant, eds., *The Magical Record of the Beast 666* (London: Duckworth, 1972), 303.

28. K. Grant, *The Magical Revival* (London: Muller, 1972), 20.

29. There have been numerous biographies of Crowley since Symond's *The Great Beast* was first published in 1951—most notably Lawrence Sutin's *Do What Thou Wilt* and Richard Kaczynski's *Perdurabo: The Life of Aleister Crowley* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2010).

30. See J. Symonds and K. Grant, eds., *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), 22.

31. See appendix containing the text of *Liber Al vel Legis* in Symonds and Grant, *The Magical Record*, 314.

32. Ibid., stanzas III: 44–45, 314.

33. Grant, *The Magical Revival*, 45. Grant elaborates on this point later in the same book: "In sexual congress each coition is a sacrament of peculiar virtue since it effects a transformation of consciousness through annihilation of apparent duality. To be radically effective the transformation must be also an initiation. Because of the sacramental nature of the act, each union must be magically directed . . . the ritual must be directed to the transfinite and non-individualised consciousness represented by Egyptian Nuit . . . The earthly Nuit is Isis, the Scarlet Woman" (p. 145).

34. See appendix containing the text of *Liber Al vel Legis* in Symonds and Grant, *The Magical Record*, 311–12.

35. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt*, 292.

36. F. King, ed., *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.* (London: Daniel, 1973), 225.

37. This essay was included in S. L. MacGregor Mathers's edition of *The Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon the King* [1889], revised edition, Weiser, Boston, 1997.

38. A. Crowley, "The Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magic," in *The Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon the King* [1889], rev. ed., ed. S. L. M. Mathers (Boston: Weiser, 1997), 16.

39. G. G. Scholem mentions the Kabbalist Jehudah the Hasid who spoke of the holy spirit "having no form, but a voice," and he also refers to a medieval Kabbalistic document titled the "Book of Life" (ca. 1200 CE), which defines the divine will, or "holy spirit," as the word of God, which is "inherent in all creatures." See G. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1961), 112.

40. F. Bardon, *The Practice of Magical Evocation* (Graz-Puntigam, Austria: Rudolf Pravica, 1967), 20.

41. A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*, 43.

42. See E. A. Wallis-Budge, ed., *Lefefa Sedek: The Bandlet of Righteousness* (London: Luzac, 1929), 3.

43. Ibid., 4.

44. Ibid., 5.

45. A. Crowley, *Book Four* [1913] (Dallas: Sangreal Foundation, 1972), 71.

46. J. La Fontaine, "Satanism and Satanic Mythology" in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century*, ed. B. Ankarloo and S. Clark (London: Athlone Press, 1999), 94.

47. A. S. LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, introduction by Burton H. Wolfe (New York: Avon, 1969), 17.

48. Journalist Gavin Baddeley interviewed Anger a few months after LaVey's death in 1997 and confirmed that "the Black Pope" and Anger had been friends for almost 40 years: Anger had been active in the Church of Satan since its earliest days. See G. Baddeley, *Lucifer Rising* (London: Plexus, 1999), 78.

49. A. Lyons, *The Second Coming: Satanism in America* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1970), 183–84.

50. Ibid.

51. See LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, 25. According to Zeena and Nikolas Schreck in "Anton LaVey: Legend and Reality," http://satanismcentral.com/aslv.html., LaVey was strongly influenced by Galt's speech in Ayn Rand's novel, *Atlas Shrugged*, in formulating these Satanic precepts.

52. LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, 18.

53. LaVey quoted in Lyons, *The Second Coming*, 184.

54. Ibid.

55. Interview between the author and Dr. Michael Aquino for the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, San Francisco, 1984.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. See *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*, in M. Aquino, ed., *The Crystal Tablet of Set* (San Francisco: Temple of Set, 1983), Appendix 1.

63. Henceforth all reference to Satan was replaced by reference to Set.

64. See *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*, in Aquino, *The Crystal Tablet of Set*.

65. Interview between the author and Dr. Michael Aquino for the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, San Francisco, 1984.

66. D. Webb, "Xeper: The Eternal Word of Set," 1999, http://www.xeper.org/pub/tos/xeper2.html.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. The Temple of Set recognizes six formal degrees of initiation: Setian I°, Adept I°, Priest of Priestess of Set III°, Master of the Temple IV°, Magus V°, and Ipsissimus VI°.

70. Interview between the author and Lilith Sinclair for the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, San Francisco, 1984.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Aquino was the first High Priest of the Temple of Set, and this position was later held by other senior figures within the organization, including Don Webb and (briefly) Zeena Schreck. Aquino returned to the post of High Priest in 2002.

74. M. Aquino, "Origins of the Temple of Set," in *The Crystal of Table of Set*, selected extracts, 47.

75. M. Aquino, "Black Magic in Theory and Practice," *The Crystal of Table of Set*, selected extracts, 1–55.

76. Ibid., 17.

77. Ibid., 18.

78. Ibid., 19.

79. Ibid., 28.

80. Ibid., 15.

81. Ibid., 19.

82. Ibid., 16.

83. Ibid.

84. M. Aquino, "The Two Paths," *The Crystal of Table of Set*, selected extracts, 41.

85. Aquino, "Black Magic in Theory and Practice," *The Crystal of Table of Set*, 16.

86. Interview between the author and Dr. Michael Aquino for the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, San Francisco, 1984.

87. Aquino, "Black Magic in Theory and Practice," *The Crystal of Table of* Set, 19.

88. Interview between the author and Lilith Sinclair for the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, San Francisco, 1984.

89. D. Webb, "Seven of the Many Gateways," in *The Ninth Night*, ed. L. D. Wild, 1, 2 (June 1998), Sydney, http://www.xeper.org.

90. D. Webb, "The Black Beyond Black," 2004, http://www.xeper.org/australasia.html.

91. M. Aquino, "Satanism and the Immortality of the Psyche" (San Francisco: Temple of Set, 1996), http://www.xeper.org/nan_madol/immortal.html.

92. LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, 94.

93. D. Webb, "Xeper: The Eternal Word of Set."

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

96. Webb, "Seven of the Many Gateways."

97. Webb, "The Black Beyond Black."

98. M. Aquino, "Satanism and the Immortality of the Psyche."

99. In an interview published in 1998, Zeena Schreck confirmed to Kiki Scar that "the Temple of Set does not have an official curriculum concerning sexual magic and prefers to allow individual initiates to experiment with this method privately, if they wish to." See K. Scar, "Sado-Magic for Satan: An Interview with Zeena Schreck," *Cuir Underground* 4 (Summer 1998): 4; also published online at http://www.black-rose.com. Schreck was briefly High Priestess of the Temple of Set in 2002 and was succeeded by Michael Aquino, the current High Priest and cofounder of the Temple of Set.

100. Webb, "The Black Beyond Black."

101. K. Grant, *Cults of the Shadow* (London: Muller, 1975), 169–70.

102. That is to say, an inverted Kabbalistic Tree featuring 10 "demonic" *sephiroth*.

103. See http://www.dragonrouge.net/english/general.htm.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid.

106. According to the *Book of the Black Serpent*, the Qliphothic planetary rulers associated with the 10 spheres on the reverse side of the Tree of Life are Thamiel (Neptune/Kether), Chaigidel (Pluto/Chokmah), Sateriel (Saturn/Binah), Gamehioth (Jupiter/Chesed), Galeb (Mars/Geburah), Tagaririm (Sol/Tiphareth), Harab-Serapel (Venus/Netzach), Samael (Mercury/Hod), Gamaliel (Luna/Yesod), and Nahemoth (Terra/Malkuth). Ten "evil chiefs" are also assigned to these spheres. They are, respectively: Satan, Beelzebub, Lucifuge, Ashtaroth, Asmodai, Belphegor, Baal, Adramalach, Lilith, and Nahemah.

## Chapter 8

1. For details of Mathers's increasingly dictatorial leadership of the Golden Dawn, see Francis King, *Ritual Magic in England* (London: Spearman, 1970); and George Mills Harper, *Yeats's Golden Dawn* (London: Macmillan, 1974).

2. For more information on Enochian magic, see Chapter 9 in the present volume. It derives historically from the work of Elizabethan occultists Dr. John Dee (1527–1608) and Edward Kelley (1555–95), who met in 1581. Dee and Kelley made use of wax tablets called almadels, engraved with magical symbols, and also used a large number of 49-inch squares filled with letters of the alphabet. Nearby, on his table, Kelley had a large crystal stone upon which he focused his concentration and entered a state of trance reverie. Kelley maintained that while he was in a state of trance, "angels" would appear, and they in turn would point to various letters on the squares. These letters were written down by Dee as Kelley called them out. When these invocations were completely transcribed, Kelley then reversed their order, believing that the angels had communicated them backward to avoid unleashing the magical power that they contained. Dee and Kelley considered that the communications formed the basis of a new language known as Enochian. These magical conjurations were subsequently incorporated into magical practice by the ritual magicians of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, who used them to induce trance visions on the "astral plane."

3. A. Crowley, *The Vision and the Voice* [1929] (Dallas: Sangreal Foundation, 1972).

4. J. Symonds and K. Grant, eds., *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), 621. According to Lawrence Sutin, Crowley was deeply ashamed of his homosexuality because it "conflicted with his status as a manly gentleman coming of age" (*Do What Thou Wilt A Life of Aleister Crowley* (New York: St, Martin's Press, 2000), 43. Crowley was also well aware of the famous libel action that led to the imprisonment of Oscar Wilde. This had occurred in 1895, during Crowley's first year at Cambridge University.

5. Spare was briefly a member of the O.T.O. circa 1910, but soon quarreled with Crowley and thereafter sought to avoid him. Even though Spare became friendly with Thelemite Kenneth Grant in the late 1940s, Spare and Crowley were never reconciled. See Chapter 6 and also K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks!: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare* (London: Fulgur, 1998).

6. F. King, ed., *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.* (London: Daniel, 1973), 28.

7. Crowley writes in *The Confessions*: "I protested that I knew no such secret. He said, 'But you have printed it in the plainest language.' I said that I could not have done so because I did not know it. He went to the bookshelves and, taking out a copy of The Book of Lies, pointed to a passage in the despised chapter." See Symonds and Grant, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, 710.

8. Crowley later visited Berlin where he received instructional documents from the German O.T.O. He was also granted the grandiose title "King of Ireland, Iona and all the Britains within the Sanctuary of the Gnosis" and took *Baphomet* as his new magical name. Later Crowley adapted the ninth degree of the O.T.O so that it identified the priest and priestess as Osiris and Isis, "seeking Nuit and Hadit through the vagina and the penis." He also developed a series of homosexual magical rituals with Victor Neuburg featuring invocations to Thoth-Hermes. At one point in these rituals, which became known collectively as the *Paris Working*, Crowley scourged Neuburg on the buttocks and cut a cross on his chest. For details see J. O. Fuller, *The Magical Dilemma of Victor Neuburg* (London: Allen, 1965), 203–16.

9. See F. King, *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.*, 29. King points out that Crowley was not accepted by a majority of German O.T.O. members until 1925. The Order was suppressed by the Nazis in 1937.

10. A. Crowley, *De Arte Magica*, Chapter 12, http://www.skepticfiles.org.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., Chapter 16.

13. See F. King, *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.*, 207.

14. Baphomet was Crowley's magical name after he assumed leadership of the British branch of the O.T.O. in 1912. It is also the name of a demonic deity represented graphically by Eliphas Lévi as a goat-headed god with wings, breasts, and an illuminated torch between his horns. The Knights Templar were accused by King Philip IV of France of worshipping Baphomet although few members of the Order admitted to this ritual practice. It has been suggested that the name Baphomet may be a corruption of Mohammed.

15. See A. Crowley, "Emblems and Modes of Use," private text intended for the ninth-degree O.T.O., http://www.aethyria.com.

16. See Frater Osiris, *On the Mass of the Phoenix: An Analysis*," 2003, http://www.hermetic.com/osiris; and also A. Rhadon, "Sex, Religion and Magick: A Concise Overview," 2004, http://www.baymoon.com.

17. Osiris, "Analysis of the Mass of the Phoenix."

18. See Frater Osiris, "Analysis of Liber XXXVI, *The Star Sapphire*," Seattle, 2004, http://www.hermetic.com/osiris.

19. Ibid. Frater Osiris is probably referring to Crowley's sex magic text *Emblems and Modes of Use*, where it is suggested that the "elixir" should be consumed in this way.

20. This is Crowley's expression. IAO was one of the sacred names ascribed to the archon Abraxas, a planetary deity associated with Basilides, a Gnostic philosopher who lived and taught in Alexandria ca. 125–40 CE. The name Abraxas in Greek letters has a numerical value of 365, thereby linking the deity to the number of days in a year. Abraxas was said to rule over 365 heavens and was depicted on numerous charms, amulets, and talismans in order to attract good luck.

21. A. Crowley, *Energized Enthusiasm: A Note on Theurgy*, http://www.luckymojo.com/esoteric/occultism/magic/ceremonial/crowley.htm. This text was first published in *The Equinox*, vol. 1, no. 9, in March 1913, and was republished by Weiser, New York, in 1976.

22. Crowley, *Energized Enthusiasm: A Note on Theurgy.*

23. See L. Abraham, entry for the "Chemical Wedding" of King Sol and Queen Luna, *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 36.

24. In *Liber Aleph*, Crowley writes: "Neglect not the daily Miracle of the Mass, either by the Rite of the Gnostic Catholic Church, or that of the Phoenix." Quoted in Frater Osiris, *On the Mass of the Phoenix*.

25. The Mark of the Beast is "the sign of the Sun and Moon or Cross and Circle conjoined." See http://www.thelemicgoldendawn.org/rituals/phoenix.htm.

26. Frater Osiris, *On the Mass of the Phoenix*.

27. First published in the Thelemite journal *Mezla*, vol. 1, no. 111 (1985): 1.

28. This is remarkably similar to Austin Spare's notion of the "Void moment," which is described in Chapter 7.

29. *Mezla*, vol. 1, no. 111 (1985): 1.

30. Ibid.

31. See listing of key Crowley texts on sex magic published online at http://www.hollyfeld.org. *Liber A'ash vel Capricorni Pneumatici* heads the list. A "Class A" document in the Argenteum Astrum was one that could not be altered or modified in the slightest way and had to be adhered to by members strictly as presented by Crowley.

32. A. Crowley, *Liber A'Aash vel Capricorni Pneumatici (Liber CCCLXX)*, first published in *The Equinox* 1, no. 6.

33. H. Urban, "Magia Sexualis: Sex, Secrecy and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72, no. 3 (September 2004): 711.

34. P.-R. Koenig, "Spermo-Gnostics and the O.T.O," http://www.cyberlink.ch/-koenig/spermo.htm.

35. J. G. Melton, *The Origins of Modern Sex Magick* (Evanston, IL: Institute for the Study of American Religion, 1985).

36. See R. North, "Introduction," in *Sexual Magic*, P. B. Randolph (New York: Magickal Childe, 1988; original French-language text: *Magia Sexualis*, Paris 1931), http://www.supoervirtual.com.br.

37. P. B. Randolph, *Eulis!* (Toledo, OH: Randolph, 1873, republished 1896).

38. Ibid., 48, 218.

39. Randolph, *Eulis!*, quoted in C. Yronwode, "Paschal Beverly Randolph and the Ansairetic Mysteries," http://www.luckymojo.com/tkpbrandolph.html.

40. P. B. Randolph, *The Ansairetic Mystery: A New Revelation Concerning Sex!* (Toledo, OH, ca. 1973–74), republished in J. P. Deveney, *Paschal Beverly Randolph: A Nineteenth-Century American Spiritualist, Rosicrucian and Sex Magician* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997).

41. A. Crowley, *Energized Enthusiasm*.

42. J. Godwin, C. Chanel, and J. P. Deveney, *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor* (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1995), 92–97.

43. P.-R. Koenig, "Correct Gnosticism," http://www.parareligion.ch/correct.htm.

44. These Gnostic sects include the Carpocratians, the Ophites, and the Phibionites, and they are of interest because of their libertine tendencies, chthonic snake imagery, and ritual consumption of blood and semen respectively. The Phibionites provide arguably the most intriguing parallel to Thelema in relation to Crowley's sacramental sex magic practices.

45. Koenig, "Spermo-Gnostics and the Ordo Templi Orientis."

46. M. Eliade, *Occultism: Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 113.

47. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 26: 9, 3–4.

48. Ibid., 26: 17, 1 ff., quoted in Eliade, *Occultism*, 110.

## Chapter 9

1. F. King, ed., *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy* (London: Spearman, 1971), 29.

2. I. Regardie, ed., *The Golden Dawn*, 4 vols. (Chicago: Aries Press, 1937–40).

3. Specifically, when Francis King first published a collection of the Flying Rolls under the title *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*. See Bibliography.

4. S. L. MacGregor Mathers (*Frater Deo Duce Comite Ferro*), "Flying Roll No. XI: Clairvoyance," in F. King, *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, 66.

5. Anon., *The Book of the Black Serpent*, ca. 1900, circulated among initiates of the Isis-Urania Temple in London. Included as an appendix in R. A. Gilbert, *The Sorcerer and His Apprentice* (Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983).

6. Mathers (*Frater Deo Duce Comite Ferro*), "Flying Roll No. XI," 67.

7. Ibid.

8. See M. Stavish, "The Body of Light in the Western Esoteric Tradition," http://www.hermetic.com/stavish/essays/bodylight.html.

9. Ibid.

10. M. Aquino, *The Crystal Table of Set* (San Francisco: Temple of Set, 1983), 37.

11. J. W. Brodie-Innes (*Frater Sub Spe*), "Flying Roll No. XXV: Essay on Clairvoyance and Travelling in the Spirit Vision," in F. King, *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, 73–74.

12. See A. Richardson, *Priestess: The Life and Magic of Dion Fortune* (Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1987), 111.

13. D. Fortune, *Applied Magic* (London: Aquarian Press, 1962), 56–57.

14. Brodie-Innes (*Frater Sub Spe*), "Flying Roll No. XXV," 73.

15. Lévi made this suggestion in *Dogme et ritual de la haute magie*, published in Paris in 1856.

16. See commentaries on these cards in Paul Foster Case, *The Tarot: A Key to the Wisdom of the Ages* (New York: Macoy, 1947). Case's American esoteric organization, Builders of the Adytum (B.O.T.A.), was affiliated with the Golden Dawn, and there are few differences between his Tarot deck and the Rider Tarot created by Golden Dawn members Arthur Edward Waite and Pamela Colman Smith.

17. See F. King, *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, 58–59.

18. This is a reference to a ritual grade within the Golden Dawn. The grade of 5° = 6° equated with Tiphareth on the Tree of Life.

19. See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 4:12–13.

20. Mathers (*Frater Deo Duce Comite Ferro*), "Flying Roll No. XI," 68–69.

21. Ibid.

22. Quoted in Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 4:43.

23. The sacred name HCOMA derives from the so-called Enochian system of angelic magic established by the Elizabethan occultists Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelley. Enochian magic was incorporated into the Golden Dawn's ceremonial practices. See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, vol. 4.

24. See F. King, *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, 82.

25. Yod is the sacred first letter of the Kabbalistic Name of God, JHVH.

26. F. King, *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, 82.

27. Ibid., 82–84.

28. See Israel Regardie's introduction to Aleister Crowley's *The Vision and the Voice* [1929] (Dallas: Sangreal Foundation, 1972).

29. Ibid., 57–58.

30. Ibid., 61.

31. Ibid., 62.

32. Ibid., 199–201.

33. Ibid., 199.

34. Ibid., 201.

35. Quoted in Richardson, *Priestess*, 112.

36. A Gnostic sect, the Melchizedekians, maintained that there was a spiritual power greater than Jesus Christ. This was Melchizedek, "the light gatherer," who is said to have performed a comparable role in the heavens to that of Jesus on Earth.

37. Kenneth Grant, *The Magical Revival* (London: Muller, 1972), 177.

38. See chapter by "FPD," "The Old Religion," in Basil Wilby, ed., *The New Dimensions Red Book* (Cheltenham, UK: Helios, 1965).

39. Fortune, *Applied Magic*, 4.

40. According to the teachings of modern Theosophy, Akashic records are a type of "astral" memory of all events, thoughts, and emotions that have arisen in world history and in one's personal life. Some psychics are said to

be able to tune into this dimension in order to receive authentic impressions of past ages. Many Theosophical descriptions of Atlantis also derive from apparent Akashic memories.

41. FPD, "The Old Religion," 47.

42. Ibid., 49.

43. Ibid., 78.

44. See Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki, *The Shining Paths: An Experiential Journey through the Tree of Life* (Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983); and *Highways of the Mind: The Art and History of Pathworking* (Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1987).

45. A. O. Spare, "Mind to Mind and How," in *Two Tracts on Cartomancy* (London: Fulgur, 1997), 32.

46. For further information on the magical concepts central to Spare's visionary art, readers are referred to Gavin Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare* (London: Fulgur, 1995); and Nevill Drury, *Dark Spirits: The Magical Art of Rosaleen Norton and Austin Osman Spare* (Brisbane, Australia: Salamander, 2012).

47. In his introduction to the 1975 facsimile reprint of *The Book of Pleasure* (93 Publishing, Quebec), Kenneth Grant writes: "Towards the end of his life, when Spare lived more or less reclusively in a Dickensian South London slum, he was asked whether he regretted his lonely existence. 'Lonely!,' he exclaimed, and with a sweep of his arm he indicated the host of unseen elementals and familiar spirits that were his constant companions; he had but to turn his head to catch a fleeting glimpse of their subtle presences."

48. G. W. Semple, "A Few Leaves from the Devil's Picture Book," in A. O. Spare, *Two Tracts on Cartomancy* (London: Fulgur, 1997), 21.

49. Ibid., 21.

50. Ibid.

51. *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* was self-published in London in 1913. A facsimile reprint was released by 93 Publishing in Montreal, Canada, in 1975.

52. See Spare, *The Book of Pleasure*, 50. The hand-drawn sigils are reproduced from Spare's text.

53. Kenneth Grant, "Austin Osman Spare," *Man, Myth and Magic*, vol. 1 (London: Marshall-Cavendish, 1970).

54. These quotations are from Spares's *The Focus of Life* (Morland Press, 1921), republished as a facsimile edition by Askin Publishers, London, in 1976: 11, 13.

55. Exhaustion could be brought about in a variety of ways. Spare cites "Mantras and Posture, Women and Wine, Tennis, and the playing of Patience, or by walking and concentration on the Sigil etc. etc." See Spare, *The Book of Pleasure*, 51.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. For an account of Norton's life and magical explorations, see N. Drury, *Homage to Pan: The Life, Art and Sex Magic of Rosaleen Norton* (London: Creation Oneiros, 2009).

59. R. Norton, "She Hates Figleaf Morality," *People*, Sydney, March 29, 1950, 30.

60. R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Sydney: Walter Glover, 1952), 44.

61. For the complete transcript of Rosaleen Norton's interview with L. J. Murphy, see the appendix in Drury, *Homage to Pan*.

62. L. J. Murphy transcript, Drury, *Homage to Pan*.

63. Ibid.

64. Norton was married to Beresford Conroy at this time, although she divorced him in 1952.

65. L. J. Murphy transcript, Drury, *Homage to Pan*.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. See C. G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1919); *The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959); *Symbols of Transformation* (Princeton, NJ: Bollingen Foundation/Princeton University Press, 1956); and *Man and His Symbols* (New York: Dell, 1968).

## Chapter 10

1. Holly Morris, "Homewaters of the Mind," in *The Road Within*, ed. S. O'Reilly, J. O'Reilly, and T. O'Reilly (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly and Associates, 1997), 146.

2. Graham Harvey, *Listening People, Speaking Earth* (Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 1997).

3. Sean Connors, "Karuk Orientations toward the Land," in *Indigenous Religions: A Companion*, ed. G. Harvey (London: Cassell, 1999), 150.

4. L. Hillman and J. F. Salter, "Environmental Management: American Indian Knowledge and the Problem of Sustainability," *Forest, Trees and People* 34 (1997): 25.

5. A. I. Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World view," in *Teachings from the American Earth*, ed. D. Tedlock and B. Tedlock (New York: Liveright, 1975), 141–78.

6. Ibid., 151.

7. Deborah Bird Rose, "Consciousness and Responsibility in an Australian Aboriginal Religion," in *Traditional Aboriginal Society: A Reader*, ed. W. H. Edwards (South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1987), 260.

8. Deborah Bird Rose, *Nourishing Terrains* (Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission, 1996), 7.

9. W. E. H. Stanner, *White Man Got No Dreaming: Essays 1938–1973* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979), 135.

10. Dreaming Ancestor, painted on rock faces and caves in the Kimberley region of Australia.

11. David Mowaljarlai and Jutta Malnic, *Yorro Yorro: Everything Standing Up Alive: Spirit of the Kimberley* (Broome, Western Australia: Magabala Books, 1993), 138.

12. Ibid., 139.
13. Ibid., 139.
14. Ibid., 142.
15. Donald Thomson, "The Concept of 'Marr' in Arnhem Land," *Mankind* 10, no. 1 (1975): 1–10.
16. W. E. H. Stanner, "Some Aspects of Aboriginal Religion," in *Religious Business*, ed. Max Charlesworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 [1976]), 8–9.
17. Helen Payne, "The Presence of the Possessed: A Parameter in the Performance Practice of the Music of Australian Aboriginal Women," in *Rediscovering the Muses: Women's Musical Traditions*, ed. K. Marshall (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 18.
18. Ursula McConnel, *Myths of the* Munkan (Carlton, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1957), xv.
19. Christine Watson, *Piercing the Ground: Balgo Women's Image Making and Relationship to Country* (Fremantle, Western Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2003), 107.
20. Nancy Munn, "Totemic Designs and Group Continuity in Walbiri Cosmology," in *Aborigines Now*, ed. M. Reay (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1964), 86.
21. W. Caruana and N. Lendon, eds., *The Painters of the Wagilag Sisters' Story 1937–1997* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 1997), 158.
22. Aboriginal artist Wandjuk Marika, quoted in Lorraine Mafi-Williams, "Dreamtime Almost Gone," in *Spirit Song*, ed. L. Mafi-Williams (Norwood, South Australia: Omnibus, 1993), 4.
23. Mowaljarlai and Malnic, *Yorro Yorro*, 138.
24. Val Webb, *Stepping Out with the Sacred* (London: Continuum, 2010), 55.
25. Berry, quoted in Ursula King, *The Search for Spirituality: Our Global Quest for a Spiritual Life* (New York: Blue Bridge, 2008), 172.
26. Ibid.
27. Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980).
28. Brian Easlea, *Science and Sexual Oppression: Patriarchy's Confrontation with Women and Nature* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1981).
29. Doug Ezzy, "Geographical Ontology: Levinas, Sacred Landscapes and Cities," *The Pomegranate* 6, no. 1 (2004): 20.
30. Ibid., 25.
31. Ibid., 30.
32. Bron Taylor, *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).
33. Norman Habel, *An Inconvenient Text: Is a Green Reading of the Bible Possible?* (Hindmarsh, South Australia: Australian Theological Press, 2009).
34. See for example, Andy Letcher, " 'There's Bulldozers in the Fairy Garden': Re-enchantment Narratives within British Eco-Paganism," in *Popular Spiritualities: The Politics of Contemporary Enchantment*, ed. Lynne Hume and Kathleen McPhillips (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 175–86; Graham St. John, "Reclaiming the Future at Goolengook: Going Feral and Becoming Native in Australia," in Hume and McPhillips, *Popular Spiritualities*, 187–200.

35. Prudence Jones, "Pagan Theologies," in *Pagan Pathways: A Guide to the Ancient Earth Traditions*, ed. Graham Harvey and Charlotte Hardman (San Francisco: Thorsons, 2000), 37.

36. David Yarrow, "Sacred Landscapes," in *Practising the Witch's Craft*, ed. Douglas Ezzy (Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2003), 189–205.

37. V. Crowley, "Wicca as Nature Religion," in *Nature Religion Today: Paganism in the Modern World*, ed. Joanne Pearson, Richard H. Roberts, and Geoffrey Samuel (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 170–79.

38. Charles Leland, *Aradia or the Gospel of the Witches* (Blaine, WA: Phoenix, 1990 [1890]).

39. Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1979), 12.

40. Ibid., 12.

41. Letcher, " 'There's Bulldozers in the Fairy Garden.' "

42. Ross Terrill, *The Australians: In Search of an Identity* (London: Bantam, 1987).

43. Ibid.

44. Lynne Hume, "Creation and Innovation in Australian Paganism," *Australian Religion Studies Review* 20, no. 1 (2007): 45–58.

45. David Tacey, *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia* (Melbourne: HarperCollins, 1005), 175.

46. Alastair McIntosh, "The Gal-Gael Peoples of Scotland: On Tradition Re-bearing, Recovery of Place and Making Identity Anew," in Pearson, Roberts, and Samuel, *Nature Religion Today*, 180–202.

47. This conference was organized by the Department of Religious Studies at Lancaster University, and sought to explore the practices and beliefs that constitute contemporary Paganism.

48. As an Australian nonindigenous person, well aware that Australia is not the country of my ancestors, this notion was very powerful for me personally.

49. McIntosh, "The Gal-Gael Peoples of Scotland."

50. Ibid., 182.

51. Ibid., 187.

52. Ibid., 189.

53. Peter Beyer, "Globalisation and the Religion of Nature," in Pearson, Roberts, and Samuel, *Nature Religion Today*, 19.

## Chapter 11

1. M. Wertheim, *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace* (New York: Norton, 1999), 223.

2. Ibid., 228.

3. D. Green, "Technoshamanism: Cyber-Sorcery and Schizophrenia," paper presented at the international conference "The Spiritual Supermarket: Religious Pluralism in the 21st Century," organized by INFORM and CESNUR (London, April 19–22, 2001), http://www.cesnur.org/conferences/cesnur2001.htm.

4. M. Dery, *Escape Velocity: Cyberspace at the End of the Century* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996), 28.

5. See T. Leary, "Computers, Consciousness and Creativity: An Interview with Dr. Timothy Leary," in *Echoes from the Void*, ed. N. Drury (Dorset, UK: Prism Press, 1994), 172.

6. E. Davis, "Technopagans: May the Astral Plane Be Reborn in Cyberspace," *Wired*, July 1995, 128.

7. D. Rushkoff, *Cyberia: Life in the Trenches of Hyperspace* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994), 143.

8. E. Davis, "TechnoPagans: The Roots of Digital Magick," *Green Egg* 29, no. 129 (August–September 1997): 41.

9. Rushkoff, *Cyberia*, 145–46.

10. T. Williams, "Navigation Systems for the Spirit," *Green Egg* 29, no. 129 (August–September 1997): 39.

11. See J. Dowse, "Cyberpagans!," *Pagan Dawn* 119, Beltane (1996): 11.

12. In Second Life, practitioners in the virtual world acquire exclusive right to a section of cyber-territory on the Internet and then populate their "space" with personas and settings of their own creation. The sites are interactive and assume their own "reality."

13. S. Reeder, "Children of the Digital Gods," *Green Egg* 29, 129 (August–September 1997): 16.

14. VRML stands for "virtual reality markup language" and is used to create three-dimensional imagery in cyberspace, whereas text-based websites are created with HTML (hypertext markup language).

15. See B. Galloway, ed., *Fantasy and Wargaming* (Cambridge: Stephens, 1981), 6–7.

16. Ibid., 7.

17. Published by White Wolf, Stone Mountain, Georgia, 3rd ed., 1992.

18. Wertheim, *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace* 236.

19. Rushkoff, *Cyberia*, 198.

20. B. Laurel, "Toward the Design of a Computer-Based Interactive Fantasy System" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1986), 1.

21. D. Evans, *The History of British Magick after Crowley* (London: Hidden, 2007), 359.

22. R. Sherwin, "Chaos Magick," http://www.chaosmatrix.org/library/chaos/texts/sher2.html.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. P. J. Carroll, *Liber Null and Psychonaut* (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1987), 181–82. Elsewhere, Carroll writes: "Magic arises to prominence when the boundary of the self is either expanding or contracting. For example, during times of innovation and discovery, or during times of repression. A profound magical renaissance is now in progress because the boundary of self is both expanding and contracting simultaneously. Science, drugs, psychology, communications networks and all the paraphernalia of late twentieth century life have expanded aspects of awareness to a degree inconceivable a century ago"

(see P. J. Carroll, "The Magic of Chaos," http://www.philhine.org.uk/writings/ess_mach.html.)

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Mark de Frates (Marik): "Sigils, Servitors and Godforms," 1998, http://www.chaosmatrix.org/library/chaos/texts/servitors.html, 4.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., 5.

32. C. G. Jung quoted in William McGuire and R. F. C. Hull, eds., *C. G. Jung Speaking* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978), 348.

33. C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 340.

34. Quoted in Philip H. Farber, "Introduction to CyberMagick," 1998, http://users.bestweb.net/~kali93/oc98/cyber.htm.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Steve Collins, "Technology and Magick," http://scan.net.au/scan/journal/display.php?journal_id=35

39. G. P. Grieve, "Imagining a Virtual Religious Community: Neo-Pagans on the Internet," *Chicago Anthropology Exchange* 7 (1995): 98–132, http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/G_Grieve_Imagining_1995.pdf.

# Bibliography


Abraham, L. *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Albrecht, D. *Rites in the Spirit*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Andreesco-Miereanu, I. "Magic in Eastern Europe." In *Hidden Truths: Magic, Alchemy and the Occult*, edited by L. E. Sullivan, 116–21. New York: Macmillan, 1989.

Ankarloo, B., and S. Clark, eds. *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century*. London: Athlone Press, 1999.

Aquinas, St. T. *Summa Theologica*. New York: Ava Maria Press, 1997.

Aquino, M., ed. *The Crystal Tablet of Set*. San Francisco: Temple of Set, 1983.

Aquino, M. "Satanism and the Immortality of the Psyche." San Francisco: Temple of Set, 1996. http://www.xeper.org/nan_madol/immortal.html.

Armstrong, A. H., ed. *Plotinus*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1953.

Ashcroft-Nowicki, D. *Highways of the Mind: The Art and History of Pathworking*. Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1987.

Ashcroft-Nowicki, D. *The Shining Paths: An Experiential Journey through the Tree of Life*. Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983.

Asprem, E. "Goetia and Modern Western Magic." *Aries* (forthcoming).

Avorgbeder, D. K. "Music in World Shamanism." In *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*, edited by M. N. Walter and E. J. N. Fridman, pp. 179–186. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO.

Baddeley, G. *Lucifer Rising*. London: Plexus, 1999.

Baker, J. R. "Psychedelic Sacraments." *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 37, no. 2 (2005): 179–87.

Bardon, F. *The Practice of Magical Evocation*. Graz-Puntigam, Austria: Rudolf Pravica, 1967.

Barnstone, W., ed. *The Other Bible*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984.

Baroja, J. C. *The World of the Witches*. London: Phoenix Press, 2001.
Berndt, R. M., and C. H. Berndt. *The World of the First Australians*. Sydney: Ure Smith, 1977.
Berndt, R. M., and C. H. Berndt. *A World That Was: The Yaraldi of the Murray River and the Lakes South Australia*. Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1993.
Berndt, R. M., and C. H. Berndt. "A Preliminary Report of Field Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia." *Oceania*, 14, no.1, 1943: 220–49.
Berthelot, M. *La Chimie au Moyen Age*, vol. 2, Paris: Imprimerie nationale,1893.
Best, M. R., and F. H. Brightman, eds. *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
Beyer, P. "Globalisation and the Religion of Nature." In *Nature Religion Today: Paganism in the Modern World*, edited by J. Pearson, R. H. Roberts, and G. Samuel, 11–21. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.
Biesele, M. *Women Like Meat: The Folklore and Foraging Ideology of the Kalahari Ju/'hoan*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1993.
Birckhead, Jim. "And I Can't Feel at Home in This World Anymore: Fieldwork in Two Settings." In *Anthropologists in the Field*, edited by L. Hume and J. Mulcock, 95–107. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
Blain, J. *Nine Worlds of Seid Magic: Ecstasy and Neo-Shamanism in North-European Paganism*. London: Routledge, 2002.
Blavatsky, H.P. *Isis Unveiled*. Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1886.
Blumenthal, D. R., ed. *Understanding Jewish Mysticism: The Merkabah Tradition and the Zoharic Tradition*. New York: Ktav, 1978.
Bonner, J. *Qabalah*. London: Skoob, 1995.
Bowie, F. "Methods for Studying the Paranormal (and Who Says What Is Normal Anyway?)." *Paranthropology: Journal of Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal* 1, no. 1 (2010): 4–6.
Brennan, B. A. *Hands of Light: A Guide to Healing through the Human Energy Field*. New York: Bantam, 1987.
Brennan, B. A. *Light Emerging: The Journey of Personal Healing*. New York: Bantam, 1993.
Burckhardt, T. *Alchemy*. Baltimore: Penguin, 1971.
Butler, E. M. *Ritual Magic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971 [1949].
Butler, W. E. *The Magician: His Training and Work*. Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1970.
Cardeña, E., S. J. Lynn, and S. Krippner, eds. *Varieties of Anomalous Experience: Examining the Scientific Evidence*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2000.
Carroll, P. J. "The Magic of Chaos." http://www.philhine.org.uk/writings/ess_mach.html.
Carroll, P. J. *Liber Null and Psychonaut*. York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1987.
Caruana, W., and N. Lendon, eds. *The Painters of the Wagilag Sisters' Story 1937–1997*. Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 1997.
Case, P. F. *The Tarot: A Key to the Wisdom of the Ages*. New York: Macoy, 1947.

Cawte, J. *Medicine Is the Law*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1974.
Charlesworth, M., ed. *Religious Business*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
Churton, T. *The Gnostics*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987.
Classen, C. "Foundations for an Anthropology of the Senses." *International Social Science Journal* 49, no. 3 (1997): 401–12.
Classen, C., D. Howes, and A. Synnot. *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smells*. London: Routledge, 1994.
Clifford, J., and G. Marcus. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
Collins, S. "Technology and Magick." http://scan.net.au/scan/journal/display.php?journal_id=35.
Corbin, H. J. *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi*. Translated by R. Manheim. Bollingen Series XCI. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969.
Couliano, I. P. *The Tree of Gnosis*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992.
Crabtree, V. "Left-Hand Path Practices in the West." http://www.dpjs.co.uk/lefthandpath.html.
Crowley, A. *Book Four*. Dallas, TX: Sangreal Foundation, 1972 [1913].
Crowley, A. *De Arte Magica*, n.d., http://www.skepticfiles.org
Crowley, A. *Energized Enthusiasm: A Note on Theurgy*. New York: Weiser, 1976 [1913]. Also at http://www.luckymojo.com/esoteric/occultism/magic/ceremonial/crowley.htm.
Crowley, A. *Magick in Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973 [1929].
Crowley, A. "The Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magic." In *The Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon the King* [1889], rev. ed., edited by S. L. M. Mathers. Boston: Weiser, 1997
Crowley, A. *The Vision and the Voice* [1929]. Dallas: Sangreal Foundation, 1972
Crowley, V. "Wicca as Nature Religion." In *Nature Religion Today: Paganism in the Modern World*, edited by J. Pearson, R. H. Roberts, and G. Samuel, 170–79. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.
Crowley, V. *A Woman's Kabbalah*. London: Thorsons, 2000.
Czaplicka, M. A. *Aboriginal Siberia: A Study in Social Anthropology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969 [1914].
Damasio, A. R. *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. New York: Avon Books, 1999.
Damasio, A. R. *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999.
Davies, O. *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Davis, E. "Technopagans: May the Astral Plane be Reborn in Cyberspace." *Wired*, July 1995.
Davis, E. "TechnoPagans: The Roots of Digital Magick." *Green Egg* 29, no. 129 (August–September 1997): 41.
de Frates, M. (Marik). "Sigils, Servitors and Godforms." 1998. http://www.chaosmatrix.org/library/chaos/texts/servitors.html.

Dery, M. *Escape Velocity: Cyberspace at the End of the Century.* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996.
Desjarlais, R. *Body and Emotion*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.
Deveney, J. P. *Paschal Beverly Randolph: A Nineteenth-Century American Spiritualist, Rosicrucian and Sex Magician*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
Dowse, J. "Cyberpagans!" *Pagan Dawn* 119, Beltane (1996).
Drury, N. *Dark Spirits: The Magical Art of Rosaleen Norton and Austin Osman Spare*. Brisbane, Australia: Salamander, 2012.
Drury, N., ed. *Echoes from the Void*. Dorset, UK: Prism Press, 1994.
Drury, N. *The Elements of Shamanism*. Shaftesbury. Dorset, UK: Element, 1989.
Drury, N. *Homage to Pan: The Life, Art and Sex Magic of Rosaleen Norton*. London: Creation Oneiros, 2009.
Drury, N., ed. *Pathways in Modern Western Magic*. Richmond, CA: Concrescent Press, 2012.
Drury, N. *Stealing Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Modern Western Magic*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
Earle, D. "Dog Days: Participation as Transformation." In *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*, edited by J-G. Goulet & B. G. Miller, 310–320. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.
Easlea, B. *Science and Sexual Oppression: Patriarchy's Confrontation with Women and Nature*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1981.
Eck, D. L. *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. Cambersburg, PA.: Anima Books, 1985.
Edwards, W. H., ed. *Traditional Aboriginal Society: A Reader*. Melbourne: Macmillan, 1987.
Ehn, B., and O. Lofgren. "Emotions in Academia." In *The Emotions: A Cultural Reader*, edited by H. Wulff, 101–17. Oxford: Berg, 2007.
Eliade, M. *Occultism. Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.
Eliade, M. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy.* New York: Pantheon, 1964.
Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1977 [1945].
Ellis, C. "Time Consciousness of Aboriginal Performers." In *Problems and Solutions: Occasional Essays in Musicology*, edited by J. Kassler and J. Stubington, 147–69. Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1984.
Evans, D. *The History of British Magick after Crowley.* London: Hidden, 2007.
Evans-Pritchard, E. E. *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985 [1937].
Ezzy, D., ed. *Practising the Witch's Craft*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2003.
Ezzy, D. "Geographical Ontology: Levinas, Sacred Landscapes and Cities." *The Pomegranate* 6, no. 1 (2004): 19–33.
Farber, P. H. "Introduction to CyberMagick." 1998. http://users.bestweb.net/~kali93/oc98/cyber.htm.
Favret-Saada, J. *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage*. Translated by Catherine Cullen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Fazeldean, M. "Aboriginal and Christian Healing." In *The Gospel Is Not Western: Black Theologies from the Southwest Pacific*, edited by G. W. Trompf, 96–106. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987.

Feld, S. "Sound as a Symbolic System: The Kaluli Drum." In *The Varieties of Sensory Experience*, edited by D. Howes, 79–99. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1991.

Fell-Smith, C. *John Dee*. Lake Worth, FL: Nicolas-Hays, 2004

Fenn, R. K. "Editorial Commentary: Religion and the Secular, the Sacred and the Profane: The Scope of the Argument." In *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion*, edited by R. K. Fenn. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001.

Ferguson, J. *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Mysticism and the Mystery Religions*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1976.

Ferrer, J. and J. H. Sherman, eds. *The Participatory Turn: Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008.

Finke, R. A., "Levels of Equivalence in Imagery and Perception." *Psychological Review* 87 (1980): 113–32.

Fisdel, S. A. *The Practice of Kabbalah: Meditation in Judaism*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1996.

Flowers, S. E. *Lords of the Left-Hand Path: Forbidden Practices and Spiritual Heresies*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2012.

Fortune, D. *Applied Magic*. London: Aquarian Press, 1962.

Foucault, M. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*. Brighton, UK: Harvester Press, 1980.

"FPD." "The Old Religion." In *The New Dimensions Red Book*, edited by B. Wilby, 47–83. Cheltenham, UK: Helios, 1965.

Frater Osiris. *On the Mass of the Phoenix: An Analysis*. 2003. http://www.hermetic.com/osiris.

Frater Osiris. "Analysis of Liber XXXVI, *The Star Sapphire*." Seattle, 2004, http://www.hermetic.com/osiris.

Frazer, J. G. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, abridged ed. London: Macmillan, 1922. Republished 1996, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Friedson, S. M. *Dancing Prophets: Musical Experience in Tumbuka Healing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1996.

Fuller, J. O. *The Magical Dilemma of Victor Neuburg*. London: Allen, 1965.

Galloway, B., ed. *Fantasy and Wargaming*. Cambridge: Stephens, 1983.

Gebhart-Sayer, A. "The Geometric Designs of the Shipibo-Conibo in Ritual Context." *Journal of Latin American Lore* 11, no. 2 (1985): 143–75.

Gilbert, R. A. *The Sorcerer and His Apprentice*. Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983.

Ginsburg, C. *Kabbalah: Its Doctrines, Development and Literature*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956.

Ginzburg, Carlo. *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*. London: Hutchinson Radius, 1990.

Godwin, J., C. Chanel, and J. P. Deveney. *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor*. York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1995.

Goulet, J.-G. A., and B. G. Miller, eds. *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.
Grant, K., "Austin Osman Spare." *Man, Myth and Magic*, vol. 1. London: Marshall-Cavendish, 1970
Grant, K. *Cults of the Shadow*. London: Muller, 1975.
Grant, K. *The Magical Revival*. London: Muller, 1972.
Grant, K. *Nightside of Eden*. London: Muller, 1977.
Grant, K. and S. *Zos. Speaks!: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*. London: Fulgur, 1998.
Grant, R. M., ed. *Gnosticism: An Anthology*. London: Collins, 1961.
Green, D. "Technoshamanism: Cyber-Sorcery and Schizophrenia," http://www.cesnur.org/conferences/cesnur2001.htm.
Greenwood, S. *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*. Oxford: Berg, 2000.
Grieve, G. P. "Imagining a Virtual Religious Community: Neo-Pagans on the Internet." *Chicago Anthropology Exchange* 7 (1995). http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/G_Grieve_Imagining_1995.pdf.
Grindal, B. T. "Into the Heart of Sisala Experience: Witnessing Death Divination." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 39, no. 1 (1983): 60–80.
Gruenwald, I. *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1980
Guédon, M. F. "Dene Ways and the Ethnographer's Culture." In *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters: The Anthropology of Extraordinary Experience*, edited by D. Young and J.-G. Goulet, 39–70. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.
Guiley, R. E. *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*. New York: Facts on File, 1989.
Habel, N. 2009. *An Inconvenient Text: Is a Green Reading of the Bible Possible?* Hindmarsh, South Australia: Australian Theological Press, 2009.
Haining, P., ed. *The Witchcraft Papers*. London: Hale, 1974.
Halifax, J. *Shaman: The Wounded Healer*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1982.
Hallowell, A. I. "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World view." In *Teachings from the American Earth*, ed. D. Tedlock and B. Tedlock. New York: Liveright, 1975.
Harner, M. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980.
Harner, M., and G. Doore. "The Ancient Wisdom in Shamanic Cultures." In *Shamanism*, edited by S. Nicholson, 3–16. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books/Theosophical, 1987.
Harper, G. M. *Yeats's Golden Dawn*. London: Macmillan, 1974.
Harvey, G. "Discworld and Otherworld: The Imaginative Use of Fantasy Literature among Pagans." In *Popular Spiritualities: the Politics of Contemporary Enchantment*. edited by L. Hume and K. McPhillips. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006, 41–52.
Harvey, G. *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. London: Hurst, 2005.
Harvey, G., ed. *Indigenous Religions: A Companion*. London: Continuum, 1999.
Harvey, G. *Listening People, Speaking Earth*. Kent Town, S.A.: Wakefield Press, 1997.
Harvey, G., and C. Hardman, eds. *Pagan Pathways: A Guide to the Ancient Earth Traditions*. London: Thorsons, 2000.

Harvey, T. S. "Humbling, Frightening, and Exalting: An Experiential Acquaintance with Maya Healing." In *Anthropology and Humanism*, 31 (1), 2006: 1–10.

Harvey, Y. K. *Six Korean Women: The Socialization of Shamans*. St. Paul, MN: West, 1979.

Heckenberger, M. "The Wars Within: Xinguano Witchcraft and Balance of Power." In *In Darkness and Secrecy: The Anthropology of Assault Sorcery and Witchcraft in Amazonia*, edited by N. L. Whitehead and R. Wright, 179–201. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.

Helminski, K. "The Gate of Secrets." http://www.sufism.org/society/sema2.html.

Hillman, L., and J. F. Salter, "Environmental Management: American Indian Knowledge and the Problem of Sustainability," *Forest, Trees and People* 34 (1997): 25.

Holler, C. *Black Elk's Religion: The Sun Dance and Lakota Catholicism*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995.

Holmyard, E. J. *Alchemy*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1957.

Hoppăl, M. "Shamanism: An Archaic and/or Recent Belief System." In *Shamanism*, edited by S. Nicholson, 76–100. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books/Theosophical, 1987.

Howes, D., ed. *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*. Oxford: Berg, 2005.

Howes, D., ed. *The Sixth Sense Reader*. Oxford: Berg, 2009.

Howitt, A. W. *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*. Canberra, Australia: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1996.

Hultkrantz, Ă. "Introductory Remarks on the Study of Shamanism." *Shamanism: An International Journal for Shamanistic Research* 1, no. 1 (1993): 9–10.

Hume, L. "Creation and Innovation in Australian Paganism." *Australian Religion Studies Review* 20, no. 1 (2007): 45–58.

Hume, L. *Portals: Opening Doorways to Other Realities through the Senses*. Oxford: Berg, 2007.

Hume, L. *Ancestral Power: The Dreaming, Consciousness and Aboriginal Australians*. Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 2002.

Hume, L. *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*. Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1997.

Hume, L., and K. McPhillips, eds. *Popular Spiritualities: The Politics of Contemporary Enchantment*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006.

Husserl, E. *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1972 [1913].

Hutton, R. *Shamans: Siberian Spirituality and the Western Imagination*. London: Hambledon Continuum, 2001.

Hutton, R. *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Huxley, A. *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1971 [1954].

Idel, M. *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988.

Isherwood, C. *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965.
Jackson, M. *Paths toward a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
James, W. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Harmondsworth, UK: Viking Penguin, 1982 [1902].
Jones, P. "Pagan Theologies." In *Pagan Pathways: A Guide to the Ancient Earth Traditions*, edited by G. Harvey and C. Hardman, 32–46. London: Thorsons, 2000.
Jung, C. G. *The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959.
Jung, C. G. *Man and His Symbols*. New York: Dell, 1968.
Jung, C. G. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. New York: Vintage, 1989.
Jung, C. G. *Psychology of the Unconscious*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1919.
Jung, C. G. *Symbols of Transformation*. Princeton, NJ: Bollingen Foundation/ Princeton University Press, 1956.
Kaczynski, R. *Perdurabo: The Life of Aleister Crowley*, Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2010.
Kaplan, A. *Jewish Meditation: a Practical Guide*. New York: Schocken, 1985.
Kaplan, A. *Meditation and Kabbalah*. York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1982.
Karr, D. "The Study of Solomonic Magic in English." http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Solomon/index.php.
Katz, R. *Boiling Energy: Community Healing among the Kalahari Kung*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
Kendall, L. *The Life and Hard Times of a Korean Shaman*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1988.
Kieckhefer, R. *Magic in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 [1989].
King, F., ed. *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*. London: Spearman, 1971.
King, F. *Ritual Magic in England*. London: Spearman, 1970.
King, F., ed. *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O*. London: Daniel, 1973.
King, U. *The Search for Spirituality: Our Global Quest for a Spiritual Life*. New York: Blue Bridge, 2008.
Koenig, P. R., "Correct Gnosticism." http://www.parareligion.ch/correct.htm.
Koenig, P.-R. "Spermo-Gnostics and the O.T.O." http://www.cyberlink.ch/-koenig/spermo.htm.
Kreeft, P. *Summa of the Summa: The Essential Philosophical Passages of St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica*, New York: Ignatius Press, 1990.
Kringelbach, M. L. "Emotion, Feelings and Hedonics in the Human Brain." In *The Emotions: A Cultural Reader*, edited by Helena Wulff, 37–60. Oxford, UK: Berg, 2007.
La Fontaine, J. "Satanism and Satanic Mythology." In *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century*, edited by B. Ankarloo and S. Clark, 81–109. London: Athlone Press, 1999.
Lambert, M. B. *Cathars*. New York: Wiley, 1998.

Laurel, B. "Toward the Design of a Computer-Based Interactive Fantasy System" (PhD diss.), Ohio State University, 1986.
LaVey, A. S. *The Satanic Bible*. New York: Avon, 1969.
Lawrence, P. "*De Rerum Natura*: The Garia View of Sorcery." In *Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia*, edited by M. Stephen, 27–28. Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1987.
Laycock, D. C. *The Complete Enochian Dictionary: A Dictionary of the Angelic Language as Revealed to Dr John Dee and Edward Kelley*. London: Askin, 1978.
Leary, T. "Computers, Consciousness and Creativity: An Interview with Dr Timothy Leary." In *Echoes from the Void*, edited by N. Drury, 168–174. Dorset, UK: Prism Press, 1994.
Lee, R. L. M. & S. E. Ackerman. *The Challenge of Religion after Modernity*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002.
Leland, Charles. *Aradia or the Gospel of the Witches*. Blaine, WA: Phoenix, 1990 [1890].
Lepp, T. "Trees." In *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*, vol. 1, edited by M. N. Walter and E. J. N. Fridman, 263–264. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004.
Letcher, A. "Mad Thoughts on Mushrooms: Discourse and Power in the Study of Psychedelic Consciousness." *Anthropology of Consciousness* 18, no. 2 (2007): 74–97.
Letcher, A. *Shroom: A Cultural History of the Magic Mushroom*. London: Faber and Faber, 2006.
Letcher, A. " 'There's Bulldozers in the Fairy Garden': Re-enchantment Narratives within British Eco-Paganism." In *Popular Spiritualities: The Politics of Contemporary Enchantment*, edited by L. Hume and K. McPhillips, 175–186. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006.
Lévy-Bruhl, L. "A Letter to E.E. Evans-Pritchard," *British Journal of Sociology*, 3, 1952: 117–23.
Lewis, I. M. *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1971.
Lewis, T. *The Medicine Men: Oglala Sioux Ceremony and Healing*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990.
Lewis-Williams, D. *The Mind in the Cave*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1985.
Luhrmann, T. M. *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.
Lyons, A. *The Second Coming: Satanism in America*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1970.
MacLellan, G. "Dancing on the Edge: Shamanism in Modern Britain." In *Paganism Today*, edited by G. Harvey and C. Hardman, 138–148. London: Thorsons, 1995.
MacLellan, G. *Shamanism*. London: Piatkus, 1999.
Mafi-Williams, L., ed. *Spirit Song*. Norwood, South Australia: Omnibus, 1993.
Malinowski, B. *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.
Marshall, K., ed. *Rediscovering the Muses: Women's Musical Traditions*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993.

Mathers, S. L. M., ed. *Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon. The Book of Evil Spirits*. Boston: Weiser, 1995 [1904].
Mathers, S. L. M., ed. *The Greater Key of Solomon*. Chicago: De Laurence, 1914.
Matt, D. C. *The Essential Kabbalah*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.
Matthews, C. and J. *The Western Way*. London: Arkana, 1994.
McCall, A. *The Medieval Underworld*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979.
McConnel, U. *Myths of the Munkan*. Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1957.
McGuire, W., and R. F. C. Hull, eds. *C. G. Jung Speaking*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1978.
McIntosh, A. "The Gal-Gael Peoples of Scotland: On Tradition Re-bearing, Recovery of Place and Making Identity Anew." In *Nature Religion Today: Paganism in the Modern World*, edited by J. Pearson, R. H. Roberts, and G. Samuel, 180–202. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.
McKenna, T. *The Archaic Revival*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991.
Melton, J. G. *The Origins of Modern Sex Magick*. Evanston, IL: Institute for the Study of American Religion, 1985.
Merchant, C. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980.
Merkur, D. "Stages of Ascension in Hermetic Rebirth." *Esoterica* 1 (1999): 67–84.
Miller, T. R. "Mannequins and Spirits: Representations and Resistance of Siberian Shamans." *Anthropology of Consciousness*, 10, no. 4 (1999): 69–80.
Morris, H. 1997. "Homewaters of the Mind." In *The Road Within*, edited by S. O'Reilly, J. O'Reilly, and T. O'Reilly, 144–49. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly and Associates.
Mowaljarlai, D., and J. Malnic. *Yorro Yorro: Everything Standing Up Alive: Spirit of the Kimberley*. Broome, Western Australia: Magabala Books, 1993.
Munn, N. "Totemic Designs and Group Continuity in Walbiri Cosmology." In *Aborigines Now*, edited by M. Reay, 1–20. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1964.
Napier, A. D. *Foreign Bodies: Performance, Art, and Symbolic Anthropology*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
Netton, I. R. *Sufi Ritual: The Parallel Universe*. Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 2000.
Noll, R. "The Presence of Spirits in Magic and Madness." In *Shamanism*, edited by S. Nicholson, 47–61. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books/Theosophical, 1987.
Norbu, C. N. *Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2002.
North, R., "Introduction." In *Sexual Magic*, P. B. Randolph, New York: Magickal Childe, 1988.
Norton, R. "She Hates Figleaf Morality." *People*, Sydney, March 29, 1950.
Norton, R. *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. Sydney: Walter Glover, 1952.
O'Grady, J. *Heresy*. Dorset, UK: Element, 1985.
O'Reilly, S., J. O'Reilly, and T. O'Reilly, eds. *The Road Within*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly and Associates, 2002.

Pachter, H. M. *Paracelsus: Magic into Science*. New York: Collier, 1961.
Pagels, E. *The Gnostic Gospels*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979.
Paracelsus. *The Archidoxes of Magic*. London: Askin, [1656] 1975.
Partridge, C. "Sacred Chemicals: Psychedelic Drugs and Mystical Experience." In *Mysticisms East and West: Studies in Mystical Experience*, edited by C. Partridge and T. Gabriel, pp. 96–131. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2003.
Patai, R. *The Hebrew Goddess*. 3rd ed. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990.
Payne, H. "The Presence of the Possessed: A Parameter in the Performance Practice of the Music of Australian Aboriginal Women." In *Rediscovering the Muses: Women's Musical Traditions*, edited by K. Marshall, 1–20. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993.
Pearson, J., R. H. Roberts, and G. Samuel, eds. *Nature Religion Today: Paganism in the Modern World*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.
Peterson, J., ed. *The Lesser Key of Solomon: Detailing the Ceremonial Art of Commanding Spirits Both Good and Evil*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 2001.
Pinchbeck, D. *Breaking Open the Head: A Psychedelic Journey into the Heart of Contemporary Shamanism*. New York: Broadway Books, 2002.
Prattis, I. J. *Anthropology at the Edge: Essays on Culture, Symbol, and Consciousness*. New York: University Press of America, 1997.
Randolph, P. B. *Eulis!* Toledo, OH: self-published, 1873.
Randolph, P. B. *Sexual Magic*, New York: Magickal Childe, 1988 [1931]. http://www.supoervirtual.com.br.
Rasmussen, K. *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*. Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921–24, vol. 7, no. 1. Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1929.
Reader, A. L., III. "The Internal Mystery Plays: The Role and Physiology of the Visual System in Contemplative Practices." *Alternative Therapies* 1, no. 4 (1995): 54–63. Reprinted from *ReVision* 17 (Summer 1994).
Reay, M., ed. *Aborigines Now*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1964.
Redgrove, H. S. *Alchemy: Ancient and Modern*. London: Rider, 1922.
Reeder, S. "Children of the Digital Gods." *Green Egg*, 29, no. 129 (August–September 1997): 15.
Regardie, I. *Ceremonial Magic: A Guide to the Mechanisms of Ritual*. Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1980.
Regardie, I. *Foundations of Practical Magic*. Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1979.
Regardie, I., ed. *The Golden Dawn*. 4 vols. Chicago: Aries Press, 1937–40.
Regardie, I. *The Middle Pillar*. Chicago: Aries Press, 1945.
Regardie, I. *The Tree of Life: A Study in Magic*. London: Rider, 1932.
Reichel-Dolmatoff, G. "Brain and Mind in Desana Shamanism." *Journal of Latin American Lore* 7 (1981): 73–98.
Rhadon, A. "Sex, Religion and Magick: A Concise Overview." 2004, http://www.baymoon.com.
Riboli, D. "Transformation." In *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*, vol. 1, edited by M. N. Walter and E. J. N. Fridman, 255–59. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004.

Richardson, A. *Priestess: The Life and Magic of Dion Fortune*. Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1987.

Robbins, R. H. *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*. New York: Crown, 1959.

Robinson, G. "Living in Sheds: Suicide, Friendship, and Research among the Tiwi." In *Anthropologists in the Field*, edited by L. Hume and J. Mulcock, 153–67. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Robinson, James M., ed. "Introduction." *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977.

Rose, D. B. *Nourishing Terrains*. Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission, 1996.

Rose, D. B. "Consciousness and Responsibility in an Australian Aboriginal Religion." In *Traditional Aboriginal Society: A Reader*, edited by W. H. Edwards, 257–69. South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1987.

Roth, P. A. *Meaning and Method in the Social Sciences: A Case for Methodological Pluralism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Roth, W. E. *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines*. Brisbane, Australia: State Government Printer, 1897.

Rushkoff, D. *Cyberia: Life in the Trenches of Hyperspace*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1964.

Russell, J. B. *A History of Witchcraft*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1982.

Russell, J. B. *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972.

Santos-Granero, F. "The Enemy Within: Child Sorcery, Revolution, and the Evils of Modernization in Eastern Peru." In *In Darkness and Secrecy: The Anthropology of Assault Sorcery and Witchcraft in Amazonia*, edited by N. L. Whitehead and R. Wright, 272–303. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.

Saunders, N., A. Saunders, and M. Pauli. *In Search of the Ultimate High: Spiritual Experience through Psychoactives*. London: Rider, 2000.

Scherberger, L. "The Janus-Faced Shaman: The Role of Laughter in Sickness and Healing among the Makushi." *Anthropology and Humanism*, 30 (1), 2005: 55–69.

Schechner, R., and W. Appel, eds. *By Means of Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Schneider, M. *Culture and Enchantment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Scholem, G. G. *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition*. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1960.

Scholem, G. G. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. New York: Schocken, 1961.

Scholem, G. G. *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*. New York: Schocken, 1991

Scholem, G. G. *Origins of the Kabbalah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Schreck, Z. and N., "Anton LaVey: Legend and Reality." http://satanism central.com/aslv.html.

Schroll, M. "The Future of a Discipline: Considering the Ontological/ Methodological Future of the Anthropology of Consciousness, Part I:

Toward a New Kind of Science and Its Methods of Inquiry." *Anthropology of Consciousness* 21, no. 1 (2010): 1–29.

Searles, E. "Prophecy, Sorcery, and Reincarnation: Inuit Spirituality in the Age of Skepticism." In *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*, edited by J.-G. Goulet and B. Granville, 158–82. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.

Seligmann, K. *Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion*. New York: Pantheon, 1971.

Semple, G. W. "A Few Leaves from the Devil's Picture Book." in A. O. Spare, *Two Tracts on Cartomancy*. London: Fulgur, 1997.

Semple, G. W. *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*. London: Fulgur, 1995.

Shah, I. *The Secret Lore of Magic*. London: Abacus, 1972 [1957].

Shanon, B. *The Antipodes of the Mind: Charting the Phenomenology of the Ayahuasca Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Sherwin, R. "Chaos Magick." http://www.chaosmatrix.org/library/chaos/texts/sher2.html.

Shulgin, Alexander, and Ann Shulgin. *Pihkal: A Chemical Love Story*. Berkeley, CA: Transform Press, 1995.

Shumaker, W. *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

Siikala, A. *The Rite-Technique of the Siberian Shaman*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1978.

Spare, A. O. *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*. London: self-published, 1913.

Spare, A. O. "Mind to Mind and How." In *Two Tracts on Cartomancy*. London: Fulgur, 1997.

St. John, G. "Reclaiming the Future at Goolengook: Going Feral and Becoming Native in Australia." In *Popular Spiritualities: The Politics of Contemporary Enchantment*, edited by L. Hume and K. McPhillips, 187–99. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006.

Stanner, W. E. H. "Some Aspects of Aboriginal Religion." In *Religious Business*, edited by M. Charlesworth, 1–23. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 [1976].

Stanner, W. E. H. *White Man Got No Dreaming: Essays 1938–1973*, 20th anniversary ed. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1999 [1979].

Stavish, M. "The Body of Light in the Western Esoteric Tradition." http://www.hermetic.com/stavish/essays/bodylight.html.

Starhawk. *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1979.

Sullivan, L.E., ed. *Enchanting Powers: music in the world's religions*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Stephen, M. *A'aisa's Gifts: A Study of Magic and the Self*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Stephen, M. "Master of Souls: The Mekeo Sorcerer." In *Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia*, edited by M. Stephen, 41–80. Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1987.

Stoddart, A. M. *The Life of Paracelsus*. London: Rider, 1915.

Stoller, P. *The Power of the Between: An Anthropological Odyssey*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Stoller, P., and C. Olkes. *In Sorcery's Shadow*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Stone, J. "Clothing the Body in Otherness." In *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*, edited by Jean-Guy A. Goulet and Bruce Granville Miller, 283–309. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.

Stowe, D. W. *How Sweet the Sounds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Strassman, R. *DMT: The Spirit Molecule*. Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 2001.

Sullivan, L. E., ed. *Hidden Truths: Magic, Alchemy and the Occult*. New York: Macmillan, 1989.

Sutcliffe, R. "Left-Hand Path Ritual Magick." In *Pagan Pathways: A Guide to the Ancient Earth Traditions*, edited by G. Harvey and C. Hardman, 109–137. London: Thorsons, 2000.

Sutin, L. *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*. New York: St Martin's Press, 2000.

Swan, J. "Rolling Thunder at Work: A Shamanic Healing of Multiple Sclerosis." In *Shamanism*, edited by S. Nicholson, 145–57. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books/Theosophical, 1987.

Symonds, J. *The Great Beast: The Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley*. London: Mayflower, 1973.

Symonds, J., and K. Grant, eds. *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1970.

Symonds, J., and K. Grant, eds. *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*. London: Duckworth, 1972.

Szonyi, G. E. *John Dee's Occultism: Magical Exaltation through Powerful Signs*. Albany: State University Press of New York, 2005.

Tacey, D. *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia*. Melbourne: Harper Collins, 1995.

Tart, C. "Discrete States of Consciousness," in *Symposium on Consciousness*, edited by R. Lee, D. Galin, A. Deikman, and C. Tart. New York: Penguin Books, 1976.

Taylor, B. *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

Tedlock, D., and B. Tedlock, eds. *Teachings from the American Earth*. New York: Liveright, 1975.

Terrill, R. *The Australians: In Search of an Identity*. London: Bantam, 1987.

Thomson, D. "The Concept of 'Marr' in Arnhem Land." *Mankind* 10, no. 1 (1975): 1–10.

Tindale, N. B. "Native Songs of South-East Australia." *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia* 61 (1937): 107–120.

Tourigny, Sylvie C. " 'Yo, Bitch . . .' and Other Challenges: Bringing High-Risk Ethnography into the Discourse." In *Anthropologists in the Field*, edited by L. Hume and J. Mulcock, 116–126. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Tramacchi, D. "Entheogens, Elves and Other Entities: Encountering the Spirits of Shamanic Plants and Substances." In *Popular Spiritualities*,

edited by L. Hume and K. McPhillips, 91–104. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006.

Trompf, G. W., ed. *The Gospel Is Not Western: Black Theologies from the Southwest Pacific*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987.

Turnbull, C. "Liminality: A Synthesis of Subjective and Objective Experience." In *By Means of Performance*, edited by R. Schechner and W. Appel, 50–81. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Turner, D. *Afterlife Before Genesis*. New York: Peter Land, 1997.

Turner, E. "Advances in the Study of Spirit Experience: Drawing Together Many Threads." *Anthropology of Consciousness* 17, no. 2 (2006): 33–61.

Turner, E. *Experiencing Ritual: A New Interpretation of African Healing*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.

Turner, E. *The Hands Feel It: Healing and Spirit Presence among a Northern Alaskan People*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996.

Turner, E. "A Visible Spirit Form in Zambia." In *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters*, edited by D. Young and J.-G. Goulet, 71–95. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1994.

Turner, V. *The Anthropology of Performance*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Turner, V. *From Ritual to Theatre: the human seriousness of play*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982.

Unterman, A., ed. *The Kabbalistic Tradition*. London: Penguin, 2008.

Urban, H. *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Urban, H. "Magia Sexualis: Sex, Secrecy and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism." *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 72, no. 3 (2004): 695–731

Valiente, D. *An ABC of Witchcraft, Past and Present*, rev. ed. London: Hale, 1984.

Vitebsky, P. *The Shaman*. London: Baird, 2001.

Waite, A. E. *The Holy Kabbalah*. New York: University Books, 1960.

Wallis-Budge, E. A., ed. *Lefefa Sedek: The Bandlet of Righteousness*. London: Luzac, 1929.

Wallis, R. J. *Shamans and Neo-Shamans: Ecstasy, Alternative Archaeologies and Contemporary Pagans*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Walter, M. N., and E. J. N. Fridman, eds. *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*. 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004.

Watson, C. *Piercing the Ground: Balgo Women's Image-making and Relationship to Country*. Fremantle, Western Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2003.

Webb, D. "The Black Beyond Black." 2004. http://www.xeper.org/australasia.html.

Webb, D. "Modern Black Magic: Initiation, Sorcery and the Temple of Set." in N. Drury (ed.)., *Pathways in Modern Western Magic*. Richmond, CA: Concrescent Press, 2012.

Webb, D. "Seven of the Many Gateways." In *The Ninth Night*, edited by L. D Wild. 1998, 1, 2. http://www.xeper.org.

Webb, D. "Xeper: the Eternal Word of Set." 1999. http://www.xeper.org/pub/tos/xeper2.html.

Webb, V. *Stepping Out with the Sacred*. London: Continuum, 2010.
Weber, M. *The Sociology of Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.
Wells, A. *This Their Dreaming*. St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1971.
Wertheim, M. *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace*. New York: Norton, 1999.
White, I. *Paddy Compass Namadbara: Portrait of a Western Arnhem Land "Clever" Man*¸ unpublished manuscript, cited in Hume, L. *Ancestral Power: The Dreaming, Consciousness, and Aboriginal Australians*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1997.
Whitehead, N. L., and R. Wright, eds. *In Darkness and Secrecy: The Anthropology of Assault Sorcery and Witchcraft in Amazonia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.
Widengren, G. *Mani and Manichaeism*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965.
Wilby, B., ed. *The New Dimensions Red Book*. Cheltenham UK: Helios, 1965.
Wilkes, B. "Reveal or Conceal?" In *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*, edited by Jean-Guy A. Goulet and Bruce Granville Miller, 53–84. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.
Williams, T. "Navigation Systems for the Spirit." *Green Egg* 29, no. 129 (August–September 1997): 39.
Willis, R. *Some spirits heal, others only dance: a journey into human selfhood in an African village*. New York: Berg, 1999.
Wilson, C. *Poetry and Mysticism*. San Francisco: City Lights, 1974.
Yarrow, D. "Sacred Landscapes," in *Practising the Witch's Craft*, edited by D. Ezzy, 189–205. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2003.
Woolley, B. *The Queen's Conjuror: The Science and Magic of Dr Dee*. London: HarperCollins, 2001.
Yates, F. *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.
Young, D., and J.-G. Goulet, eds. *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters: The Anthropology of Extraordinary Experience*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.
Yronwode, C. "Paschal Beverly Randolph and the Ansairetic Mysteries." http://www.luckymojo.com/tkpbrandolph.html.
Zaleski, C. *Otherworld Journeys*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
Zusne, L. & W. Jones. *Anomalistic Psychology: A Study of Magical Thinking*. London: Psychology Press, 1989.

# Index

## About the Authors

LYNNE HUME, PhD, is an anthropologist and Associate Professor in Studies in Religion at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. She has researched and published on Australian indigenous culture, contemporary Paganism, new religious movements, altered states of consciousness, and sensorial anthropology. Her most recent books include *Portals: Opening Doorways to Other Realities through the Senses* (2007); *Anthropologists in the Field: Cases in Participant Observation* (with Jane Mulcock) (2004) and *Ancestral Power: The Dreaming, Consciousness and Aboriginal Australians* (2002).

NEVILL DRURY, PhD, is an independent historical researcher whose specialist interests include contemporary Western magic, shamanism, transpersonal psychology and visionary art. His most recent publications include *Dark Spirits: The Magical Art of Rosaleen Norton and Austin Osman Spare (2012); Stealing Fire from Heaven: the Rise of Modern Western Magic* (2011); *Homage to Pan* (2009), *The Dictionary of Magic* (2005) and *The New Age: the History of a Movement* (2004). He also edited the multi-authored volume *Pathways in Modern Western Magic* (2012).