MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown

MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

VOLUME 5

Dion-Egg

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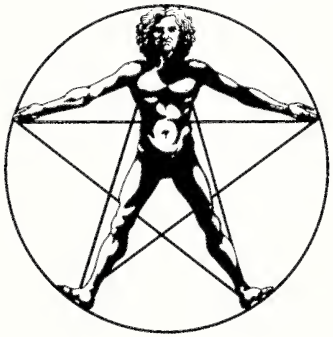

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown

MARSHALL CAVENDISH
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Frontispiece: Many superstitions attach to mirror reflections, which have been regarded as the visible double of the human soul: *La réproduction interdite* by Magritte. (Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge)

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DIONYSUS

Beneath the wild, savage rites of Dionysus lies the recognition of man's need for occasional release from the bonds of law and order. To resist Dionysus is to reject joy – and to incur terrible consequences

THE THIRTEENTH GOD of the Greeks, Dionysus was a son of Zeus, according to Hesiod, although his paternity has been disputed. He was a stranger in Hellas, coming from wild uplands, mystic, the object of both frenzied devotion and hostility. After many wanderings and much trouble, he came to sit at the High Table of Olympus as one of the great gods, taking the place surrendered to him by Hestia, the goddess of hearth and housework. This bare account contains nearly all the clues we need for as much understanding as we are ever likely to achieve, rationally, of the mythology and cult of Dionysus, the god of far more than wine.

The difficulty in writing about Dionysus is not that he is distant but that he is so close: indeed, he is always with us. But he is often denied and, when this happens, he wreaks a terrible vengeance. He is the god of the wilds – not the wilds of visible nature where Artemis reigns, but the wilds that extend so far and smile so deep in the secret regions of the human personality. He is the god of the irresistible but often resisted urge to 'let oneself go', to throw off the trammels of custom and respectability, to abandon, indeed, the Greek ideal of moderation in all things. He represents a permanent human force and yet a force that every age and culture seeks, if not to suppress, to channel and contain. Every age will reinterpret him according to its own attitudes and beliefs, its own restraints and permitted releases. This is no bad thing, so long as we are aware of it: it makes us (because he is so strange and fascinating, so known and yet so unknown) think about him more deeply than about Ares or Hera, or perhaps even Zeus or Athene. We can learn more about ourselves from Dionysus and how his cult revealed him than we can from any other Greek deity – except Apollo, the god of order and reason, with whom Dionysus is curiously and significantly linked.

Born from the Thigh

The mythological stories told of Dionysus's birth and his adventurous progresses through the lands of men will of themselves lead us on to the nature of his cult and the historical background of its introduction and acceptance in classical Greece. In origin, Dionysus is no Greek. He plays, for instance, no partisan role in Homer's account of the Trojan War – not even on the side of the Asiatic Trojans. He figures only occasionally, in passing. Homer had heard of his wild rites but clearly knew little about him. Dionysus hails, in fact, from Phrygia and later moves to Thrace, the wild tracts on either side of the Hellespont. His mother, Semele, is associated with the Phrygian earth goddess Zemelo. The Greek mythologists, however, make Semele a mortal, the daughter of Cadmus, King of Thebes – that doom-laden site of so many products of the Greek imagination.

Semele, needless to say, was beautiful and attracted the attention of the ever-amorous Zeus, the father of the gods. Hera's jealousy, ever fertile of new ways to thwart Zeus, caused her to visit Semele in the guise of an old woman and suggest to the naive girl that she ask her divine lover to appear to her in his full immortal splendour – not least to impress her sisters Agave, Ino and Antonoe. Zeus, who had promised Semele any favour she might ask, reluctantly consented – whereupon Semele was annihilated by his lightning and thunderbolts. Her unborn son was rescued by Zeus and shut away by him in his own thigh, whence in due time he was born.

But Hera was not to be deceived and on her orders Dionysus was seized by the Titans, who tore him limb from limb and began to cook him up for a meal. Having been restored to life by Rhea (his earth goddess grandmother), he was finally hidden, disguised as a girl, in the household of Athamas, King of Orchomenus in Greece. But Hera made the king demented and he killed his son Learchus, thinking he was hunting a stag. Dionysus was next fostered by nymphs on Mt Nysa where, some say, he invented wine. Grown to manhood, he was himself driven mad by Hera and went wandering about the world, accompanied by Silenus, his tutor, and a rout of satyrs and wild women – the maenads or bacchantes – his former nymph nurses and others.

Strange tales are told of these followers and of their extraordinary powers. They caused fountains of milk and wine to spring from the earth; fire could do them no harm – they often carried it in their hands or on their heads; weapons left them unscathed; they had the strength to tear apart live bulls and other fierce beasts, the women no less than the men – yet the women showed great tenderness to young animals and suckled them at their own breasts. Armed with the *thyrsos*, an ivy-twined staff tipped with a pine cone, brandishing swords and enwreathed with serpents, they followed the god as far as India and then retraced their steps to Greece.

As he went, the god founded cities, so it is said, taught laws and the culture of the vine and engaged in battles. But if he was victorious in the latter, he frequently met with opposition from stubborn folk who denied his divinity. These paid dearly for their blindness. Lycurgus, for instance, King of Thrace, was driven mad, killed his son Dryas with an axe thinking he was cutting down a vine, and mutilated his corpse. Thrace was smitten with a great drought. Dionysus, who had taken refuge from Lycurgus's persecution at the bottom of the sea, reappeared and said relief would come only with the death of the king. Whereupon his subjects tied Lycurgus to wild horses

Hirmer Verlag

Left **Dionysus was credited with discovering grapes and inventing the art of wine-making: scene on the inside of a shallow Greek bowl dated about 535 BC, showing the god bringing the vine across the seas to Greece**

and tore him apart. In Argos and Boeotia, both provinces of Greece, there was similar hostility to the god with similar results: the women went berserk and ripped their children to pieces.

The most famous account of the denial of the godhead of Dionysus and the frightful consequences was set in Thebes. The story is told in one of the most memorable of Greek tragedies, *The Bacchae* of Euripides (c487-407 BC). Dionysus, accompanied by his followers, came to the city, the place of his birth, and was angered to find that Agave and his mother's other sisters denied his divinity and that he was the son of Zeus; but old Cadmus and the blind seer Tiresias recognized him. Dionysus therefore sent a madness upon his aunts and the rest of the Theban women, who abandoned their household chores and went raving upon Mt Cithaeron. Pentheus, son of Agave and now King of Thebes, a pillar of unimaginative authority and male supremacy, was outraged and tried to arrest Dionysus and his maenads, but they walked out of prison completely unharmed.

Meanwhile the women are out on a high mountain, at this stage in a comely trance, like flower-children of antiquity. But set upon by herdsmen, they go into a frenzy, tear the Theban cattle limb from limb, eat the flesh raw, plunder the neighbouring villages and steal the children. Nothing can avail against them. Then Pentheus begins himself to fall under the spell of Dionysus, who so far in the play has appeared as a mortal. He is persuaded to go and watch the women, hidden in a pine tree and disguised as a woman. But the possessed women discover him, uproot the tree and dismember him alive. Agave, his mother, wrenches off his head, believing she has slaughtered a lion cub with her bare hands. The women return in ecstasy to the city but Cadmus manages to bring them back to their senses. As Agave and the others realise the full horror of what they have done and stumble off into hopeless exile, Dionysus reveals himself as the god.

Sonia Halliday

Although drinking wine was in fact only one of the means through which the worshippers of Dionysus attempted to achieve union with him, he is traditionally depicted in art as the god of wine and revelry ***Above*** **Drunken Dionysus, a mosaic from Antioch, Turkey**
Dionysus was also the god of the whole of 'moist nature' – sap and blood and sperm ***Facing page*** **The whipping of a young girl, an initiate into the Dionysian mysteries: mural in the Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii, apparently a centre for the worship of Dionysus**

A Wild and Frenzied Joy

By the account so far, Dionysus might well seem a bestial character and his deeds even more horrific than most of the cruel doings of the ancient Greek divinities. But the point is this: horrors occur when Dionysus is denied. If you surrender to him you will have joy – a wild and frenzied joy but not a joy destructive in itself; but if you resist, the joy becomes a foul and frenzied horror, a punishment for the refusal of joy.

The stories illustrate this point, particularly the *Bacchae*, in which one of the most striking elements is the contrast between the accounts of the women on Cithaeron. In the first, when they are left alone in communion with the god, all is peaceful and idyllic, in the second, after they have been startled by the herdsmen and think they are being hunted, they erupt into bloody madness; and in the third, when they discover Pentheus in their midst, there is a climax of unspeakable fearfulness.

The stories also reflect something unique in Greek religion and mythology: the historical fact of the introduction, by groups of foreign missionaries, of what was to all intents and purposes a new religion and a new ethos – and of the inevitable resistance they met. The Dionysiac cult is totally different from the mainstream of Greek, Olympian religion. The latter was founded upon the immortality of the gods and the mortality of men and upon the gulf between the two. It was man's duty to reverence the gods, from a distance, and to avoid their anger by decent and orderly behaviour – self-knowledge and no extremes. Dionysus offered the complete opposite. Within a ritual frame, his cult allowed, indeed encouraged, the release of irrational impulses which gave freedom, identification with the god and thereby happiness. He is known as 'Lusios' – the liberator. Moreover his cult is open to all: to young and old, men and women, slaves and freedmen.

It is this which makes Dionysus the god of far more than wine. He is the god, says Plutarch, of the whole of 'moist nature' – sap and blood and sperm – or, in the words of Professor E. R. Dodds, of 'all the mysterious and uncontrollable tides that ebb and flow in the life of nature.' It was the later Greeks and the stolid Romans who looked to a degenerate Dionysus, the tipsy, merry Bacchus and his Saturday-night-out boys and girls: and modern Europe followed them until anthropology and psychology suggested different ideas. For the real devotees of Dionysus, wine was merely one means of union with the god. There were others more potent – above all, the dance.

Dancing Madness

In many societies throughout the world dancing has had a profound religious significance. Everyone knows of savage dances and the states of 'ecstasy' – standing outside oneself – that they induce. Jalaluddin Rumi, the founder of the Mevlevi sect of dervishes noted for their dancing, taught that 'he who knows the power of the dance dwells in God'. There have, throughout the Christian era, been outbreaks of 'dancing madness' in Europe; and their characteristics as described in the records are strikingly similar to those that we read of in Euripides. Even in our own time, the dance has become more of a cult. On the wilder shores of pop music, events may be observed that are strongly reminiscent of a Dionysiac 'orgy'. And be it noted that the word 'orgy' is not used here in its debased common sense. For a Dionysiac, and for many alive today, the 'orgy' is not a drunken revel but a means of seeking, by

dance and music, a communion with something beyond the ordinary, in company with a band of like-minded people.

Apart from dance and music, there is evidence that the behaviour of the *bacchae*, the women inspired to ecstatic frenzy by Dionysus, is not a figment of the possibly warped imagination of an old and disappointed Athenian playwright. In many countries and in any number of modern clinical descriptions, the same elements recur. The tossing back and around of the head and hair, the handling of snakes, insensitivity to pain, the tearing apart and eating raw of animals – all these are characteristic of hysteria and, very often, of hysteria channelled in the practice of religion.

God of Many Joys

He, the nurturer and the god of rapture; he the god who is forever praised as the giver of wine which removes all sorrow and care; he, the deliverer and healer, 'the delight of mortals', 'the god of many joys', the dancer and ecstatic lover, 'the bestower of riches', the 'benefactor' – this god who is the most delightful of all the gods is at the same time the most frightful. No single Greek god even approaches Dionysus in the horror of his epithets, which bear witness to a savagery that is absolutely without mercy. In fact, one must evoke the memory of the monstrous horror of eternal darkness to find anything at all comparable. He is called the 'render of men', 'the eater of raw flesh', 'who delights in the sword and bloodshed'. Correspondingly we hear not only of human sacrifice in his cult but also of the ghastly ritual in which a man is torn to pieces.

W. F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*
(trans. Robert B. Palmer)

In the Dionysiac cult, the rending and devouring of raw flesh is probably based on straightforward magic: you may become god by devouring god in one of his manifestations. This concept is not so far removed from that of the Christian who receives the wafer of consecrated bread during Holy Communion, not to mention that of Scandinavian tribes in the Dark Ages who, it is said, devoured their kings when times were bad in order to spread their royal strength throughout all the members of the band. Maybe the fate of Pentheus reflects this kind of human sacrament, behind the ostensible motive of revenge – an echo of ritual symbolism.

It seems probable that the actual cult of Dionysus was introduced into northern Greece about the beginning of the 7th century BC. Its coming, and its gradual penetration southwards, are likely to have had the twin results of disturbing the settled routine of domestic and religious life, and of provoking violent opposition from the Pentheus figures of the time. About the start of the 6th century the problem may have reached crisis point and it appears to have been resolved in a thoroughly Greek, pragmatic way by incorporating the Dionysiac cult into the existing state cults – rather, to take a tame parallel, as British would-be revolutionaries are sometimes elevated to the House of Lords.

Bacchanalian revel in honour of the god of the wilds of the human personality: painting by Nicholas Poussin in National Gallery, London

Night on a Bare Mountain

This unlikely marriage took place notably at Delphi, the seat of Apollo, the god of law and order. Commenting on this remarkable outcome, Charles Seltman writes (in *The Twelve Olympians*): 'Law could be redeemed from mechanistic rote by the natural human contact of the anarchic god, while licence could be put under control by complying with the god of self-knowledge and moderation. Order could learn about disorder, and disorder about order.' When one compares this solution with the earlier troubles and the sorry Christian history of persecution and sectarianism, one may yet think the Greeks worthy of study and admiration.

Of particular interest is the establishment of Dionysiac religion at Athens. Peisistratus, ruler of Athens in the mid-6th century, founded both the Panathenaic Games and the Great Dionysia. He invited the priest of Dionysus at Eleutherae – a village on the borders of Attica which claimed to be the god's birthplace – to set up his statue at the foot of the Acropolis. The priest was accompanied by a troupe of country players called *tragodoi* (literally, 'goat-singers') who gave performances before the statue in honour of the god. Many people believe that this is the origin of Greek tragedy and thus of Western theatre (see DRAMA). It is interesting that this may at least partly explain why Greek actors wore masks: Dionysus had long been the god of masquerade – the Master of Illusions, as Professor Dodds calls him, capable of transforming himself into many shapes to avoid his enemies. In the Attic countryside, the Dionysia were less subtle and included, we may be sure, a good deal of rural jollification and drunkenness.

But the most extraordinary manifestation of the Dionysiac cult, which lasted until the age of Plutarch in the 2nd century AD, was the joint mountain dancing festival of the women of Athens and Delphi. This was held in midwinter every two years. A group of well-born Athenian women and girls were chosen to walk the 100 miles, barefoot across the mountains to the shrine of Apollo, where they joined their Delphic sisters. After prayers and sacrifices to the god of licence in the precincts of the god of reason they set off at night to scale Mt Parnassus, more than 8,000 feet high. There, on the bitter heights, they held the *oreibasia*, the mountain dancing of Dionysus.

Nobody knows exactly what they did. The remarkable fact is that they did it at all – these cloistered women from upperclass homes upon the serene Attic coast, abandoning themselves in midwinter to the harsh night on the bare mountain. Other parts of Greece held similar rites but nowhere in such dramatic surroundings. Wild they may have been but their timing in midwinter and the exclusion of men point to something very different from the popular idea of an 'orgy'. For these women, the *orgia* were acts of devotion and communion, of release into the unknown, terrifying yet fulfilling.

Michael Holford

Right **'Mr Punch' is depicted as a jovial Dionysian figure surrounded by nymphs and satyrs in this detail from the cover of *Punch* magazine, designed by Richard Doyle and used from 1844 to 1951** ***Below*** **The bacchae and maenads, the women who followed Dionysus on his travels, tore wild beasts apart in frenzy, yet showed great tenderness towards young animals: Dionysus and maenads, scene on a Greek urn of about 540 BC**

John Webb

Other Dionysiac festivals may well have been more 'orgiastic'. In some, men were allowed to take part and these may have been characterized by sexual freedom. But it is well to remember a passage from the *Bacchae*: 'Dionysus compels no woman to be chaste. Chastity is a matter of character and she who is naturally chaste will partake of Bacchic rites without being touched.' As Seltman says, 'Their state of *ecstasis* left the Bacchae free to follow either the instincts or the restraints of nature. No inhibitions stopped the satisfaction of desire; no exhibitionist urge drove them towards promiscuous folly.'

Beyond Good and Evil

The Dionysiac cult recognizes the universal human need to fling off the fetters of habit, if only – willingly – to take them up again and soldier on to cope with the demands of an ordered social life. Dionysus allows us this release, this necessary respite from regime. And in spite of the frenzy, this does not free us from ultimate responsibility. As Professor Dodds observes 'Dionysus is beyond good and evil... he is what we make of him.' The god, in fact, is already within us: we have to seek him and allow him to escape, if we do not wish him to break out—as he did from Pentheus's prison—and drive us mad. In this sense, we are indeed one with Dionysus; and that is why he fascinates us.

CHARLES DE HOGHTON

Hirmer Verlag Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris

FURTHER READING: E. R. Dodd's introduction to *The Bacchae* (Oxford University Press, 1944); see also his *The Greeks and the Irrational* (University of California Press, 1951); W. F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, translated by Robert B. Palmer (Spring Pubns., 1981); Philip Vellacott's translation of *The Bacchae* is in the Penguin Classics series.

Scala

Dioscuri

'Sons of Zeus', the twin heroes Castor and Polydeuces of Greek myths (Castor and Pollux of Roman); they protected sailors, and were believed to have come to the aid of the Roman army at the battle of Lake Regillus, c496 BC; they sailed on the voyage with the Argonauts to fetch the Golden Fleece; they were worshipped in Sparta, where their symbol was two upright pieces of wood joined by two cross-pieces, hence the astrological symbol for Gemini, with which they were associated.

See TWINS.

DIRECTIONS

'I ADJURE THEE, furthermore, by the crown of thorns which was set upon His head, by the blood which flowed from His feet and hands, by the nails with which He was nailed to the Tree of the Cross, by the holy tears which He shed, by all which He suffered willingly through great love for us: by the lungs, the heart, the hair, the inward parts, and all the members of our Saviour Jesus Christ. I conjure thee by the judgement of the living and the dead, by the Gospel words of our Saviour Jesus Christ, by His Saying, by His miracles . . .'

This apparently pious prayer is in fact part of a long incantation in the 16th century *Grimoire of Honorius*, intended to summon up to visible appearance one of the most powerful of all demons, Amaymon, King of the North. The grimoire also provides incantations for summoning the demonic rulers of the other three directions: Egym (south), Baymon (west) and Magoa (east).

The belief that each direction has its ruling demon has a long history in Europe. An early list of them is Oriens (east), Amemon (south), Eltzen (north) and Boul (west). Cecco D'Ascoli, the 14th century astrologer and magician, said that four spirits 'of great virtue' rule the cardinal points. Each of them has 25 legions of spirits under his command. If they are summoned up and given human blood to drink and the flesh of a dead man or a cat to gnaw, they will give trustworthy answers to the magician's questions. Their names are Oriens (east), Amaymon (west), Paymon (north) and Egim (south).

Another magical textbook, the *Lemegeton*, says that the kings of the four quarters 'are not to be called forth except it be upon great occasion, but invoked and commanded to send such, or such a spirit as is under their power and rule'. Several centuries later, the modern magician Macgregor Mathers, commenting on the importance of a properly constructed magic circle, said that without one, to summon up 'such fearful potencies as Amaymon, Egym or Beelzebub' would probably result in the death of the magician on the spot.

In white magic the four directions also have their rulers, the archangels Raphael (east), Michael (south), Gabriel (west) and Uriel (north). The magician appeals to each angel to protect him against evil coming from each direction (see CIRCLE).

Many North American Indian tribes – especially those of the south-west – also link spirits and deities with the directions and with colours. The Pueblos see six main directions: north, yellow; west, blue; east, white; south, red; upwards, usually multicoloured; downwards, black. Animal gods and Nature spirits come into the system, so that Mountain Lion and Oriole (both more or less yellow) are associated with the north. Similarly, the major Aztec god Tezcatlipoca was yellow as ruler of sunrise in the east, blue as lord of the south, red as master of sunset in the west, and black as ruler of evil magic in the north (see AZTECS).

The east, being the direction of sunrise, is symbolically the direction of life and light, and to turn to the east is to turn towards the light, towards spiritual illumination, towards God. This is why the altar in a Christian church is almost always at the east end. Some early churches were built the other way round, following the precedent of Greek and Roman temples which usually faced east so that when the doors were opened the rays of the sun shone on the statue of the god.

By contrast, the west is the direction of death because the sun 'dies' there each evening. In many prehistoric burials the dead face towards the west and in modern Europe people are usually buried with their heads to the west. In Homer the principal entrance to the underworld, where the dead live, is in the far west.

The north, on the whole, has an evil reputation. In the northern hemisphere the sun moves through the sky from east to south to west, and the north is the one sector of the sky through which the life-giving sun does not pass. And if you face eastwards, the sacred direction, the side on which shadows fall is both the north and the left. But alternatively, instead of taking the east as the point of reference, some peoples have looked to the North Star or Pole Star as the fixed point of the heavens, 'the unmoved mover', the First Cause. The Etruscans placed the home of the gods in the north, and when one of their seers was about to speak he would face south, identifying himself with the gods. The Old Old God of the Aztecs lived at the Pole Star, the point on which the whole universe turned.

Robert Estall

Each of the four directions indicated on a church weathervane traditionally has its guardian angel: Raphael (east), Michael (south), Gabriel (west) and Uriel (north)

Evil on the Left

In Europe the left is traditionally the side of evil and the right of good. Black magic is 'the left-hand path' and to move to the left in magic is to attract evil influences. This is probably because the left hand is normally the weaker and the right the stronger, so that right is the side of God and good: hence the word 'right' means not only a direction but also justice, virtue, truth straightness. The left or 'sinister' side belongs to abnormality, evil and the Devil.

Medieval writers found great difficulty in explaining why the gospel is read in church from the left side of the altar and the epistle from the right (from the point of view of the congregation). This seemed extremely peculiar, since the gospel would be expected to take precedence. The real reason was that the gospel had originally been given the place of honour, the right, as seen from the bishop's chair, but this had been forgotten and ingenious explanations were produced. The epistles, it was said, were the apostles' preaching to the Jews, the chosen people of God (the right side of the altar) but they rejected it. So the words of Christ (the gospels) were offered instead to the pagans (the left side).

(See also RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE.)

Novosti Press Agency

DISEASE

Magic and medicine have been inextricably mixed since men first tried to cure disease. Magical methods range from the 'shark repellent' of the Second World War to the Renaissance use of 'mumia', the use of holy relics or the moss from a human skull

MANY ANTHROPOLOGISTS make a sharp distinction between religion and magic. They point out that if a sick man seeks a religious cure he implores or badgers some god, demon or other spiritual creature to restore his health. The outcome then depends on the goodwill of the supernatural being. To achieve a magical cure he only needs to know the ritual formula or possess the appropriate charm. If he applies it correctly the desired result will follow.

Other scholars see religion and magic merely as variants, often interwoven, by which people try to gain their desires in an indifferent or hostile world, and seek to allay their fears or soothe their insecurities. It is certain that insecurity promotes recourse to magic. In our own society actors, sailors and bomber pilots (all members of insecure or dangerous professions) are notoriously addicted to the carrying of 'lucky charms'. This is a practice little fancied by bank clerks, civil servants and others in safe, humdrum jobs although that insecure and neurotic civil servant Samuel Pepys mentions in his *Diary* that he carried a hare's foot against the colic. Natives of some Polynesian atolls have elaborate fishing magic to avert the dangers of the open Pacific but none when they fish the quiet waters of the lagoon.

In primitive societies it is often believed that objects that are similar in shape, colour or smell to the cause or symptoms of an illness will have a curative effect; prehistoric burials have been found in which the body has been sprinkled with red ochre, probably because it was thought to have the life-giving powers of blood. Skeleton, between 30,000 and 40,000 years old, found in Samarkand, Russia

Illness, especially among primitive peoples, produces great insecurity. Hence, there are many magical cures available for treating even quite trivial diseases.

As well as being magically cured, illness may be magically caused and it is illogical to

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The belief that monarchs inherited the magical power to cure scrofula, the King's Evil, by touching was widespread from the 11th to the 18th centuries *Left* Edward the Confessor, the first monarch to show healing powers, curing a leper *Right* Charles II: he is believed to have 'touched' more than 92,000 people *Below* Touch-piece presented by Charles II to prevent a recurrence of the King's Evil

Many of the remedies prescribed in the past can only have been effective psychologically, as magical 'morale boosters' *Facing page* An advertisement for tiger balm (*left*) still on sale in Chinese shops in London *Right* Victorian advertisement for an eye battery: it was claimed that this gadget would do away with 'all the horrible experiences of Leeching, Bleeding and Surgical Operations'

consider the one while ignoring the other. Indeed, magic cures are often inseparable from magic causes. On the Melanesian island of Dobu almost all diseases are believed to be due to spells which are the private property of individuals. Anyone who develops yaws, a horrible tropical infection, believes that he knows who owns the magic to inflict it and that only the possessor of this spell will also own the magic to remove it.

There is a distinction between treatments which can properly be described as magical and those which are rational or empirical but are based on wrong beliefs and misunderstood physiology. Is it magical rite or inefficient pharmacology when the Anglo-Saxon leeches prescribed marsh mallow pounded with lard for gout? Many of our modern cures may seem superstitious magic a hundred years from now. During the 1918 influenza epidemic millions of people were convinced of the near-magical efficacy of a proprietary medicine named *Yadil* in preventing and curing the disease. Its manufacturers were eventually convicted of swindling the public. *Yadil* contained no active drugs and was little more than water dosed with garlic, yet vast numbers of people who took it were as sure of its potency as any Dobuan islander is convinced of the magical power of his neighbour's paralysis spell. In the Second World War servicemen likely to be torpedoed or shot down in the sea were given a product referred to as 'shark repellent'. It now seems certain that it was useless except as a magic morale booster under conditions of desperate insecurity.

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Throughout the world, man's ingenuity has concocted an astonishing number and diversity of cures and preventives when faced with disease. Yet many are basically similar. In *The Golden Bough* Frazer used the term 'Sympathetic Magic' to include what he called 'Homoeopathic Magic' and 'Contagious Magic'. He based this classification on two general principles.

The first is often called the Law of Similarity. Formerly, and even today among people with no scientific training, it was believed that objects or circumstances which bear some similarity in colour, shape, smell or sequence of events must be related to each other. If this is assumed, it becomes reasonable to treat jaundice by bringing the patient into contact with yellow things. The Anglo-Saxons prescribed yellow flowers, in Germany gold rings were used, and the ancient *Atharvaveda* of India (composed in the second millennium BC) contains a charm to take the disease from the patient and transfer it into a yellow wagtail. The Cherokees of America used burr, a plant which sticks to anything, to strengthen the memory. The Hindus filled a silver basin with water, looked at the reflection of t moon in it and then drank the water to cu neuroses – on the theory that such forms 'lunacy' were influenced by the moon.

This Law of Similarity came to be knov in medieval times as the Doctrine of Si natures. Its essential feature, the propos tion that objects are related even by the least significant attributes, led to the beli that 'like cures like', which is the foundati

of homoeopathic medicine (see HOMOEOPATHY). Its roots are very ancient. Neanderthal burials, perhaps 100,000 years old, have been found in which the body was sprinkled with red ochre. This, in homoeopathic magic, was probably thought to embody the life-giving potency of blood. Innumerable variants of this principle could be quoted. In Asia Minor and the Aegean, for example, it was customary to cut off some hair and skin from a dog which had bitten you. The dog licked its own wound, thereby curing yours.

Healing by Proxy

The second of Frazer's principles is the Law of Contagion: cures based on it are called Contagious Magic. It states that things which have once been in contact continue to act on each other even when far apart. Thus, hair or nail parings removed from the body can still be used to influence it for good or ill. When a child of the Thompson Indians of British Columbia lost his teeth, his father would feed them, in raw venison, to a dog. This ensured that the child's new teeth would be as strong as those of the dog. In 1902 a Norwich woman named Matilda Henry trod on a wire nail which pierced her foot. She at once greased and polished the nail, remarking that the wound would then stay clean, like it. Although this practice – clean the weapon that wounds you – can be found in every continent, Matilda Henry was unlucky: she died of tetanus.

An extension of the doctrine that 'like cures like' is the 'cure by proxy'. A typical example occurs in an Indian legend where the leg of a valuable camel is cured by setting fire to that of a stray ass. The treatment of a doll or effigy instead of the patient is another version of the same idea. The converse is practised by some African tribes who magically transfer mumps from a patient to a rat, and in Kashmir bulls are driven through villages to absorb the pestilence of cholera.

Extensions of this kind are common and what began as sound empiricism may end as magical flummery. *Mumia*, from which we get the word 'mummy', is derived from Persian and originally meant 'wax'. Later it was applied to natural bitumen and resin, which were used as salves or wound dressings, and were no doubt often beneficial. Because some of these resins were used in embalming, the word 'mummy' was transferred to the preserved corpse, which then acquired the therapeutic reputation of the wax. *Mumia* had become almost a panacea by Renaissance times. In 1564 Guy de la Fontaine, physician to the King of Navarre, found that the leading Alexandrian purveyor of mumia was faking it from the bodies of slaves, even those who had died of the plague. In the same century, a German physician not only made it out of executed felons but even recommended carefully spiced and prepared flesh cut from the buttocks of a living man . . . a long haul from the original wax ointment!

Magical cures often involve vital essences such as blood or flesh. In 1880 the *Daily Telegraph* reported cases of tomb robbing in Germany to obtain the heart or liver of recently dead maidens or children. They were brewed with herbs and eaten to cure various diseases and to make the cannibal bullet-proof.

The eating of mice to cure whooping cough has survived in England until recent years. This remedy goes back to ancient Egypt where mice were believed to arise by spontaneous generation from the mud of the Nile. Hence they were imbued with the life-giving properties of its flood. The earliest written record of mouse as a child's medicine, dating back to 1500 BC, occurs in the *Berlin Papyrus:* 'Make this child or his mother eat a cooked mouse. Tie the bones round his neck with a seven-knotted string'. In the predynastic cemetery of Naga ed Der in Upper Egypt (c 4000 BC) the remains of mice have been found in children's bodies.

Perhaps the earliest form of this custom is recognizable in Stone Age burials. Many Neolithic skulls have been found in which the operation of trephination has removed a piece of bone from the living skull, perhaps to allow the escape of some demon or evil spirit, perhaps to treat epilepsy. Sometimes *rondelles*, circular discs of bone, were cut out and these have been found pierced with a hole as if to be worn as a magical, life-giving or healing amulet.

In the Egyptian mouse cure we met the use of a seven-knotted string. This illustrates a common element in traditional cures: the use of number magic. Certain numbers, such as 3, 7, 9 and 13, have long been credited with a magical or mystical potency

A Spanish mathematician used certain types of numbers to cure impotence. He wrote them down, ate one himself and plied his girl friend with the other

which can be drawn upon for good or ill by persons cunning in this lore. In the New World 4 was the principal magic number.

Many examples of number magic could be given. Spells often have to be repeated thrice, incantations nine times. In Scotland, as in Sicily, a seventh son (or better still the seventh son of a seventh son) had power to heal ulcers. This, as well as involving number magic, is an example of the hereditary transmission of magical potency. It resembles the power claimed by the French and English monarchs to cure scrofula, a form of tuberculosis which was very common in the past. At this ceremony 'touch pieces', originally of gold, later of silver or copper, were given to prevent the return of the disease.

From the time of Pythagoras, the 6th century Greek mathematician, the mystique of numbers has teased the imagination of philosophers (see also NUMEROLOGY). Medieval Arab mathematicians fell greatly under their spell and numbers were used in many aspects of healing. The Spanish mathematician Al Madshritti used certain types of numbers to cure impotence. He wrote down the numbers, ate one himself and plied his girl friend with the other – a strange aphrodisiac but typical of the mystic and cabalistic attitude towards mathematics. Perhaps the most famous mystic group of numbers is that found in Dürer's engraving *Melancolia* (1514).

16	3	2	13
5	10	11	8
9	6	7	12
4	15	14	1

In this square each horizontal and vertical line adds up to 34, as do the long diagonals, the four figures in each quarter, and other combinations. Moreover, the sums of the squared or cubed figures in many combinations equal each other. This curious discovery was believed to have curative properties and was used to treat many diseases.

British Museum

Prescribing by the Stars

Inevitably, ideas about the cure of disease reflect the philosophical or scientific opinions of their time. This is well seen with astrological theories. When, in the ancient world, it came to be accepted that human affairs were closely influenced or controlled by celestial bodies, it was inevitable that this was reflected in the treatment of disease.

An example occurs in the *Anglo-Saxon Herbal*; a prescription for the *fylle-seocniss* (falling-sickness, or epilepsy) is to eat berries of 'asterion' (an unknown plant) at the time of the waning moon, when the sun is in Virgo. Crinas of Massilia (1st century AD) used astrology with enthusiasm: he made his patients pay punctilious regard to times, seasons and celestial bodies. For tuberculous ulcers Pliny, the Roman writer of the 1st century AD, recommends 'damasonium, which is also called alisma, gathered at the solstice and applied in rainwater to the sore, the leaf being crushed or the root pounded with axle-grease . . .' But caution is needed in assessing calendrical instructions. Some, at least, are rational rather than astrological and indicate the season when the root, flower or berry was botanically most ripe for therapeutic use.

Greek physicians were often negative in their approach to patients: they advise against treating such and such a disease. This becomes intelligible if the physician presupposes that his untreated patients will go to the temple for magic cures by incantation, amulets, prayer and purification. The healing temples of Asclepius were open to all (see HEALING GODS). It was up to the physician and the patient to decide between them whether to seek a medical or a magical

Right **Magical charms to cure or prevent disease or injury are common in societies that exist in an insecure and hostile environment: the inhabitants of Trecastagni on the slopes of Mount Etna in Sicily consecrate models of legs, arms and other parts of the body injured during volcanic eruptions to the saints of the local shrine, in order to ensure protection against future lava flows** ***Left*** **In the Middle Ages a sick person would anxiously watch for supernatural signs or omens indicating his recovery or death: if the mythical caladrius looked at a patient he would recover, but if the bird turned away he was sure to die: illustration from a medieval bestiary**

Axel Poinsot

cure. The philosopher and physician Galen (131-201 AD) says that incantations are useless and outside the activity of physicians. Even Pliny, who from his encyclopedic gatherings is often ridiculed as unduly credulous, has a strong vein of scepticism. He derides the use of an owl's toe to treat fever and asks, 'Why, of all things in the world, was the toe of a horned owl thought of?' For ear complaints he prescribes 'a cricket dug out with its earth and applied. Great efficacy is attributed to this creature ...because it walks backwards, bores into the earth, and chirrups at night. They hunt it with an ant tied to a hair and put it into the cricket's holde...and when the ant has embraced it the cricket is pulled out.' But of some insect remedies he writes: 'Even to hear of these cures makes me feel sick: heaven help us!'

Astrological influences were, of course, potent in causing, as well as curing, illness. The Anglo-Saxon chronicles record the arrival of comets which were thought to bring pestilence.

The dominant doctrine of health and disease throughout the Middle Ages was the Humoral Theory, or Doctrine of the Four Elements. Its first complete enunciation, apparently, was by Pythagoras, and through Aristotle (384-322 BC) it exerted an immense influence on later thought. It stated that everything was composed of four simple elements: earth, air, fire and water. These were the basis of the four 'qualities' moist, dry, hot and cold, and the four 'temperaments', melancholic, sanguine, bilious and phlegmatic. It was a sterile doctrine, overdue for replacement when the Renaissance dawned. It held, broadly speaking, that diseases were due to a *dyscrasia* or imbalance of these elements, and cure lay in redressing the balance. Thus 'hot' diseases need 'cold' remedies. Theoretically this can be described as no more than mistaken physiology. In practice it led to some outlandishly fanciful treatments, which at least verge on the magical.

The Worm in the Bud

Over vast areas of the world we meet the concept that disease is caused by a magical creature invading the body or implanting noxious missiles in it. It may be the 'worm' of Anglo-Saxon leechcraft, the gnawing snake of Bantu belief, or a wide range of indwelling spirits or devils.

In these cases cure may be sought by charms and incantations to lure forth the intruder or its missile, or by imbibing nauseating concoctions, often of human and animal excreta, to offend and drive out the demon of disease. The Nootka Indians of British Columbia withheld food from sick people so that the invading spirit should be driven off by starvation.

Doctrines of this kind are often elaborated into complex systems. The neighbourhood of Guinhangdan, a small fishing village in the Philippine Islands, may serve as an example. There witches, sorcerers and spirit gods are the chief agents of disease. The last, called *encantos*, comprise three types: *tuanon* or earth spirits; *tubignon*, river and ocean spirits; and *cohoynon*, who inhabit trees. They are very common and, although people try to avoid their haunts, this is not always practicable. When a disease is diagnosed as due to an *encanto*, incantations (often to Christian deities) and the application of ritual anointment, massage, herbs and poultices are used. A curer called a *parahaplas* wraps the patient in large leaves to sweat for about an hour. He is then uncovered and the leaves examined for the missiles which the *encantos* have shot into him. Any bits of grit, sand, hair or parts of insects are proof that the disease was in fact caused by one of these spirits.

In Europe mental disease was traditionally attributed to possession by evil spirits. According to Christian legend, a nun failed to make the sign of the cross over a lettuce she was eating and swallowed a devil who was sitting on it. When a priest exorcized him the devil protested that it was not his fault if a negligent nun had swallowed him.

Often the treatment of disease is partly rational or empirical, partly magical. The Romans treated abscesses by poultices, a practice which is still medically approved. But they also recommended that the poultice should preferably be laid on the fasting patient by a maiden, herself fasting and naked. This is no longer standard practice – though it is not impossible that some psychological benefit might ensue.

The Wandering Soul

In Bantu Africa, disease is seldom thought of as basically physical in origin. An African often understands the cause and treatment of a disease from the Western standpoint but he will ask why *he* has been afflicted and not another. He demands antibiotics but feels they will not work unless he supplements them by magically appeasing an offended ancestral spirit, atoning for a broken taboo, or placating an irate chief or sorcerer. During the 1918 influenza epidemic, accusations of witchcraft in Ghana flourished and magical cures correspondingly proliferated.

Many primitive tribes believe that disease is due, not to the intrusion of some evil spirit but to the absence of the patient's soul. This is often thought to wander in dreams and may be unable to re-enter the body if the sleeper is suddenly awakened. When this happens, the errant soul must be enticed back by charms or other allurements. Among the Kenyah of Sarawak a native healer will recall the stray soul and fasten it to the patient's body by string and the sticky blood of a fowl. The Koryaks of Siberia have a similar cure. An Ottawa medicine man has been known to trap an escaped soul in a small box and put it back into the mouth of its owner.

Belief in wandering souls is not confined to primitive and exotic tribes. In Germany, Czechoslovakia, Scotland and elsewhere the soul may escape in the form of a white bird from the open mouth of a sleeper. It may leave the body in a sneeze. If this happens it must be magically returned at once by calling out 'Bless you' or, in Spain, 'Jesus', or by making the sign of the cross.

Because in much of the world disease is thought to be a supernatural visitation supernatural means are naturally used to avert and cure it. One of the most important of these is the power of the gods and saints. In Hindu religious tradition Krishna cures the hunchback woman Kubja by touching her. The Bible claims that Christ similarly cured a blind man. Innumerable examples could be quoted. Healing was a major function of Christian saints, some of whom were specialists. St Lucy was associated with eye disorders, St Apollonia with toothache and St Agatha with diseases of the breast. In medieval times the chief purpose of pilgrimage was to seek a cure at shrines, such as that of St James of Compostela. In recent years the body of a medieval man, with a grossly diseased hip joint, was excavated at Thetford in Norfolk. Beside him lay a pilgrim's badge showing that he had journeyed to the healing shrine of Our Lady of Rocamadour in central France. Thousands of believers still seek such cures at Lourdes and elsewhere.

In Christian countries supernatural treatments often contain religious elements. Tudor England was several times ravaged by an epidemic called the Sweating Sickness – perhaps a form of influenzal encephalitis. A cure for it was to recite seven Paternosters and seven Hail Marys – thus combining Christian prayer with pre-Christian number magic.

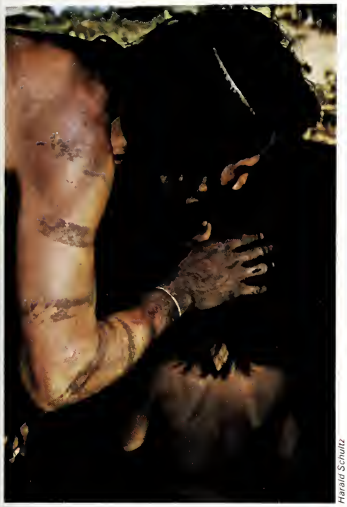
Christian curative magic takes many forms. In Sussex, shoes put crosswise every night were a cure for rheumatism. Good Friday buns were eaten later in the year as panaceas for illness.

Bede (672-735 AD) in his Ecclesiastical History records the earliest healing miracle in England as having been performed by St Germanus. The saint applied a 'bugget' or reliquary, which hung round his neck, to the eyes of a blind girl, 'which done she straight received her sight.'

Curing by Noah's Beard

The fusion of originally separate items of magic into one composite charm has already been noted. Occasionally the result was extremely complex and might combine Christian and pagan elements. The *cimaruta* is a good example. This was a charm, usually of silver or some other metal and commonly worn on a necklace, which was very popular in and around Naples. It often contained little figures of the moon, a hand, a sprig of rue, a key, a horn of fish, a cock or an eagle, a heart, a serpent and a cherub. All these might blend in a single *cimaruta*. They averted evil and cured many ills. The origin and significance of the separate items are complicated and ambiguous. The fish in Christian lore symbolizes Christ. The hand and the horn can both be traced back to a phallic origin. The moon and plants associated with it were consecrated to the goddess Lucina: both Hippocrates (5th century BC) and the Dutch physician Hermann Boerhaave (1668-1738) used moondaisy for disorders of menstruation, and rue was used against plague in Italy.

With healing seen as the primary object of medieval pilgrimages, it was to be expected that spurious holy relics would



Harald Schultz

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Among primitive peoples disease is often attributed to supernatural causes, the invasion of the body by a magical creature or evil spirit, or the absence of the soul from the body: the medicine-man attempts either to drive out the invader with charms and incantations, or to lure the soul back into the body *Above* Medicine-man in Brazil treating patient *Right* Effigy of a shaman of the Haida tribe in British Columbia

abound. Hundreds of shrines throughout Christendom claimed to effect magic cures by these relics. Enough pieces of the alleged True Cross existed to build a house. According to various legends, hairs from Noah's beard were preserved at Corbie in north-east France, parts of Christ's manger at Wimborne in Dorset, drops of the Virgin's milk at Walsingham in Norfolk and her wedding ring at Perugia in Italy.

Corpses and their trappings have always been dreaded and avoided as progenitors of magic ills. They also have healing powers. In Lincolnshire moss found growing on a skull was powdered and used as snuff to cure headaches. A ring made from a coffin hinge relieved cramps, and a piece of gallows rope cured ague. Elsewhere, barren women walked beneath corpses on gibbets, and the Greek traveller Pausanias (2nd century AD) refers to the model of a corpse being used as a votive offering.

CALVIN WELLS

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The wailing cry of the diver bird is uncannily human. This is one of several links between man and diver which make the folklore surrounding this bird especially significant

DIVER

THE DIVER BIRD is best known in the United States as the loon – but in the realms of folklore and mythology, where its diving abilities play an important part in many Indian tales about the beginnings of the earth, its other name comes more frequently into use. The great northern diver, whose distribution is mainly North American, is sometimes seen around the coast of the British Isles, and breeds also in Norway; while two other species, the red-throated and the black-throated, nest in Scotland and the neighbouring islands such as the Shetlands. So the folklore of the diver is far from exclusively American.

Where the red-throated diver breeds in Shetland, it is known as the rain-goose because its call is said to forecast wet weather. In fact the diver calls during courtship, aggression and other such situations and its cries have little or nothing to do with rain. Shetland weather lore is sometimes self-contradictory; divers flying inland – said to be a sign of good weather – may also be noisy, a portent of bad weather. Nevertheless, when contradictions in folklore occur, they may be, as in this case, indications that the lore has interesting antecedents which have been obscured or forgotten. We would be at a loss to understand the Shetland traditions were it not that there are more detailed diver traditions elsewhere which throw light on them. In the Faroes, in addition to belief in the diver as weather prophet, there is a saying that when one calls as it flies over it is accompanying a soul to heaven. Norwegians, too, not only associate the bird with the weather but also with death for they say that its weird calls predict that someone will be drowned.

Skull with Artificial Eyes

There are indications that the Faroese belief in the diver as the companion of the soul is a shred from a fabric of belief which once extended throughout much of northern Europe, Asia and America. The diver has a highly important place in the traditions of Siberian tribespeople. At the four corners of the coffin of a Tungus shaman, where it is deposited on the tundra, are set posts surmounted by wooden models of diver-like birds. Small replicas of divers are sewn on the costumes of Yakut, Vogul and other shamans. Amongst these tribes it is considered reprehensible to disturb or kill a diver. Moreover in Siberia and North America alike, traditions relate that during the Creation or after the Flood the diver helped to bring the world into being by bringing up mud from below the surface of the water. There are clear indications that diver traditions were carried from Asia across the Bering Strait to be disseminated in North America a long time ago.

At Ipiutak in Alaska archeologists have found that graves belonging to an extinct Eskimo culture have yielded skulls not only of human beings but also of divers, suggesting that the birds were regarded as companions or guides for the soul and that the destinies of divers and men were regarded as linked. The eye-sockets of both the human skulls and of a diver skull were found to be fitted with artificial eyes, suggesting the belief in a mysterious affinity between men and these birds. A folktale which seems to shed light on this discovery relates how a diver restored sight to a blind boy by taking him to a mysterious underwater realm. They both plunged in and the boy emerged able to see. The various fragments of tradition from different parts of the world together suggest that the diver was regarded as a magical bird, able to enlighten and lead the human spirit in life and death. Thus the vestiges of diver lore which survive in Shetland and elsewhere in Europe are seen to be the lingering remnants of a magical or magico-religious cult which at one time extended over a great deal of the inhabited region around the North Pole.

Cry Like a Woman's Scream

One of the great northern diver's outstanding characteristics has had an important influence. The bird's loud wailing cry, sounding eerily over the still northern lakes, is remarkably like the screams of an anguished woman. Undoubtedly it reinforced the belief that the bird has mysterious human affinities. Probably it played a part in suggesting that the diver could act as man's guide not merely on earth but to the 'undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns'.

The diver's wailing cry sounds like a woman's screams, and reinforced the belief that the bird has a mysterious affinity with human beings: during seances a shaman would aim to change himself magically into a bird in order to fly to the spirit world. Shaman's rattle in the form of a diver, in the British Museum

Support for the inference that the bird's calls were responsible for its being regarded as in some respects human or quasi-human is furnished by folktales. Thus according to one story the loon is really a fisherman who was knocked on the head and had his tongue cut out so that he could not reveal the name of the criminal, and was then turned into a bird. According to another, loons which had once been men circled around Kuloskap, the culture-hero of the Algonquin Indians, and were taught their strange cry so that, recognizing it, he could come to their rescue if they needed help. Long afterwards, when they had become men again, he visited them and appointed them his huntsmen and messengers. In such stories the distinction between birds and men is vague. This is understandable because during the seances of a shaman he aims to transform himself magically into a bird, imitating its calls and movements, and so flying away to visit the spirit world.

Other diver folklore attempts to account for the bird's peculiarities in appearance and behaviour. As the great northern diver does not breed in Norway but appears off the coasts accompanied by its well-grown young, a story was concocted to explain why nobody had ever found a nest in that area. It was said that under each wing was a recess in which the eggs were incubated. Another story purported to explain why its legs are set so far back on its streamlined body that when the bird comes on land to nest it can only shuffle with difficulty. It was said that during the Creation, by an oversight, its legs were omitted and were thrown after it only just in time to become attached.

EDWARD A. ARMSTRONG

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DIVINATION

The flight of birds, the marks on a sheep's liver, the fall of dice, dreams, the chance words of children – these and many other apparently meaningless indicators have been interpreted as signs of what the future holds or of what lies concealed beneath the surface of the present. In this century astrology has risen to unprecedented popularity and influence in the mass media

THE ENDURING POPULARITY of the sun-sign horoscopes in newspapers, magazines and books demonstrates the continuing demand for divination to help people make decisions in the multi-opportunity, multi-choice world of the modern West. At a more sophisticated level, in the 1980s it was revealed that in President and Mrs Reagan's time the White House regularly consulted an astrologer, while the CIA admitted that for years it had been palming off fake astrological forecasts on the leaders of Asian and African governments, with the aim of influencing their policies in directions favourable to American interests.

In ordinary, everyday English 'to divine' something means to know it without having been told it, without having deduced it on rational grounds and without being aware of how the knowledge has come into one's mind. Far from considering knowledge of this kind inferior and unreliable, we generally value it more highly than knowledge gained in more readily explicable ways. 'Divine' is derived from the Latin word for a god, and the underlying assumption is that knowledge which is gained by intuition or inspiration, which has come into the mind from some unknown source, has been put there by a supernatural agency. 'Something tells me' we say, or 'I feel in my bones', that such is the case.

Everywhere in the world in the past, this confidence in intuition was justified by the belief that it was divinely inspired. On the other hand, it was also a common conclusion of human experience that the gods sometimes speak 'with forked tongue'. The famous oracle at Delphi, for instance, which was consulted by private individuals and governments from all over the Greek world, was renowned for couching its responses in enigmatic language which could, and sometimes did, imply something altogether different in its significance from what the words might appear on the surface to mean.

All the same, people always and everywhere have relied on divination to bring them reliable information not obtainable by other means. On the whole, allowing for numerous exceptions, it has done this to general satisfaction. People do not go on and on consulting diviners and relying on divining systems unless they are broadly content with the results.

Some diviners have a greater capacity for seeing to the heart of things than is given to most people, and some have a shrewd grasp of what it is that those consulting them want to be told. Many certainly couch their predictions in language so vague and all-embracing that they can hardly fail to come true. Beyond all this, the tendency nowadays is to explain successful examples of divination in terms of extra-sensory perception, as examples of precognition, clairvoyance or telepathy (see EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION).

Word from the Spirit World

Today's professional diviners, from the astrologers and clairvoyants in their consulting rooms down to their humbler colleagues in 'gypsy' palmists' booths or Hong Kong astrologers' stalls, are the successors of generations of specialist practitioners – priests and priestesses, shamans, magicians, oracles, prophets, seers, soothsayers, weather wiseacres, cunning men and wise women, conjure doctors and medicine men.

Some of them have operated by first going into trance. At Delphi, for example, at the most sacred sanctuary in all Greece, a young priestess, called the *Pythia*, was put into a trance, induced or assisted by chewing bay leaves, in which the god Apollo took possession of her and spoke through her mouth. She did not reply directly to the enquirer. The god's words might be jumbled and unintelligible, and had to be translated by the male priests of the shrine, who made it their business to be exceptionally well-informed and combined a shrewd grasp of contemporary realities with a gift for using phrases that could be interpreted in more than one way.

In the *Aeneid* the Roman poet Virgil gives a vivid account of another trance oracle of Apollo, in the episode in which Aeneas and the Trojans go to consult the famous Sibyl of Cumae at her cave near Naples (see SIBYLS). 'Suddenly her countenance and her colour changed and her hair fell in disarray. Her breast heaved and her bursting heart was wild and mad; she appeared taller and spoke in no mortal tones, for the God was nearer and the breath of his power was upon her.'

Later, 'she ran furious riot in her cave, as if in hope of casting the God's power from her brain. Yet all the more did he torment her frantic countenance, overmastering her wild thoughts, and crushed her and shaped her to his will.' It is hardly surprising that those who witnessed these dramatic spectacles came away deeply impressed.

In the story in the Old Testament (1 Samuel, chapter 28) of Saul consulting the witch of Endor to discover what the future held for him, the witch was apparently what would now be called a medium, able in a trance or altered state of consciousness to open up a channel with a spirit guide from beyond the veil of death. Saul was reduced to consulting her because he could get no answer from more orthodox methods of divination – dreams, casting lots or consulting a professional prophet.

Thousands of miles from Delphi, Cumae or Endor, meanwhile, at the other side of the world among the Navaho people of the south-west of the United States (see NAVAHO), sick patients were diagnosed by a 'hand trembler', who in a state of trance divined the cause of the symptoms and recommended a cure, which was then carried out by another practitioner, called a 'curer'. The Navaho's experience of the results inclines them to prefer these methods to those of conventional Western doctors.

The Cunning Man

As in the case of diagnosing disease, much divination is concerned with the present and the past, rather than the future. Diviners are called in to find lost property, to sniff out witchcraft and malevolent magic, to discern the meaning of some unusual, worrisome portent that has occurred. Their scope can range from advising a king on high matters of state to finding a lost trinket. The cunning men and wise women to whom ordinary people resorted in the past – and still do in much of the world – functioned as a combination of diviner, magician and psychiatrist. They not only diagnosed a disease or witchcraft or a threatening conjunction of events, but

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Above **Phrenology, the art of reading character from the shape of a person's head, developed during the late 18th century; the size and location of bumps on the skull, and the shape of the head itself, are thought to reflect the development of the brain centres associated with various mental processes: phrenologist examining a young client *Right* Divination by moles on the face or body is based on the belief that marks on the skin are the stars of the body and, like the stars in the firmament, they can reveal the secret of what is to come: in this engraving from a 17th century treatise on the subject a woman's face is made up entirely of circles, probably implying that the circular movement of the stars in the heavens is directly reflected in the disposition of the moles upon her skin**

provided a remedy, a recommended course of action and a sympathetic ear.

A good example is Simon Forman (1552-1611), a busy and successful, self-taught cunning man, astrologer and doctor in London in the days of Elizabeth I and James I, whose records have survived. His clients, who came from every social level, consulted him for cures of their ailments, for astrological advice in questions of love and marriage, to find out if anyone was scheming against them and who it might be, and to trace things which were missing, including stolen money and lost pets. Businessmen, then as now, paid for astrological guidance, like the City merchant who wanted know if he should risk his goods in a projected voyage to open up the North-West Passage.

An important consideration in relation to customer satisfaction in this field is that the client is not necessarily expecting a prescription that cannot fail. He or she is frequently looking for advice from an authoritative source, which it consequently makes sense to act upon, whatever the outcome may afterwards prove to be. What is more, other people in the client's sphere – other businessmen, for example –will regard the advice as authoritative, so that the client is relieved of the responsibility for failure, should things not turn out as hoped. The client has acted sensibly, it will be felt, and things often do not turn out as planned.

Forman made his own herbal remedies, as well as talismans and charms to induce love. He was consulted by aristocratic ladies who needed help in erotic matters, and his notebooks show what a demand there was at every level of society for advice over matters ranging from locating a lost canary to serious medical, marital and financial problems. The work undertaken today by social workers, counsellors and psychiatrists was then carried out by magicians, astrologers and diviners; and possibly with greater success, because their clients had more confidence in their skills.

The Dowser's Rod

One currently flourishing form of divining the present is dowsing, sometimes called 'water witching'. This way of discovering concealed water, oil or gas underground enjoys general respect because over and over again it works – though no one yet understands how. Its origins seem to lie in the Middle Ages, in the mining areas of Central Europe, where it was found that some people could discover new seams in this way. By the 15th century a dowsing rod was standard equipment for prospectors in the Harz Mountains in Germany. More recent developments are the use of pendulums to 'dowse' maps and to diagnose disease (see DOWSING; RADIESTHESIA).

Divining the past is flourishing, too, under the name of object reading or psychometry. Here an object is given to a medium or a 'sensitive' who, simply by handling it and with no other clues, can sometimes give a surprising amount of accurate information about a person who owned the

Above **Metoposcopy is judging a man's character and destiny from the lines on his forehead: diagram of the planets corresponding to wrinkles on the brow** ***Right*** **Ancient beliefs in geomancy are reflected in the more modern use of coffee grounds or tea leaves to foretell the future: photograph taken in 1855**

object or was intimately linked with it in the past, or about events in which the object played a part. Far back at the turn of the 5th and 4th centuries BC the Greek philosopher Democritus believed that objects become charged with the mental activities and emotions of those who own or use them, and in our own century sensitives claim to have helped police to solve crimes or trace missing persons through object reading (see PSYCHOMETRY).

The Patterns of Life

Writing in the 1st century AD, the Roman author Cicero drew a distinction between divination, which depends on intuition and is an art that cannot be taught, and inductive divination, which can be taught because it interprets events according to established rules. Diviners who operate in trance rely on knowledge obtained directly from gods or spirits, who can see further than mere mortals. Inductive methods of divination, by contrast, rely on what appear to be chance indications, like the fall of lots or the pattern of tea-leaves in a cup. Underlying them, however, is a rooted disbelief in chance.

Everything that happens, in this view, is part of a gigantic and immensely complicated pattern in which all the phenomena and events of the world have their place, and so anything that happens, properly interpreted, is a clue to the rest of the pattern and the course of events.

The most prestigious oracles of this kind in the West at present are probably the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, and the Tarot pack. The *I Ching* has been held in high esteem by intellectuals, from Confucius in China in the 5th century BC to C.G. Jung in the 20th century in the West. It is both a philosophical system and a sophisticated form of divination by lots, with the advantage that anyone can consult it. It involves the random casting down of 50 yarrow stalks and their selection in groups (or for simplicity and speed three coins can be used). This leads to the construction of hexagrams, whose meanings the *I Ching* supplies, and enquirers apply the meanings as best they can to their own situation or problem (see I CHING).

Like the Delphic oracle, the *I Ching* may not give a clearcut answer, and the true application of its wisdom may only become apparent after the event. Cicero's distinction between intuitive and inductive divination is not nearly as clearcut as it might seem, in fact, because inductive methods in practice depend heavily on the diviner's intuition in interpreting the indicators.

By comparison with the *I Ching*, the Tarot pack is a mere infant, whose obscure history has not been traced back much further than the later Middle Ages. Early Tarot decks had different numbers of cards and varying names for the suits, but today's standard pack consists of 78 cards, of which 56 are organised in four suits of 14 cards each, from the ace up to the ten, page, knight, queen and king. The suits are Swords, Cups, Coins (or Pentacles) and Wands (or Staffs). It is the other 22 cards (the trumps), however, which mainly distinguish the Tarot from conventional playing cards. Each has its own name and picture – the Fool, the Lovers, the Hanged Man, the Falling Tower, and so on – and these richly evocative cards have an enticing air of ancient mystery and wisdom. This is basically another method of divining by lots, as the cards are shuffled and so ostensibly randomized, before being dealt out in whatever pattern the diviner favours to get the best results (see TAROT).

Here again, books on reading the Tarot can only give very broad meanings for each card, and interpretation involves applying the broad general meaning, in relation to those of other cards in the spread, to the enquirer's circumstances, problems and interests. With experience, professional readers develop a sympathetic eye and ear for what the client's situation is and what the client wants to hear or will accept. There is frequently, again, a strong need on the enquirer's side to consult the *I Ching* or the Tarot for authoritative guidance which is a source of strength in a worrying situation – while recognizing that the ultimate outcome may be far too complex to forecast.

Out of the Mouths...

The *I Ching*, the Tarot cards, palmistry, astrology, and many other methods of divination combine a basic principle of order with a large enough number of factors – sticks, cards, lines on the hand or whatever – to supply numerous possible permutations. This is felt to do justice to both the

Mansell Collection

Palmistry was practised in ancient Greece and China, and still flourishes today in all parts of the world: 16th century painting by Peruzzi of a fortune teller reading a woman's hand *Right* An American palmist at work *Below* Illustrations from a late 15th-century treatise on the art of palmistry showing *(from left to right)* the hands of 'an Avaricious and Thoughtless Man; a Stubborn and Iniquitous Man; an Irascible and Evil Man'; and the wrist of 'a Woman Unsuited for Motherhood'

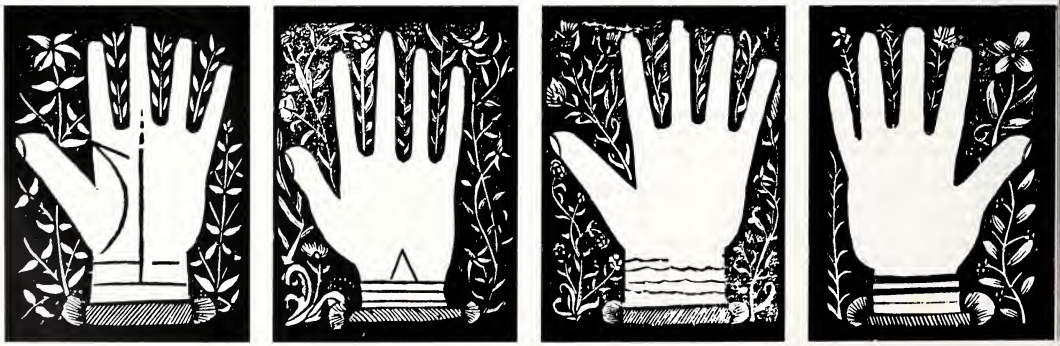
assumed underlying orderliness of the universe and its perceived complexity.

Far simpler methods have been tried, however. Pausanias, a Greek travel writer of the 2nd century AD, told a story about a man who was uncertain which of two women to marry, the one who was younger or the one who was richer. While he was anxiously turning the matter over in his mind, some children were playing nearby and he heard one of them shout, 'Take care of yourself.' He took this to be a sign that he should choose the richer woman.

Pausanias also described the custom at the town of Pharai in Greece, where there was a statue of the god Hermes in the market-place. An enquirer with a question would go to the statue in the evening, burn incense and leave a coin on the altar and whisper his question into the statue's ear. He would then go away, keeping his hands pressed firmly over his ears to prevent his hearing anything until he was clear of the market-place. Then he would uncover his ears and take the first words he heard as the answer to his question.

Signs and Portents

The belief that every event – even a stray remark – holds a clue to the underlying pattern of the universe and the direction in which events are moving lies behind the universal tendency to see omens and portents everywhere (see OMENS). Particularly striking and rare events, such as an eclipse of the sun or moon or the appearance of a comet, can arouse considerable alarm, but all sorts of lesser events may convey information to the wise. A whole encyclopedia of traditional weather lore was built up over centuries, from the simple – and meteorologically justified – chant of 'Red sky at



night, shepherds' delight, red sky at morning, shepherds' warning' to the belief in some places that a black snail crossing one's path was a sign of rain on the way, or the widespread conviction that if the oak trees put out their new leaves in the spring before the ash trees, it was a certain sign of a dry summer ahead (see WEATHER MAGIC).

In 217 BC, which proved to be the disastrous year in which Hannibal invaded Italy, public anxiety was aroused in Rome by a whole parade of portents. Soldiers were struck by lightning, the spears of other soldiers mysteriously caught fire, a shower of fiery stones dropped from the sky, a statue of the god Mars was seen to sweat, two shields began sweating blood and so on.

These alarming prodigies were reported to the Senate, which decided to hold a large-scale sacrifice of offerings to the gods and make costly gifts of gold and silver to the temples of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva. When these measures proved inadequate and Hannibal smashed the Roman army at Cannae in 216, the Senate took the rare and grave step of resorting to human sacrifice. A Gaul and a Greek man and woman were buried alive, walled in with stone in the cattle market, in a desperate effort to restore the right relationship between the Romans and their gods, which had evidently gone awry.

All manner of odd minor happenings were treated as omens in Rome, from somebody stumbling or sneezing or an owl hooting at midday to the unexpected appearance of an animal or the creaking of a chair. Official augury, which took omens from the appearance and behaviour of birds, was not directed towards predicting the future, but to determining whether the gods were or were not favourable to a suggested course of action. Prophecy and politics are old bedfellows and the augurs were not infrequently suspected of biased interpretation of the omens. It was not from academic interest that Julius Caesar, when he had achieved his dominant position in Roman politics, appointed himself head of the augurs (see AUGURY).

Once a year in the Roman countryside, on each farm, the farmer and his family and the labourers put on clean clothes and wreathed the heads of the oxen with garlands. Then they led a male lamb three times round the boundary of the farm – drawing a magic circle round it, in effect. The lamb was sacrificed as an offering to the gods of corn and wine, who were asked to protect the farm, to make sure it was fertile and to keep wolves away. The liver and entrails of the slaughtered lamb were inspected and, if they were normal, it signified that the gods had accepted the offering and everyone could sit down happily to a good feast. The lamb's liver and entrails would be normal far more often than not, so that everyone on the farm could feel cheerful and confident for the coming year. This is a good example of the useful social role of divination in promoting the optimism needed for effective work.

In India, too, the interpretation of omens, including weather phenomena and the flight and cries of birds, goes back to the beginning of recorded history. The direction of smoke rising from a sacrifice was considered significant, as was the behaviour of the domestic house-lizard. At human sacrifices, omens were read from the victim's cries and from the way in which his severed head fell.

Dreams were also considered meaningful in India, and everywhere else in the world. The strange plane of existence, with its own curious logic, into which they transport the dreamer, can readily be identified as the supernatural realm of gods and spirits, and people everywhere have felt that a particularly striking dream is trying to tell them something important (see DREAMS). The oldest manual of dream interpretation which has survived, the Chester Beatty papyrus of about 1350 BC, comes from Ancient Egypt, and it employs much the same plays on words and associations of ideas which have been relied on by Freud and other psychoanalysts of this century.

The Stars in their Courses

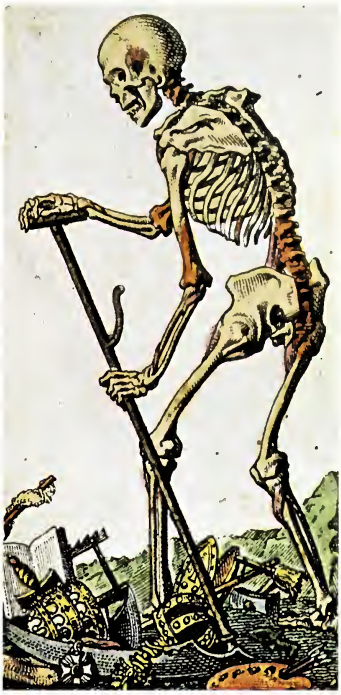
The queen of the divinatory arts, however, is astrology, which has recruited more believers around the world than any religion has ever been able to command. The magnificent panoply of the stars at night and the orderliness and predictability of their motions has suggested to awed human beings everywhere that here, in the sky, is to be found the divine key to the pattern of events on earth.

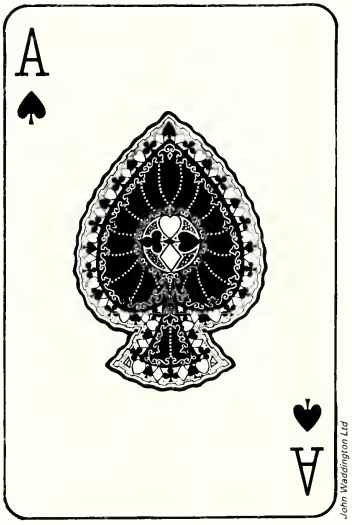
The Western and Indian astrological traditions both go back to the astronomer-priests of ancient Mesopotamia, who identified the sun, the moon and the planets with deities, which gave each of the heavenly bodies an individual character and sphere of influence. They also identifed the circle of the zodiac and divided it into twelve equal sections, or 'houses'. Events in the sky, including the movements of the planets, eclipses, comets and the behaviour of clouds, were carefully noted, recorded and compared with subsequent events on earth so that they could be used to predict future events affecting the royal government.

The invention of natal astrology, the drawing up of horoscopes for individual men and women based on the positions of the planets in the zodiac at the time of birth or conception, apparently came later. It seems to have been practised in Egypt as early as the 5th century BC and was definitely reported from Babylonia in the 4th century BC.

There were direct connections between Mesopotamia and Greece, through which astrology began to spread into the classical world, but the main stream which bore astrology westwards flowed by way of Egypt. The father of Western astrology, the astronomer and geographer Claudius Ptolemy, lived at Alexandria in the 2nd century AD. He wrote in Greek and his books circulated all over the Roman world. Several of the Roman emperors consulted astrologers and one of them, Domitian (81-96), had the horoscopes of leading citizens checked for subversive tendencies.

From Mesopotamia and Greece astrology spread to India, along with the signs of the zodiac, the week of seven days and the 24-





Dread symbols of death: the grisly skeleton of the Tarot pack *(above)*, part of an early 19th century set in the British Museum and *(below)* the sinister ace of spades, popularly identified as the 'death card'. It is possible that cards bearing such distinctively appropriate symbols were used for fortune telling a long time before their use in games of chance

Methods of Divination

The following are the technical terms for some of the many methods of divination

Aeromancy	by atmospheric phenomena; weather predicting
Alectromancy	by a cock picking up grain
Amniomancy	by a caul
Anthroposcopy	by facial features
Arithmancy	by numbers
Astrology	by planets and stars
Augury	from the behaviour of birds
Austromancy	by the winds
Axinomancy	by a balanced axe, or by a stone on a red-hot axe
Belomancy	by arrows
Bibliomancy	by random passages in books
Bletonism	by currents of water
Botanomancy	by herbs
Capnomancy	by smoke
Cartomancy	by cards
Catoptromancy	by mirrors
Ceromancy	by molten wax dropped in water
Cheiromancy	by the hands
Clairaudience	by hearing things inaudible to normal hearing
Clairvoyance	by seeing things invisible to normal sight; second sight
Cledonomancy	from chance remarks or events
Cleromancy	by dice or lots
Coscinomancy	by sieve and shears
Crystallomancy	by a crystal
Dactyliomancy	by a finger-ring
Dowsing	by means of a divining-rod
Geloscopy	by a person's way of laughing
Genethlialogy	from the stars at birth
Geomancy	by dots on paper, marks on the earth, or particles of earth
Gyromancy	by whirling round until dizziness causes a fall
Halomancy	by salt
Haruspicy	from the entrails of animals
Hepatoscopy	from the liver of animals
Hieromancy	by observation of sacrificed things
Horoscopy	by planets and stars
Hydromancy	by water
Ichthyomancy	by fishes
Lampadomancy	from the flame of a candle or torch
Leconomancy	from the shape taken by oil poured on water
Lithomancy	by stones
Margaritomancy	by pearls
Moleosophy	by moles on the body
Myomancy	from the movements of mice
Necromancy	through communication with the spirits of the dead
Numerology	by numbers and names
Oenomancy	from the appearance of wine poured in libation
Oneiromancy	by dreams
Onomancy	by the letters of a name
Onychomancy	by the finger-nails
Ophiomancy	from the behaviour of snakes
Ornithomancy	by the flight of birds
Palmistry	by the hands
Pegomancy	by fountains
Pessomancy	by pebbles
Phrenology	by the head
Physiognomy	by the face
Psychometry	by handling an object
Pyromancy	by looking into a fire
Rhabdomancy	by a wand or divining-rod
Scapulomancy	by the shoulder-blades of animals
Scatoscopy	by inspection of excrement
Sciomancy	by shadows, or ghosts
Scrying	by a crystal
Sideromancy	by the movements of straws on red-hot iron
Sortilege	by drawing lots
Spodomancy	from ashes
Stichomancy	from random passages in books
Tephromancy	from sacrificial ashes
Theomancy	by oracles, and by persons inspired by a god
Uromancy	by urine
Xylomancy	by dry sticks
Zoomancy	from the behaviour of animals

hour day. Astrology has been generally accepted there ever since and the heavens are consulted, as a matter of course, to find an auspicious time for a wedding, concluding a business deal, digging a well or laying the foundations of a house or a bridge, setting off on a long journey or any other undertaking of importance.

On a Rising Tide

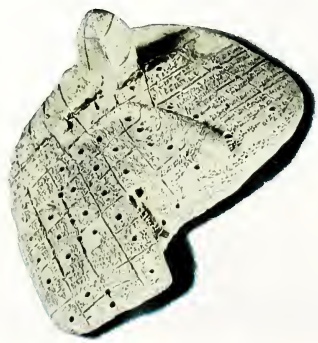
Astrology was accepted at the popular level in the West from Roman times onwards, all through the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance, but it went out of intellectual fashion during the 'Age of Reason' of the 18th century. In Britain it was actually made illegal by the Vagrancy Act of 1824, which prohibited the casting of horoscopes along with other types of fortune-telling.

However, it was that very same year, ironically enough, which saw the emergence of the founder of modern newspaper astrology, Robert Cross Smith (1795-1832), who wrote under the pseudonym Raphael. In 1824 he was made editor of a 16-page weekly magazine suitably entitled *The Straggling Astrologer*, devoted entirely to astrology. Published in London, it purported to have the approval of the famous Parisian card-reader and clairvoyant, Madamoiselle Lenormand, who counted the Empress Josephine among her fashionable clientele, and it included articles, among others, by 'Princess' Olive of Cumberland, an eccentric lady who claimed to be the daughter of one of George III's brothers.

The magazine only survived for a few issues, but it made history by being the first to run regular astrological predictions about love and marriage, business, travel and so on, like the familiar newspaper and magazine astrology columns of today. It even boldly ran an article on how to tell if the lady whom you planned to marry was really a virgin.

Smith later produced an almanac with astrological predictions for every day of the year, which became *Raphael's Almanac* and was kept going for many long years after his death by a succession of 'Raphaels'.

Clay model of an animal's liver, with instructions in cuneiform, used by Babylonian priests in haruspicy, the art of divination by the inspection of the entrails of freshly-killed beasts



British Museum

Meanwhile a more heavyweight figure had appeared on the scene in the shape of Richard James Morrison (1795-1874), a retired naval officer and a better-educated man than his friend Smith. He turned professional astrologer in 1830, wrote under the name Zadkiel and published *Zadkiel's Almanac*, which lived on long after his death, until 1931. He also practised scrying with a crystal ball, through which he believed he made contact with the spirits of the dead and other supernatural beings. Morrison flatly rejected Copernican astronomy and stoutly maintained that the sun revolved round the earth, and he published several textbooks of astrology.

Smith and Morrison laid the foundations of a new popular astrology, accessible to the masses, concerned with ordinary people's everyday lives, hopes, fears and problems, and giving much space to the astrological prospects of the royal family and other people in the public eye. Zadkiel's 1861 almanac made gloomy prognostications about the health of the Prince Consort, who did in fact die of typhoid that same year.

Victorian universal education provided a much larger literate working-class public for astrological publications. Building on the pioneers' work came William Frederick Allen (1860-1917), who wrote as Alan Leo. A commercial traveller for a sewing-machine company, brought up among the Plymouth Brethren in London, he studied astrology in his spare time, married a professional palmist and in 1890 joined the

Michael Holford

Camera Press London

Soothsayers, oracles, clairvoyants and other tellers of fortunes are revered and consulted daily in many parts of the world, where divination is still considered to be an important and serious art

Above **Divining tablets made from wood and ivory, from Mashonaland in Zimbabwe: now in the British Museum**

Right **Fortune teller in the market place at Marrakesh, Morocco**

Theosophical Society (see BLAVATSKY), which encouraged him to see astrology in high-flown terms as an ancient symbolic system of profound insight.

He was a thoroughly practical and efficient businessman, however, and in 1898 he set up as a professional astrologer in Hampstead and pioneered the modern mass-produced horoscope. So successful was he that by 1903 he was employing nine assistants, owned the magazine *Modern Astrology* and turned out popular textbooks under the general title *Astrology For All*.

By this time the new popular astrology had spread to the European continent, but it was not until 1930 that it was taken up by the mass circulation newspapers in Britain, when R. H. Naylor (1889-1952) started to write a regular astrology column in the *Sunday Express*, kicking off with an arch analysis of the horoscope of the infant Princess Margaret. Naylor claimed to have predicted the R101 airship disaster of that year and, on another occasion, he walked into the editor's office one afternoon and asked if he could add to his article because there was going to be an earthquake. The editor said it was too late to add anything – and eleven hours later southern England was duly rocked by an earthquake.

Readers liked the column and it was soon copied by *The People*, the *Sunday Express*'s main rival, with a regular column by Edward Lyndoe. Other popular papers followed suit, as did the French and American press, and by the 1940s there were no less than seven mass-circulation astrological monthly magazines in the United States. The day of the media astrologer had arrived and the professional diviner could now enjoy a popular audience of previously undreamed-of proportions.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

(See also ASTROLOGY; CARDS; CHINESE ASTROLOGY; FATE; GEOMANCY; LIVER; LOTS; NUMEROLOGY; ORACLES; PALMISTRY; PHRENOLOGY; PROPHECY; SCRYING; TEA-LEAF READING.)

FURTHER READING: R. Cavendish, *A History of Magic* (Penguin Arkana, New York, 1990); E. Howe, *Urania's Children* (Kimber. London, 1967).

Sieve and Shears

A form of divination much used from the earliest years of the Middle Ages down to our own day, in some French provinces, is coscinomancy, or divination by a balanced sieve. The early phrase was 'spinning the *sas*' – an old word which means sieve or strainer. It is notable that all peoples have ascribed divinatory potentialities to objects in rotation. A mere knife spinning on its collar upon a table is supposed by many people to be capable of bringing bad luck to a house. The gyratory movement is of a character essentially mysterious or even diabolic, as some hold, and divination by the sieve is certainly one of the most perplexing methods in existence. The *Opera omnia* of Cornelius Agrippa . . . contains an invaluable figure indicating the manner of suspending the sieve in order to make it vaticinate. The author says that 'the sieve is suspended by tongs or pincers (*forcipes*), which are supported by the middle fingers of two assistants. So may be discovered by the help of the demon (*daemone urgente*), those who have committed a crime or theft or inflicted some wound. The conjuration consists of six words – understood neither by those who speak them nor by others – which are DIES, MIES, JESCHET, BENEDOEFET, DOWIMA and ENITEMAUS; once these are uttered they compel the demon to cause the sieve, suspended by its pincers, to turn the moment the name of the guilty person is pronounced (for all the suspected persons must be named) and thus the culprit is instantly known... More than thirty years since I made use of this manner of divination three times; the first time was on the occasion of a theft which had been committed; the second on account of certain nets or snares of mine used for catching birds being destroyed by some envious one; and the third in order to find a lost dog which belonged to me and by which I set great store. In every said attempt my fortune was to succeed; yet I stopped notwithstanding after the last time for fear lest the demon should entangle me in his snares.

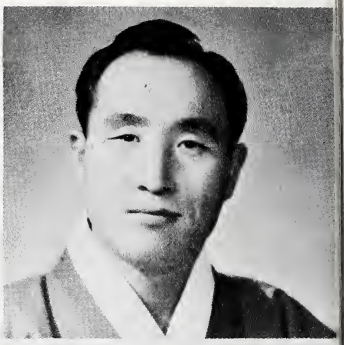
E. Grillot de Givry
Picture Museum of Sorcery, Magic and Alchemy

Believers in this modern millenarian movement see the hand of Satan in anything which hinders their missionary work, from poor health to a car breaking down or a missed appointment: but movements of this sort play an important role in developing countries

DIVINE PRINCIPLES

A YOUNG KOREAN electrical engineer named Sun M. Moon, during the late 1940s and early '50s received a series of what he took to be messages from God which acknowledged him as none other than the returned Christ. Through his divine encounters, he came to believe that a new body of knowledge, The Divine Principles, was being revealed to him. This doctrine unveiled the laws by which God governs man, explained the causes of mankind's problems and God's purposes in human history, and also disclosed the manner in which the perfected and eternal kingdom of God would soon be established on earth.

By the late '50s he had assembled several hundred followers in and around Seoul, Korea. To these believers he announced that the next few years would be the 'Last Days' of the 'world as we know it', a period of 'cosmic tribulation and judgement'. The world was soon to undergo a dramatic, supernaturally caused transformation, through which his faithful followers would become rulers of a restored, eternal and perfect Garden of Eden. Although this imminent transformation was to be effected by 'descending spirit forces', God's Chosen People were obliged to play a role. They were to assemble a large number of converts in order to constitute a 'foundation of the new world'. This foundation was to be the elite which would govern the theocracy of the 'New Age'. And since the restoration of man to God's grace was to involve



Sun M. Moon *(above)* became convinced that God had chosen him as the second Christ after he had been saved from execution in a Communist prisoner-of-war camp

not just Korea, but the entire world, the foundation had to include persons from a variety of nations. Throughout the 1960s Moon sent missionaries abroad – especially to Japan and the United States – to perform this work. Over the years, the movement gained thousands of converts, claiming membership in some 16 countries. The impact of the cult, popularly called the Moonies (see MOONIES) was considerable.

Spartan Simplicity

Two of the most striking features of the Divine Principles movement are the intensity of the members' efforts to win converts and the degree to which they sacrifice themselves to 'God's newly revealed plan'. If the movement remains a rather minor one, in terms of sheer size, it is not because of any lack of effort on the part of its members. The way of life defined as exemplary by Divine Principles believers is one of spartan simplicity and a virtually total commitment to winning converts. Ideally, the believer is expected to surrender all his material wealth to the movement, retaining only enough to enable him to survive while he carries on his missionary activities. While the members often work at conventional jobs, they keep for themselves only enough funds for the bare necessities of life and for the expenses of individual proselytizing. All the rest of their wages goes into a collective fund, to be spent on the more expensive missionary endeavours, such as printing books and leaflets, and renting communal houses and lecture halls. If a convert's spouse, parent or other relative refuses to convert, it is felt best to sever the relationship altogether rather than risk possible interference with the primary task of witnessing. Occupational career commitments must be dropped unless they increase one's access to potential new and influential converts, for the imminent advent of a perfect world renders all conventional careers meaningless.

Periodically, missionary campaigns are held lasting 40 days, during which thousands of people are sent through the countryside to win new converts. In preparation for, and during, these campaigns, the believers fast and deny themselves even their few normal comforts. A diet of bread and water is defined as proper during such periods. During the campaigns some missionaries live by collecting and selling waste articles. The most devoted missionaries may even become permanent itinerants, especially in South Korea. One such missionary has related:

> My husband and I have been pioneering in different provinces, and to do this we had to send our four children into orphanages. I climb to a mount every day and gather brush and wood to make bundles of fuel to carry down to a village and sell. With the money I buy a few pounds of oats for my living. Supporting myself in this way, I proclaim the truth day after day and month after month.

Suffering, and enduring that suffering, for the Glory of God and the Restored World on Earth is a central theme of everyday life among the believers. Indeed, one *must* experience the suffering of living humbly and of missionizing intensely in the face of rejection, if one is fully to win favour with God or, more immediately, with Moon and fellow believers. On ceremonial occasions, Moon provides special prizes and accords special recognition to those whom he judges to have 'suffered most and for a long time and made a notable achievement' in winning converts.

Associated Press Photo

The Divine Principles movement developed in Korea at a time when that country was ravaged by war, and the example set by Sun M. Moon helped to give many of his confused fellow countrymen a sense of direction

Battle Between God and Satan

A significant part of the movement's appeal lies in the character of what is promised them in return for their sacrifice and endurance. Beginning with their rule over the restored and reformed earth within a few (unspecified number of) years, believers are assured of being virtual demigods for all eternity. Those who convert early, before the truth of the Divine Principles becomes self-evident, and who thus help to bring about the inevitable, will occupy the most favoured positions in the divine theocracy. When the millennium comes, the mass of those who are still unconverted will come before them for judgement. Those who did most to obstruct the movement will be assigned the lowest places in the new world. In the context of such massive and eternal rewards, any present suffering and hardship is viewed by believers as quite minor.

A particularly valued place is promised to Koreans. Not only is Moon the successor to Jesus and the 'Lord of the Second Advent', but Korea is the New Israel and will 'serve as the priest nation for the rest of the world', and as 'God's Chosen People' the Koreans will be favoured in the new order. Seoul will be the world capital and Korean will be the language spoken by all mankind.

The Divine Principles conception of reality also has an appeal of a more immediate and everyday character. The movement believes in extremely active supernatural forces, whose continual presence and acts are constantly manifest in everyday events. This world of supernatural forces is populated by spirit persons – humans who have died, and eternal figures such as God, Satan and the angels, who are themselves divided into two warring camps. God's forces are in constant battle with Satan's forces, contending for control of man in the material world. Since the Fall of Man in Eden, Satan has more or less dominated or controlled man, although the forces of God have continually attempted to throw off this domination.

Now that God has chosen Moon as the second Christ and has revealed his divine plan, this age-old struggle is entering its final and decisive phase. In this last stage, God's forces will win a permanent victory over those of Satan. The fact that these forces are locked in a fight to the finish is constantly manifest in everyday events. All events in the material world are caused by the actions of spirit persons in one or

the other of the two camps. Persons in the spirit world cause events in the material world for a purpose related to this cosmic battle. Satan's spirits hinder and God's spirits help those in the material world who help God (in the form of the Divine Principles movement). Satan's spirits help and God's spirits hinder those who help Satan (which means all who oppose the Divine Principles movement).

This conception provides believers with a simple and powerful scheme for interpreting the 'meaning' of everyday events: anything that hinders or hurts a believer, the movement or those aligned with it, is an attack by Satan's spirits: anything that helps a believer, the movement or those aligned with it, is an act of helping or leading by God's spirits. Through constant application of this scheme in everyday life, members come to have an immediate and close sense of unseen forces operating on the physical order (for example, the weather) and intervening in world affairs, in relations among nations, in the latest national disaster, and in their own daily lives. Missed or caught buses, cars breaking down or running smoothly, poor and good health, missed and kept appointments, chance and arranged meetings, lost and found property – everything and anything – belongs to a world of spirit causality.

Opposition from Parents

As might be expected, the beliefs, dedication and missionizing intensity of Divine Principles followers have indeed generated opposition. In South Korea during the 1950s, the movement experienced an especially difficult time. It was a favourite for 'exposé' magazines, an object of condemnation by more conventional religions and an object of some concern to the government. Apart from the disapproval generated by the heterodox character of their beliefs, various kinds of irregularities (sometimes sexual) were alleged to occur within the movement and it was viewed as having a strong tendency to break up families. It should be noted, however, that matters of this sort have frequently been of concern to conventional citizens when faced with intensely committed 'end of the world' religions.

Perhaps partly as a result of its continual growth, the Divine Principles movement has more recently experienced less condemnation in South Korea. Syncretic religions, combining different religious beliefs, have a sizeable following in that country, making them a political fact of life. Recent regimes have apparently thought it the better part of wisdom to attempt to gain the co-operation of such groups in fostering social reform rather than to suppress them.

Movements like the Divine Principles have an important function in developing countries. They can transform a passive belief in the natural and inevitable character of whatever exists into a faith that things can be changed – by God, man, or both. Though political leaders are apt to put little stock in supernatural forces as catalysts of change, they agree with the fundamental belief that things can be changed, and are disposed to support this belief almost irrespective of the larger creed in which it is embedded. In pre-industrial, developing countries such religions as the Divine Principles can be viewed as cauldrons in which are forged people amenable to the modern mentality.

Outside South Korea the movement only began to 'take hold' in the early '60s. While still only tenuously established in most countries in which it claims membership, it has experienced relatively strong growth in Japan. And, partially paralleling the early difficulties in South Korea, the missionizing intensity and devotion of its members have generated opposition among the Japanese. In the main, this opposition has crystallized around the fears of parents whose offspring have joined the movement. In 1967 a group of deserted parents formed a national organization dedicated to getting their youth to return home and to resume their high school or college studies. Pointing to the Divine Principles' missionary intensity and glorification of suffering, the parents have charged that their children have been 'brainwashed', 'misled', and 'made virtual prisoners' of the movement. And, the parents have charged, as a consequence of the movement's fasting practices, many of their children suffer from malnutrition. The group has held demonstrations outside the Divine Principles' Tokyo headquarters demanding the return of their children and they are said to have undertaken legal action against the movement.

It is in the United States that the Moonies aroused the most bitter controversy outside Asia. As parents became aware of what was happening to their children, they made efforts to rescue them from the organization, and had them 'deprogrammed'.

Middle Class Leadership

While appealing to the poorest and least educated groups, the movement's membership in various countries is also drawn from the middle classes and from the young, relatively educated sectors of the population. In South Korea, in addition to students, the movement draws significantly on young army officers and has some attraction for college teachers. Although the membership with these characteristics is small compared to the total numbers of such persons in South Korean society – and small compared to total Divine Principles' membership – it is very important, for the leadership it provides and for the sophistication it has injected into the movement's policies and strategies. Further, the occupational standing and skills of these members gives them access to the power centres of South Korean society.

In the United States, the believers tend to be of a relatively high educational level, and to be under the age of 30, with the bulk of the membership at least below 40. Many are drawn from what is identified in the United States as the 'lower middle class' or from rural and small town migrants to urban areas.

People who convert to the Divine Principles seem uniformly to be persons who, prior to and at the time of their conversion, are experiencing a sense of meaninglessness both in their own lives and in the larger world. The Divine Principles' view of reality has a strong capacity to overcome this and to give a sense of direction.

Like other millenarian religions, the Divine Principles has, over the years, become increasingly equivocal on the topic of exactly *when* the new world order will be established. In the same way that the early Christians had progressively to attenuate their millenarian expectations as they gained power and respectability, the Divine Principles movement may be entering the early stages of transformation into merely another established religion.

JOHN LOFLAND

National Portrait Gallery

Divine Right

Theory that a king's authority is given him directly by God and that he is therefore independent of the will of his subjects, who owe him unlimited obedience: probably descended from old beliefs about the divinity of kings, by way of the worship of the Roman emperors, the theory was not fully elaborated until the 16th and 17th centuries, when it was asserted by, among others, Louis XIV in France and the Stuarts in England.

See KING.

A. Guiliano

Dodona

Site of a famous oracle of Zeus, in the mountains of north-western Greece: the priests 'of unwashed feet who couch upon the ground' and priestesses interpreted the rustling of the leaves of a sacred oak as the words of the god: they may also have drawn oracles from the sound of a sacred spring in the grove, the echoes of a gong, and the flight and calls of sacred pigeons; later, the god's answers were given through lots.

See ORACLES.

DOG

The dog's habit of attaching himself to man and identifying with his master's interests is no doubt one of the reasons why this animal has been worshipped in many places and held in high esteem. Some would go so far as to say that dog worship is still practised in Britain

FROM THE BONES of dogs discovered in caves, burial grounds and lake dwellings in Europe it is known that a breed existed here in the New Stone Age, and in the Bronze and Iron Ages. The domestic dog is probably descended from the grey common wolf, *Canis Lupus*.

From the earliest recorded times the dog has been intimately associated with man, his home and his family. The first mention of the dog in the Bible may be found in the account of the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus, chapter 11) and an early reference to his being man's companion occurs in the Book of Tobit (in the Apocrypha), when Tobias sets out on his journey, accompanied by an angel, 'and the young man's dog with them'. Both cats and dogs were held in high esteem in ancient Egypt; the city of Cynopolis took its name from *cynos*, a dog. Its citizens were forced by law to provide for all their stray dogs, and they even went to war with a neighbouring city when someone ate one of their dogs. It became customary to name dogs on monuments to the dead: Pharaoh Rameses II (13th century BC) gave his pet dog the name of Anaitis-in-Power, and other dogs which were commemorated by name in this way included Ken, Abu, Akna, Tarn and Temas. Several paintings of King Tutankhamen's dogs have been discovered, elegantly depicted on the furniture of his tomb. One shows the boy king riding in his golden chariot, chasing deer, with two great mastiffs accompanying him, wearing gold collars.

It is believed that the Egyptians worshipped the dog because of their regard for the dog star, Sirius, the brightest star in the skies. Sirius was venerated by all the people of the Nile, who depended on the rise and fall of the great river for their livelihood. The rising of the river marked for them the most important feast day of the year, and when the time for the flood drew near they watched with anxiety for the rise of Sirius, the dog star, over the horizon. This told them that the floods were soon to be expected, and that their New Year was beginning. Falling down on their knees in the light of the star, they worshipped Sirius, faithful as the dog, which never failed them.

Another reason for this dog-worship may have been because the dog-headed god Anubis, or Apu, was said to guide the souls of the dead to the underworld, the abode of Osiris. Thus the god – and the creature whose head he wore – had to be placated and worshipped.

From the earliest recorded times the dog has been intimately associated with mankind, and it was revered by the Egptians – whose god Anubis was dog-headed – as well as the Babylonians, Assyrians and Chaldeans. ***Above*** **As faithful companions and expert hunters, dogs were also held in high esteem among the Celts. Bronze Celtic dog from Kirkby Thore, Westmorland, in northern England**

The Smell of an Infidel

The dog was also revered by the early Babylonians, Assyrians and Chaldeans, who were the people living between the two great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris. History relates that the Governor of Babylon owned so many dogs that four towns were made exempt from taxes provided the inhabitants fed their dogs properly. Terracotta statuettes of these ancient creatures may be seen in the British Museum, and their names have a familiar ring even today. The last of the great kings of Assyria in the 7th century BC gave such names to his hunting mastiffs as 'He-Ran-and-Barked', 'The Producer-of-Mischief' and 'The Seizer of His Enemies'.

Because the Egyptians worshipped dogs, the Hebrews hated them, and scorned the belief that animals could detect the presence of spirits and ghosts, or were familiar with the world beyond the grave. But the Hebrews, although disliking the dog, were aware of his value. 'Dwell not in a town where no barking dog is heard', they said. According to legend, when the Jews made their silent, secret exodus from Egypt to find the promised land, not a single Egyptian dog stirred: 'they did not move their tongues against man or beast'.

Islam abhors the dog for one of the same reasons as the strict Jew. The animal is

The Hound of Heaven

Behind the image of the watchdog that guards man's possessions, lies that of the personal dog-ghost that protects him on lonely roads; and, deeper still, lies the image of the divine dog that protects man's soul on its way to paradise. Behind the image of the guide dog that leads the blind is that of the personal dog-ghost that guides its master to treasure, and ultimately the divine dog that guides souls through the darkness of the Underworld. (Harnesses moulded on the clay images of dogs found buried with their masters in Chinese tombs are similar to those used by the blind.) Behind the image of the dog that hauls medicine and food to outposts is that of the personal dog-ghost that brings these commodities to the bereaved, and – on the deepest level – that of the divine dog-physician and the suckling bitch-goddess. Dogs on all three levels guard treasure, hound criminals and provide faithful companionship: all three take the initiative in approaching man.

Dog-deities provided the light of the sun, moon and stars, and the waters that fertiiized the earth. They were responsible for the potency of man and fertility of women, and they gave protection against all evil influences.

The dog received the souls of dying men. It also judged souls after death, and maintained equilibrium between the light and dark elements. As an incarnation of the Buddha, the dog brought man enlightenment.

Finally, we come to the Hound of Heaven – Christ – the Guide, the Protector, the Healer, the Light of the world, the Judge – who everlastingly pursues man's soul, and operates in the individual psyche as the will towards 'Life more abundant'; as the drive towards greater consciousness.

Patricia Dale-Green *Dog*

Michael Holford

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

A man's dog has been called his 'best friend' and as such has been shown a devotion which sometimes borders on worship *Above* A cemetery for departed dogs in England; it is an old belief that dogs will accompany their masters to heaven *Facing page* St Hubert, the patron saint of dogs in northern Europe, receives the magic stole which has the power to cure the bite of mad dogs: *The Mass of Saint Hubert*, a painting in the National Gallery, London

held to be an unclean eater, a devourer of refuse, and must therefore be classed with the pig. Yet Mohammed allowed dogs to be used for the chase, and the animals captured were eaten, provided the name of Allah was uttered when the hunting dogs were slipped from their leads. The Moslem creed admits two dogs into heaven, Tobit's dog, already mentioned, and the great watchdog Katmir, said to be the Dog of the Seven Sleepers, who appears in the Koran and whose descendants are prized by the Bedouin tribes to this day.

The giant mastiffs of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, who ruled Rhodes from the 14th to the 16th centuries, were taught to distinguish between the smell of a Turk and a Christian; Spanish bloodhounds helped in the conquest of Mexico and Peru and in the 16th century there was a spaniel famous for having saved the Dutch republic by awakening the camp of William the Silent just as it was about to be attacked by the enemy.

The Country of the Dogs

A number of strange beliefs concerning dogs are held in the East. In various parts of the Orient it is – or was, until very recently – believed that there are tribes of men whose heads are fashioned in the shape of a dog. Bilad el Kelb, the Country of the Dogs, said by the Sudanese to exist near Uganda, is a land where all the men become dogs at sundown and run about barking fiercely and hunting in the woods. Arabic superstition maintains that there is a tribe called Beni-Kelb (the Sons of the Dog), in which housewives and daughters look like fair women, but the males have no speech, because they are all white hounds. Some say these hounds 'dwell not in the land of Arabia, but inhabit a country beyond the flood, where they devour their old folk as soon as their beards are hoary'. When these fabled animals catch sight of a guest approaching, the story goes, 'the hospitable men-dogs spring forth to meet him, and holding him by his mantle with their teeth, they draw him gently to their nomad tents, where they give him drink and refreshments.'

The Emperors of ancient China hunted tigers, deer and boar with greyhounds, mastiffs and chows. The chow, still the commonest dog of China, is traditionally the village guardian, sleeping in the sun by day, on watch at night. In Tibet, the lamas placed images of 'dog-lions' in their sacred temples.

It is clear that the ancient Persians venerated dogs because of the many references in their sacred writings. Three kinds of dog are mentioned in the *Zend-Avesta*: the house dog, the shepherd's dog and the vagrant. The stray, prowling around the camps in search of carcasses and unwanted food, was a scavenger well provided for, being compared to the begging holy man, and was protected by religious laws. In the *Zend-Avesta* the stray dog is described as being 'self-clothed and selfshod, watchful, wakeful and sharp-toothed, born to watch over man's goods.'

There are only five sins, according to this work, which carry with them the penalty of being cast into outer darkness. Two of these concern the dog – giving him food too hot to eat, or refusing him food while humans are eating. The faithful, said the holy law, must 'set aside three mouthfuls of bread and give them to the dog'.

When a man dies, as soon as the soul has left the body, the corpse-demon falls upon the body from hell, and this demon can be expelled only by the glance of a dog with four eyes. As the Parsees could never find such a creature, they interpreted the doctrine as meaning a dog with two spots over the eyes.

A yellow-eared and four-eyed dog was believed by many Persians to watch at the head of the Kinvad bridge, the gateway to the next world, and with his fierce barking he was said to drive out the Devil from the souls of the holy ones who walked over the bridge into eternity. This yellow-eared dog, according to the Parsees, was the first creature allowed to guard man's body before

Hirmer Verlag

Left Ceramic dog-lions from China which were often placed in sacred temples: by courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum *Above* In Greek mythology the entrance to the underworld was guarded by a monstrous three-headed dog called Cerberus: Greek vase of the 6th century BC showing the watchdog and Hercules who tamed him

God had animated it. 'Arise, O thou yellow-eared dog, arise!' cried God, and the dog immediately barked and shook his ears, so that the Devil, seeing the fierce creature, fled down into hell.

The Watchdogs of Hell

It was considered a serious crime, according to the *Zend-Avesta*, to kill a sacred water dog, the holiest of dogs. This impious act was believed to bring on a terrible drought which would dry up all the pastures, the drought lasting until the dog's killer was discovered and put to death. Then the holy soul of the dog was offered as a sacrifice for three days and three nights, in front of a blazing fire. The slayer had to endure 20,000 lashings on his back, and then to carry 20,000 loads of wood. He must also kill 10,000 snakes, 10,000 tortoises, 20,000 frogs, 10,000 cats, 10,000 earthworms and flies, and after further punishment he was finally considered to have atoned for his fearful crime.

The Hindus believe that the dog is equal in status to man. 'The wise will look upon a Brahmana possessed of learning and humility, and on a dog'. The dog is therefore a responsible creature, and must pay for his mistakes. Thus, a mad dog that bites without first barking or warning, and wounds a man or sheep, must pay for his crime as if it were wilful murder.

In the sacred books of the Hindus there are two four-eyed dogs of Yama, the God of Death of early Vedic mythology. These dogs guard the gates of hell, a myth which has a parallel in Egyptian mythology, in which Anubis, the dog-headed (or jackal-headed) god, was given the same task, and also in Greek myth in which Cerberus is the monstrous watchdog of the underworld.

The Dog Husband

One of the five daughters of an old woman owned a dog. That girl became pregnant, for the dog changed itself into a young man to become her lover. Her family, ashamed, cast her out. But the girl made fire and survived. Eventually she gave birth to four male pups and one female. They grew quickly. One night months later the girl heard sounds like children playing. She spied on the pups, and saw that they had removed their dog coats and were playing in human form, an ability they had kept secret from her. She quickly took the coats and flung them into the fire. From then on the children walked upright as humans. When the girl's family learned that the children were real people, they were all reconciled.

Abridged from *Folk-Tales of the Coast Salish*, ed. Thelma Adamson

Superstition in connection with the dog dies hard. In many parts of central Europe today, and in most Slavonic countries, the dog-spirit is said to live in the fields of ripening corn, so that when the wind rustles the corn like waves the older folk say, 'Look – the mad dog is in the corn.' This dog is supposed to stay in the cornfield until the last sheaf is left standing. He runs in front of the reapers, seeks sanctuary in the last sheaf, but is finally caught. If a reaper falls ill during the harvest, he is said to have stumbled upon the corn spirit, who has punished him with sickness.

Many legends and superstitions surround the close bond between man and the dog. The Spaniards relate how three dogs, Cubilon, Melampo and Lubina, went with their masters to worship the infant Christ at Bethlehem, so that even today in Spain it is considered lucky to call dogs by these names.

In the United States, a yellow dog following you awhile, or a strange dog going home with you, means good luck. A dog rolling over continually means visitors coming; a dog eating grass foretells rain. And as elsewhere, a dog howling at night is a death omen – because of the old belief in the dog's supernatural perceptions, enabling it to see the approach of Death himself.

JOHN MONTGOMERY

FURTHER READING: Patricia Dale-Green, *Dog* (Houghton Mifflin, 1967) with a complete bibliography.

DOGON

AMONG NON-MUSLIM peoples of French-speaking Africa the best known to anthropology are the Dogon. Their renown is due to the series of books written about them by teams of French anthropologists who over more than a half-century have visited their villages, and to the number of films which have been made of their rituals.

The Dogon live on the edge of the Bandiagara plateau, which straddles the narrow central part of the West African Republic of Mali. They first moved into this region of high cliffs and rocky ravines in the 15th century, in order to seek refuge from other warlike groups who were at that time ravaging the area. As a protective and precautionary measure, they built their villages against the steep, unscaleable faces of the cliffs, and it was not until the late 19th century, when the French colonial authorities had pacified the area and banned slave trading, that they began to move back down into the plain.

The physical austerity of the Dogon's arid, rocky homeland makes a strong contrast with the richness and complexity of their intellectual traditions, their visually striking masks, and their vivid ceremonies. The objects they carve for rituals fetch high prices in Western art galleries, while their elaborate myths about the nature of life are so finely interwoven with one another that they have been collectively compared with the developed theologies of the world's major religions.

The Vibrating Seed

According to Dogon stories about the creation of the universe, life started when a small seed began to vibrate internally. This vibration was made up of seven 'pulses' which expanded in a revolving spiral. When the vibration became so strong that it broke through the seed's sheath, it reached out to the ends of the universe. Therefore, to the Dogon, the spiral signifies both the extension of the universe, and the energy within it. If this spiral is looked at from the side, it appears to be an alternating zig-zag, and in this guise it is meant to represent the perpetual alternation of opposites (such as male versus female, light versus dark, right versus left, high versus low). This is the essential principle of 'pairing': the continued interaction of such opposites is the basis of life, and every Dogon contains a bit of each pole within him- or herself.

The seven pulses form both the universe and each individual: the first and sixth pulses are the legs, the second and fifth ones the arms, the third and fourth ones the left and right sides of the head, and the seventh, the strongest, is the sex organ.

The Dogon lay out their villages along the lines of this seven-fold division of the body. The smithy, at the north end of the village, symbolizes the head; shrines at the other end signify the feet; the huts for menstruating women, on the east and west sides, represent the hands. The family houses grouped in the centre stand for the chest, and the conical shrine at their southern end represents the male genitalia. Since a proper being contains both male and female principles, the hollowed stone near the shrine, which is used for pressing oil, symbolizes the female genitalia. Following their rule of 'twin-ness', the Dogon construct their villages in pairs: one is considered upper, the other lower. Even the space within a village is divided into upper and lower sections.

The houses of individual Dogon are also built according to the same bodily pattern as their villages. The kitchen, at the north end, represents the head; the two hearths stand for the eyes; the main room in the centre is said to be the belly; the two lines of store rooms on the east and west sides symbolize the arms; the pair of towers on the sides of the house, and another pair at its southern end, are the hands and feet.

Ideally, the layout of fields is similarly rule-bound: at the centre are three ritual fields, surrounded by several spiral series of other fields. These series of expanding spirals are laid out, in an alternating manner, in counter-clockwise and clockwise directions. This intricate pattern etched on the surface of the land is mean to represent the unfurling of the boundless cosmos.

As these examples suggest, many different aspects of Dogon life reflect and express the same symbolic system. A person, a house, a village, the tilled land, or even the universe itself may be structured or organized according to the same set of simple principles. An individual is, at one and the same time, both part of this unifying system and the system itself. For, in themselves, Dogon individuals contain the system, i.e. the balance of good and evil, male and female, the revolving spiral, the most miniature seed and the entire cosmos.

The formal elegance of the Dogons' structuring principles, with their micro- and macro-cosmic ramifications, seems almost too perfect to be true. In fact, a investigative re-study of their religious ideas by Walter van Beek, a Dutch anthropologist who more recently lived with them, suggests that it should not be accepted wholesale. The Dogon he spoke to said their system of ideas was not so regular, nor so extensive. They commented that Marcel Griaule, the anthropologist who led most of the famous French expeditions to their homeland and who 'elucidated' the common pattern behind their traditions, was a hard, impatient taskmaster who pestered the locals with so many questions that, in order to displease their powerful guest, they exaggerated the extent to which their key principles order and harmonize the details of their daily lives. Thus exactly what are the religious ideas of the Dogon remains an open question, one which is still in the process of being resolved.

The main, and among the most spectacular of Dogon rituals are the elaborate communal dances held annually in January in honour of all those who have died in the previous twelve months. About every dozen years, groups of Dogon also celebrate the *dama* dance. The point of this ritual is to give the spirits of all those who died in the previous twelve years a last chance to see their living kin perform a gorgeous, theatrical dance before they have to depart forever, to join the ancestors. The most elaborate, lengthy, and rarely performed of the Dogons' funeral rites is the Sigi. Staged approximately every sixty years and involving every single Dogon village, its series of dances takes more than five years to complete. The purpose of this remarkably extended ritual process is to celebrate the mythical death of the first human and to initiate new generations of Dogon males into the their culture's esoteric knowledge.

The Power of the Wilderness

Ritual dances are performed only by men, wearing masks which symbolize the uncontrollable power of the wilderness beyond their villages. By wearing these masks and by dancing in a dramatic manner, the ritual performers try to reinvigorate their bereaved community with the untamed potency of the bush. At the same time, they are lauding life while commemorating death. Grief is to be expunged through action, collective vitality celebrated in the midst of individual deaths.

The dancers stage satirical commentaries on almost anything that touches their life. Specific masks may represent a particular animals, trees, spirits, fellow Dogon, or outsiders. Thus some dancers poke fun at their non-Dogon neighbours or at different types of Westerners with whom they come into contact. Performers masked as 'white men' do not dance, but strut about awkwardly. They may act as officious colonial administrators, greedy for taxes, or as tourists – impolite intruders who push and shove, and carry an important box called a 'camera'. The dances of those Dogon who live near where Griaule worked usually include one performer in a 'white man' mask, who sits in a chair, acts in an insultingly haughty manner, asks nonsensical questions, and writes the nonsensical answers down.

The Dogon are now so famous that they are visited by a steady stream of tourists, eager to buy aged, ritual masks. The locals know exactly what these Westerners want. So, according to van Beek, they smear new carvings with soot, bury them for a few weeks near termite mounds, soak them in millet gruel, and dry them in hot ashes. Visitors are happy to buy these 'antiques' and the Dogon are happy to take their money. Everyone goes home contented.

JEREMY MACCLANCY

FURTHER READING: The most famous work of Marcel Griaule is his highly readable account of the lengthy conversations he had with one learned Dogon, *Conversations with Ogotemmel: an Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas* (Oxford University Press, 1965). There is also much interesting information on the contemporary religious and artistic life of the Dogon in David Maybury-Lewis, *Millennium: Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World* (London: Viking, 1992).

Masks worn by Dogon men in their ritual dances symbolise the uncontrollable power of the wilderness beyond their villages

DOLPHIN

AS AT THE PRESENT DAY, the belief that dolphins were especially friendly to mankind was popularly widespread in the ancient world, and there are many stories of boys riding dolphins and of dolphins saving men from drowning. Perhaps the most famous of all these is the story of Arion, the legendary poet and musician of the 7th century BC, who was threatened with death by sailors who coveted his wealth. He persuaded them to let him sing one last song, then leapt into the sea and was carried safely ashore by a dolphin that had been attracted by his singing.

Many similar tales are told of heroes and demigods, and it has been argued that they represent local versions of the myth of the god who dies and is reborn. Sometimes the dolphin conveys the god safely to the underworld, or brings him back in the spring; sometimes the body of the god is carried to the place that will eventually become his cult-centre.

According to one myth about Dionysus, the god hired some sailors for a voyage and the crew, unaware of their master's identity, plotted to abduct him and sell him as a slave. Discovering this, he manifested himself by filling the ship with wild music and flowing wine, turning the oars into serpents and causing a vine to grow up the mast. Terrified, the sailors leapt into the sea, whereupon Poseidon turned them all into dolphins.

The dolphin was associated not only with life and death but with divine wisdom and love. Apollo sometimes appears as a dolphin god, and the foundation of his celebrated oracle at Delphi was attributed to Cretan sailors who had been led there by a dolphin that Apollo had sent to guide them. Aphrodite and Eros are frequently portrayed riding dolphins, and Poseidon found an amorous task for the dolphin when he sent it in pursuit of the nereid Amphitrite, who had spurned his advances. As a reward for bringing her back to him, according to one account, Poseidon placed the dolphin in the sky as a constellation.

The idea of the dolphin as a guide or guardian on a journey, particularly by water or to the underworld, was widespread among the Greeks and probably throughout the Mediterranean area. At the Greek settlement of Olbia, on the north-west coast of the Black Sea, tokens in the shape of dolphins have been found in the hands of the dead. Dolphins and deities with dolphin attendants, often in forms that resemble the Greek myths, have also been found at many Roman sites as far apart as Libya and Britain.

Classical dolphin beliefs survived into the Christian era and were assimilated to at least one Christian legend. The body of Lucian of Antioch, who was martyred in 312 AD, was thrown into the sea but brought ashore by a dolphin, and Symeon Metaphrastes, the biographer of the saints of the Orthodox Church, tells how the saint's corpse was carried upon the dolphin's back 'laid out as if resting upon a bed, and it was a marvel to see how the corpse remained immovable upon such a slippery and round body'.

Greek vase showing the legendary poet Arion, who escaped from murderous sailors by leaping overboard, and was carried safely to shore on the back of a friendly dolphin

Dolphins are found not only in the Mediterranean but in temperate waters elsewhere, and they appear in the folklore of various maritime peoples. In Annam, for example, it was believed that dolphins would save shipwrecked sailors from drowning, and to find a dead dolphin at sea was a sign of bad luck.

That ancient beliefs may not be entirely mythical is suggested by 20th century reports of drowning people pushed ashore by dolphins, and of dolphins making friends with swimmers and even allowing children to ride them. In recent years, scientists have begun to investigate the reputed intelligence of these creatures and have reported that dolphins seem to have imitated human speech and responded intelligently to certain experiments. However, the possibility that the dolphin is an intelligent species with which man will one day communicate remains a dream. It is a dream in which the dolphin is as benign, and as mysterious, as in the ancient myths.

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DOUBLE

It is an old and tenacious belief that the human soul can take visible form, a belief which lies behind the lore of the astral body, the double and the aura, the guardian angel, the doppelgänger and the fetch. That the soul could be projected from the body at will, that the witch could be in two places at once, that a man might see his own phantom shortly before his death, or that others might see it at the moment of his death, are deep-rooted ideas which are still widely accepted today

THE NATURE AND SUBSTANCE of the soul or spirit has long engaged the attention of theologians and philosophers. Certain gifted individuals have claimed to see visible emanations from the human body in the form of astral bodies, etheric doubles, luminous auras, haloes and aureoles; and many of these manifestations have been represented in art, from the ancient Egyptians to the Surrealist painters (such as Magritte) of the 20th century. In primitive art the soul has sometimes been portrayed as 'a sort of gremlin emerging from the mouth', according to one bizarre but imaginative description of it.

Constant Companions

The concept of the human double (or doubles) has remained a constant factor in folklore and tradition, particularly the belief that every human being is accompanied through life by two extensions of his personality, the one good and the other evil; the former luminous and the latter dark and menacing. This curious idea was probably based originally on a primitive rationalization into companion spirits of the reflected image in water and the ever-accompanying shadow.

A vast wealth of lore, legend and superstition surrounds both the reflection and the shadow the world over. The Zulu, for example, believed it dangerous to look into a dark pool lest he be captured by the indwelling spirit, while the shadow – that darker 'other self' which followed man everywhere – might be lost or injured by carelessness. At a Chinese funeral great care is taken to ensure that no mourner's shadow is trapped inside the coffin when it is closed; while it is the practice of children everywhere to stamp gleefully upon each other's shadow, play-acting the ritual killing of the soul.

It was perhaps inevitable that the dualistic ancient Persians should have considered each human being to be permanently attended by a good and evil spirit, which influenced his thoughts from birth to death. The ancient Greeks numbered these doubles among the daemons. Although the human double could exist apart from its original it would be highly ominous for it to be seen, as this was an omen of death. Significantly it was extremely unlucky for an ancient Greek to see his reflection in water for this too was a fatal omen, inspiring the tragic legend of Narcissus.

Guardian Spirit

While the Greek daemon later evolved into our more familiar demon, the luminous reflection, transformed into the good genius, became the more familiar guardian angel of Christianity (see also GUARDIAN SPIRITS). In this celestial form the concept of the double survived the extinction of the pagan world, but whether conceived as guardian angel, etheric double or astral body, it persisted in the folk beliefs of the people. With its more primitive aspects unchanged, it survived under a variety of names such as the *Jüdel* or *Doppelgänger* of Germany, the *fylgja* of Norway, or the fetch, waft, task or fye of the British Isles.

The most primitive concepts of the soul's function continued to hold sway in popular belief until well into the 17th and 18th centuries. It was believed that the soul could escape from the body, or be stolen, or alternatively be sent out of the body at will.

In the days before the development of modern medical science it was generally assumed that the absence of the soul could be the cause of an illness, and that death might ensue as the result of the soul leaving the body and wandering abroad. Projection of the soul at will was an extremely ancient feature of folk mythology and is suggested in the book of Daniel (8.2): 'I was in Susa the capital, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision, and I was at the river Ulai.'

That the soul could wander into the unknown realm of the dream lies behind the primitive belief that it is dangerous to awaken a sleeper, since his soul might be prevented from returning. Even more sinister was the conviction that a soul could be extracted from the body by sorcerers and ghosts. Upon this assumption is based the belief found in Haiti that a soul can be captured and used as an instrument to enslave its owner, leading to the tradition of the zombie (see ZOMBIE).

The myth of soul projection became potentially dangerous during the witch trials of the 16th and 17th centuries, when it was accepted that the witch's double might wander abroad destroying human life and livestock, while its owner was to all appearances elsewhere. Known as 'spectral evidence', the testimony of a witness that the witch had been seen performing evil deeds or attending the sabbath was sufficient in law to bring large numbers of innocent persons to the stake or gallows, despite the evidence of other witnesses that the witch was at another place at the time stated.

John Cotta in *The Trial of Witchcraft*, published in 1616, justified this procedure by the following analogy: 'Experience doth show us that the same eye which saw the shape, proportion and figure together with the true substance, doth as perfectly both see and know it, when it is separated from the substance by the art of the painter.'

The Double of Death

The concept of the human double played a prominent part in beliefs about omens of love and death. At Hallowe'en a young girl would light two candles on her dressing table and peer into a mirror while she ate an apple, and it was then that the spectral double of her future husband would materialize in the mirror, looking over her shoulder. A girl with particularly steady nerves might even walk round a churchyard 12 times, after which the double would appear to her.

According to Norse ghost lore every human being had a *fylgja*, or 'follower', a spirit that was as mortal as the body it reflected and which came into the world in the caul of a newborn babe and was doomed to die when the original passed away. Connected with this macabre theme was the belief that, whenever a double materialized,

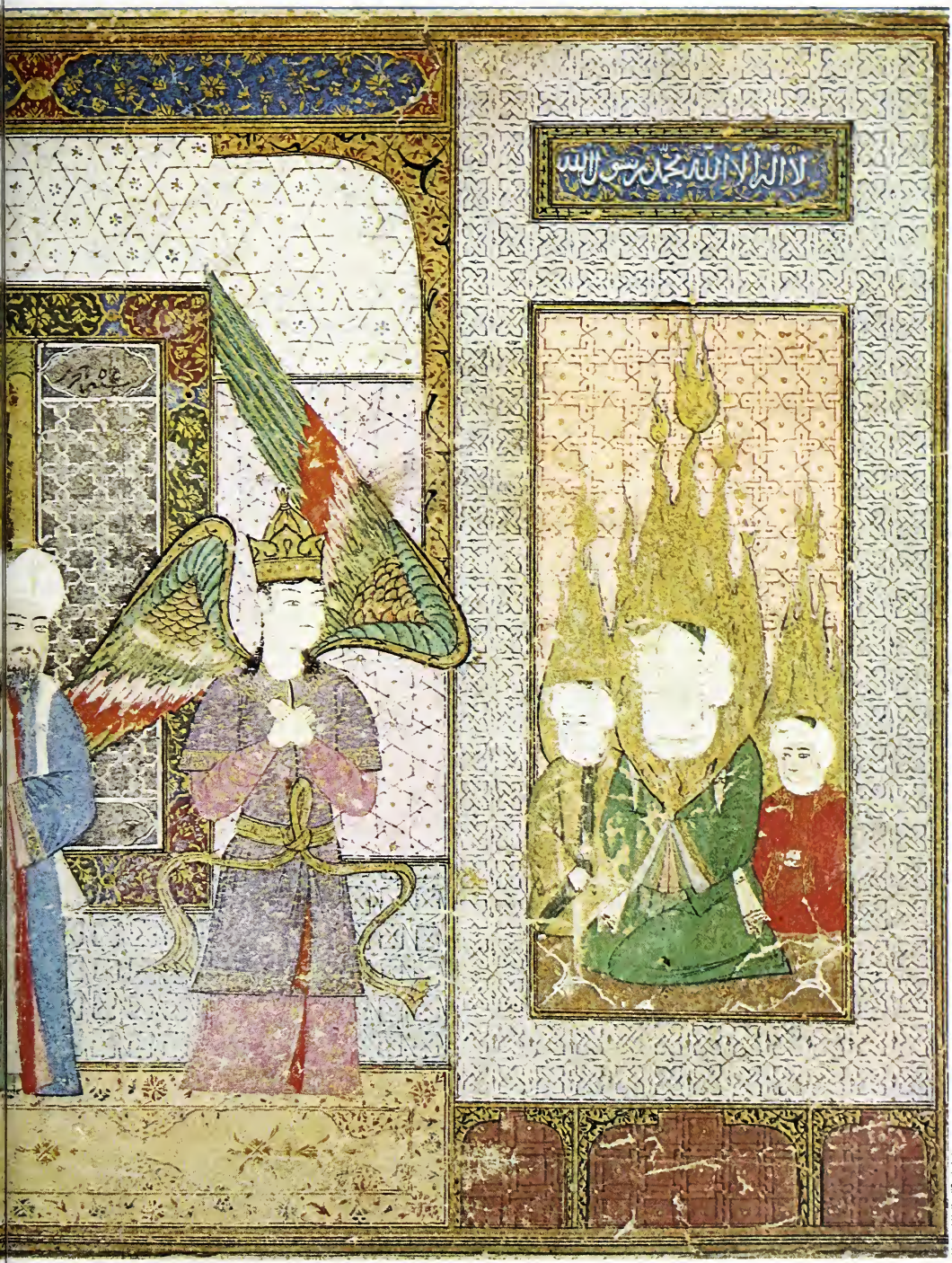
The halo which surrounds the head of the Christian saint has a counterpart in other beliefs: Moslem prophets are often depicted enveloped by flames, a symbol of their spiritual power. 16th century Turkish manuscript showing a prophet visited by an angel and holy men

death was near at hand. An old custom enabled the morbidly inclined, by keeping watch in the church porch on the eve of St Mark, and sometimes on All Soul's Day and Christmas and Midsummer Eves, to witness the shadowy forms of all who were doomed to die in the parish in the succeeding 12 months pass into the church at midnight. It was not unknown for a watcher to see his own double, a far from comforting experience for it was a sign that he too must follow the others.

Far more common, however, are reports of phantoms of the living presenting themselves at the moment of death to an intimate relative or a dear friend. Known as the 'fetch', this type of manifestation is an extremely common feature of the psychic lore of Europe. According to tradition, if the fetch was seen early in the day it was a sign that death would not take place at once: however, should it appear at night, death was likely to occur immediately. In Scotland such wraiths appeared before the shuddering beholder wrapped in their winding sheets. The Irish fetch provides the theme for a number of ghostly anecdotes in which the human being is haunted by his own double. Many modern psychical researchers consider the fetch to be a projection of thought, rather than an actual double, but to our ancestors its genuineness was beyond dispute.

Seeing Your Own Double

Robert Dale Owen, the 19th century Spiritualist, has described how a woman's dying brother appeared to her at the moment of his passing. In the proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research there is an account of the Birkbeck ghost, the apparition of a mother seen by her three children shortly before her death. One of the oldest traditions of this character relates to the 'death fetch' of William Rufus, which was seen at Bodmin in Cornwall flung over the back of a diabolical black goat at the very moment when the king was pierced by an arrow in the New Forest. There is a curious tale in Moreton's *History of Apparitions* in which the double of a young man living in the East Indies, who was about to be disinherited by his father, suddenly materialized in the lawyer's office, terrifying those present with the dramatic command, 'Hold!'.



Michael Holford/Sotheby's

Robert Doisneau, Rapho

Sometimes a fetch would materialize before the eyes of its human original, a horrifying experience because it was surely an omen of his death. John Aubrey, the 17th-century antiquary and collector of contemporary anecdotes, relates how Lady Diana Rich saw a vision of herself as clearly as a reflection in a mirror, as she walked in the grounds of Holland House in London: a month later she was dead. Her sister, Lady Isabel Thynne, had a similar experience before her death.

In the same century, a Dr William Napier, while staying at an inn, saw his own corpse lying on a bed and did not live long afterwards. Queen Elizabeth I, immediately before her death, was shocked to behold a vision of herself on her death-bed, looking 'pallid, shrivelled and wan.' Goethe and the poet Shelley were also among those privileged to see their own death fetches. As for the Empress Catherine the Great, she responded in a typically autocratic manner when her doom-laden double advanced towards her, for she ordered her guards to open fire on it.

Old ideas about the double became involved in the superstition of the falling picture. The portrait was thought to contain the soul or double of the person portrayed, and should it fall it was regarded as a sure sign of his impending death. There are households even today where, after a death occurs, all mirrors are covered – a custom that originated in the belief that the doubles of the living projected into the looking-glass could be carried away by the ghost of the departed to the land of the dead.

Eugen Kusch

Top **Henri Heraut, a Parisian artist who claimed that he was inspired by dreams to create a succession of dolls that closely resembled himself. Some might consider him to possess a macabre sense of humour for even today, in a number of more superstitious societies, effigies of this kind are still believed to house a person's spirit**

Above **Black clay urn from an early Peruvian culture, showing a priest accompanied by his other self, or *alter ego***

Facing page **The mysterious and disturbing *How They Met Themselves*, by the 19th-century English painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti: witches and sorcerers were thought to be able to project their souls at will, but to see your own double materialize was usually taken to be a sign that death was imminent**

The concept of the double is also closely associated with the aura, which is considered by clairvoyants as an 'etheric double'. The aura has long been represented in art, either as a halo (or nimbus) which surrounds the head, or as an aureole which extends around the whole body, both these forms signifying spiritual power.

The subject of the human double is still very much an open one, and remains an area of considerable study and research. It is interesting, in this respect, to note reports of the results of recent investigations carried out with the drug LSD. Not only were the subjects apparently able consciously to transform their reflections in a mirror into extraordinary shapes, but to see their own body images projected on the walls of a room or in a crystal; thus reconstructing experimentally some of the most tenaciously held beliefs about the double in European folklore.

(See also ASTRAL BODY; AURA; OUT-OF-THE-BODY EXPERIENCES.)

ERIC MAPLE

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DOUKHOBORS

A DEROGATORY TERM coined by clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church, the name Doukhobors was given to a nonconformist Christian sect of Russian peasants who first appeared in the latter half of the 18th century; it means 'spirit-wrestlers', in the sense that the sect was supposed to be battling with the Holy Spirit. The Doukhobors themselves claimed that they were fighting alongside rather than against the Holy Spirit, but the nickname, like other religious nicknames such as Quaker and Shaker, persisted in common usage.

Theologically the Doukhobors appear to have had their roots in the beliefs of the Judaizers, a heretical Russian sect which denied the Trinity and the divinity of Christ, the Paulicians, another Russian sect who protested against religious formalism and rejected the Old Testament, and the Bogomils (see BOGOMILS).

The Doukhobors began by rejecting the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church, claiming that the worship of icons and saints, the doctrine of the Trinity and all forms of ritual – including the Sacraments – were ill-founded. They regarded man as the 'living book' and accepted the gospel only in a figurative sense.

Later, they extended their dissent from the Church by including the government in their condemnation, and in particular refused to accept the idea of military service, which was then compulsory in Russia.

As the price of their nonconformism the Doukhobors suffered cruel persecution throughout the 19th century, being transported several times to different parts of Russia.

Appalled by reports of their suffering, the writer Leo Tolstoy and a group of sympathizers, which included the Society of Friends (Quakers) in England, petitioned Nicholas II to allow the Doukhobors to emigrate. Representations were made to the Canadian government and in 1899 the first immigrant party arrived on Canadian soil. Land was allocated to them in the Far West and they were cordially received.

The first colony to arrive in Canada numbered about 7500. According to some recent estimates over 20,000 Doukhobors were still to be found in Vancouver, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and particularly in British Columbia. The main concession made by the Canadian government was that of exemption from national service on religious grounds; to obtain this exemption the Doukhobors were required to belong to one of a list of approved religious organisations: the Union of Doukhobors of Canada, the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ, the Named Doukhobors of Canada, the Society of Independent Doukhobors or the Christian Community and Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors.

In the present century, the sect has continued to make its living mainly by farming, although the original Christian-Communist principles have been, to a large extent, discarded. Many Doukhobors have refused to accept government tax levies, as they reject individual land ownership and the registration of birth or marriage.

Despite their professed pacifism, the sect has sometimes resorted to acts of sabotage, together with mass protest rallies at which they all appeared in the nude, when their beliefs brought them into open conflict with the government; on several of these occasions, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police successfully dealt with this unusual form of protest by the generous use of itching powder.

The Doukhobors have little indigenous art or culture; they claim that artistic development leads to competition, and a similar objection to formal education has caused a good deal of trouble with the educational authorities. Although they accept a slightly modified version of the Scriptures as a basis of their faith, they generally abhor the written word, and include the Bible in this general aversion, passing on the teachings of Christ by word of mouth. Nevertheless, in recent times the Named Doukhobors of Canada, at least, have bowed to modern practices and produced a periodical publication, *Iskra*.

The 'Sons of Freedom', an extreme wing of the Doukhobors, for years attempted to use subversive action to force the Canadian government to deport them back to Russia – blandly disregarding the fact that the assent of two countries is needed for deportation, and that then-Communist Russia was unlikely to welcome them back to the land of their troublesome fathers.

One of the most important birds in mythology and folklore, the dove has a curiously mixed symbolism. It is the bird of love but also the bird of death and mourning

DOVE

A NUMBER of different strands have contributed to the folklore and symbolism of the dove, and so various themes are involved. This is understandable when we consider that the folklore concerns more than one species and that different aspects of the bird's behaviour have caught the attention of people in various communities. In most ancient writings the bird referred to is commonly the domestic *Columba livia* but species are not always clearly differentiated; when the allusion is to migratory species the turtle dove *Turtur communis* is concerned, or in Asia Minor *Turtur risorius*.

The domestication of the dove (or pigeon) dates from remote times, as early Egyptian tomb paintings testify. There was a 'pigeon post' in Babylon and according to Pausanias, the Greek traveller and geographer of the 2nd century AD, a winner at the Olympic Games sent news of his success to his father by homing pigeon.

The Saracens also used pigeons during the Crusades to maintain communications. But in the Middle East as well as in Europe dove cotes were built and the breeding birds were often exploited for food. Such dove cotes dating from the Middle Ages may still be seen in the English countryside.

Although the flesh of doves has been found appetizing by many peoples and pigeon pie was a popular dish in England, there were inhibitions among the Semites against eating it; this was probably because of the birds' associations with divine beings. At Hierapolis in Syria, one of the chief centres of the worship of Atargatis, a deity similar to Astarte and Ishtar, the statue of the goddess was surmounted by a golden dove. The birds were regarded as so holy that a man who was impious enough to touch one was regarded as defiled for a whole day.

The Greeks explained in a myth how the dove became associated with Aphrodite, the goddess of love. The goddess and her son Eros were playfully competing in picking flowers and as Aphrodite was winning because she had the help of a nymph named Peristera (Dove), so Eros turned the nymph into a dove and henceforth she remained under the protection of Aphrodite.

A Greek writer mentions that as Adonis had been honoured by Aphrodite, the Cyprians cast doves into a pyre to him. The mythology of the goddess, whose names Aphrodite Anadyomene signify Sea Foam Rising from the Sea, and especially the story that she was born from an egg brooded by a dove and pushed ashore by a fish, suggest that her cult came from across the sea to Greece (see APHRODITE).

Like a number of other birds with religious associations, the dove came to be regarded as oracular. According to Virgil two doves guided Aeneas to the gloomy valley where the Golden Bough grew on holm oak. There was a tradition at Dodona in Greece that the oracle was founded by a

British Museum

Left **The modern use of the dove as a symbol of peace derives from the story of Noah and the raven and dove he sent out from the Ark. When the dove returned with an olive leaf in its beak, Noah knew that the flood water had subsided** ***Right*** **To the Greeks and Romans the amorous dove was a bird of love; the Romans sacrificed doves to Venus, goddess of love, and depicted her riding in a dove-drawn chariot; from the** ***Roman de la Rose***

British Museum

dove, and the oracle in the oasis of Siwa (Ammon) which Alexander the Great sought out was similarly reputed to have owed its origin to a dove. The Romans sacrificed doves to Venus, goddess of love, whom Ovid and other writers represented as riding in a dove-drawn chariot.

The Roman worship of Venus was to a large extent derived from a Phoenician sanctuary (Eryx), where the dove was revered as the companion of Astarte. Thus European beliefs concerning doves were mainly derived from Asia. It may be that the association in the Middle East between doves and goddesses of fertility arose from the conspicuous courtship and prolific breeding of the birds.

The use of the dove as a symbol of peace, in which role it commonly appears today in cartoons, is derived from the reference in Genesis (chapter 8), describing the return of the dove to the Ark. On being sent out the second time, the bird reappeared with an olive leaf in its beak 'so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from off the earth'. Thus the dove became associated with future prosperity and tranquillity, and hence with peace.

To Christians the dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and an emblem of purity. In this 13th century English manuscript the doves eat the fruit of a tree while the dragons below wait to catch them; the tree stands for God, and the dragon, which cannot live in the shadow of the tree, is the Devil

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Symbol of the Holy Spirit

The importance of the dove in Christian symbolism is derived from the account of the appearance of the bird at Christ's baptism (Matthew, chapter 3; Mark, chapter 1). From the time of the early Church to the present day it has been the symbol of the Holy Spirit, and from the 5th century the dove was shown in pictures of the Annunciation. It also appears in representations of the Creation as the spirit of God 'moving over the face of the waters'. The white dove has long been an emblem of purity and doves were offered in the Jewish rite of purification (Luke, chapter 2). In Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, as the Holy Spirit appears to Lancelot, a dove carrying a tiny golden censer in its beak enters by the window, impressing the Knights of the Round Table with the purity of the castle of Pellas in which they are assembled. The incident is represented in Wagner's opera *Parsifal*.

Doves feature in the biographies of Saints and Christian personalities down the centuries. In the 3rd century the election of Fabian as Pope was regarded as divinely indicated by a dove alighting on his head, and when Clovis was consecrated on Christmas Day, 496, a pure white dove was said to have brought a vial filled with chrism (anointing oil). Probably because of its association with the Virgin Mary, the dove became an emblem of innocence.

The Mourning Dove

For some North American Indians, though, it was an emblem of improvidence or incompetence. California and Great Basin tribes tell many proverbial fables about Dove's inability to build a sound nest, or to profit by the teaching of the thrush.

The voices of doves have contributed to their folklore – which, in America, seems often to have been transferred from the English cuckoo. In Georgia, a girl hearing the calls of the returning doves in spring performs a ritual derived from an English cuckoo ritual. After taking some steps she looks in her right shoe for a hair which will match the colour of the hair of the man she will marry. Rural lore also says that the dove's call (like the cuckoo's) predicts rain. Unlike the cuckoo, a constant call of a dove is an omen of death.

Doves have been widely associated with death and mourning, probably due to the soul-bird belief – which is shared by many North American Indian tribes. An English folk belief suggests keeping a live pigeon or dove in the bedroom of a dying man, to prolong his life till the family gathers, apparently because the soul, with an affinity for the bird, might thus be made to linger. But in the United States the bird is also a health bringer: turtle doves nesting near a house keep off rheumatism, and a dead dove placed on the chest cures pneumonia.

(See also BREATH.)

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Even some sceptical scientists have acknowledged that dowsing works. But just how the dowser finds what he is searching for by means of a rod or pendulum is still uncertain

DOWSING

THE POPULAR VIEW of a dowser is a man with a forked stick in his hands, striding across a field and waiting for some mysterious force to drag the stick's end downwards – like a hunting dog on point – indicating the presence of water underground.

The picture may be inaccurate but, like many popular views, it persists in spite of the facts. Certainly the popular idea of dowsing appears to have a degree of the supernatural about it. Tradition says, for instance, that the forked stick should be hazel – but an even older tradition places hazel near the top of the list of 'magical' woods, a vital ingredient in many charms, amulets and folk cures. Folklore offers rowan and ash substitutes for hazel in the dowsing rod, and these are also magical woods. The forked stick, too, has its witchcraft associations.

It is the central premise of dowsing, however, that arouses scepticism: that some unseen power or force exerts itself on the stick, in the presence of unseen water (or other materials); and that this unexplained effect takes place only when the stick is held by someone with the dowsing talent, who acts as a kind of transformer or perhaps amplifier of the unseen force.

Not 'Water Diviners'

Many dowsers and a few other interested parties have been anxious in recent years to reject imputations of the supernatural, and have borrowed (from J. B. Rhine and other experimenters in telepathy) the less loaded and more modern term 'paranormal' to describe the dowsing ability. They also reject the familiar term 'water divining' – claiming with considerable justification, first that many more things than water can be sought, and secondly that the seeking has little or nothing to do with divination. So 'dowsing', an elderly term with obscure origins, has become their favourite name for their art. There are many organized Societies of Dowsers in Britain and Europe, none of water diviners.

What happens in dowsing is relatively straightforward, if also fairly wide in scope. A person uses some implement to find, by a non-physical means, the whereabouts of some material that would otherwise be hidden to his senses. Subterranean water in all its forms (streams, artesian wells, pools and so on) is the most common object of the search. But almost as often the goal is some mineral, like coal, iron or other metal. Dowsing was also used for centuries in searches for buried treasure, because of its metal-finding efficacy, until modern technology supplanted the dowsing rod.

In archeology, too, dowsers have played a part in determining the position and extent of ancient remains. Yet another use for dowsing is to search for lost objects, but it is sometimes employed in more important matters. Dowsers were in demand during the California gold rush and in other mining areas, and others claim that they have frequently been requested, often by the police, to help in searches for corpses of the drowned. And medical dowsing has been used in the attempt to locate the whereabouts and nature of an illness within a patient's body.

A Variety of Implements

Just as the object need not always be water, the implement need not be a forked stick, or indeed any kind of stick. One well-known Oregon dowser used a copper rod and radio tube as his personalized equipment – another Oregonian, the even more famous Clyde C. Hammerley, used a forked bronze bar. But then the implement could also be a pendulum or similar weight on a silk or nylon thread. Often the pendulum is used together with a rule or a protractor-like disc, especially in medical dowsing, when the pendulum's movement along the gradations of rule or disc provides information towards the diagnosis. Many dowsers have their own highly individualized implements, which work for them, if for nobody else. In the case of rods or sticks, they may be held in a variety of ways, lightly with the fingertips, or gripped tightly in front of the chest with the heels of the hands outwards and the palms down.

An Unconscious Ability

So the dowser chooses his favourite implement and goes in search of whatever is wanted, and at that point we leave the area of hard facts and confront mystery. For when the rods tremble and dip above a perfectly unremarkable spot of ground, or when the pendulum alters the direction of

The high degree of success achieved by dowsers in their search for hidden objects continues to baffle scientists. The implements used to indicate the whereabouts of water, for example, may include a pendulum or similar weight attached to a silk nylon thread *(top left)*, a long metal rod or wire with a right-angle bend at one end *(top right)*, or the more traditional forked hazel stick *(right)*. The awareness of water underground is in some unknown way transmitted through the dowser's body to the implement, which begins to tremble

Simon Field

Dowsers claim that they are endowed with a finely tuned faculty which reacts to the presence of certain objects, causing muscular contractions that affect the rod or pendulum *Left* Using an accurate map this dowser practises his art in the comfort of his own home, later visiting the sites to confirm his finds *Right* Sometimes the vibrations are so strong the dowser has to struggle to hold on

its swing, something has caused the phenomenon. Dowsers know, of course, that the implement cannot do the work itself. the manipulator must have the dowsing ability. Somehow, in the presence of water or whatever, that ability responds and, most dowsers believe, causes unconscious muscular contractions that affect the rod or pendulum.

It must be emphasized that the dowser believes himself (or herself) largely unable (on a conscious level) to detect the object of the search without using the implement. Certainly he or she would agree that they could not pinpoint its location. Nor do dowsers believe that their talent can work unless they have first concentrated the mind on the material for which they are searching. As he sets out across a field with his dowsing rods, the dowser is clearing his mind and thinking only (for instance) about water; this concentration gives his talent space to operate, while the rods reinforce and focus it, as a means of bringing into conscious awareness the dowser's unconscious perception of water.

Dowsing at a Distance

Frequently the effect can be achieved without the dowser's physical presence on the scene. Many searchers after water or minerals do their dowsing in the comfort of their own homes by moving their rods or pendulums above maps of the area in question. Henry Gross of Maine, perhaps the best known dowser in the United States, claimed many successes by map work, Uri Geller (see GELLER), although more famous for his metal-bending activities, subsequently turned his attentions profitably to prospecting at a distance. The dowser may visit the sites later, to confirm his findings and to pinpoint them more accurately. But such dowsers believe that distance has no effect on their perceptions.

So far at least, it seems there is nothing difficult about dowsing. Anyone can try it to see if they have the talent with a bit of bent wire in the garden, or over a good big map with a homemade pendulum. It is all the more odd, then, that such a simple process with such great potential value should be comparatively young.

It may be true that the charmed sticks of primitive peoples that trembled and vibrated when a ghost had been conjured up (as in old Melanesian lore) or in the presence of a thief or his hidden loot (as in old African lore), are in fact early forerunners of the dowsing rod. But dowsing as we know it, with its more practical uses, was born later. Even classical times seem to have been without it: ancient Greek and Roman water finders had an armoury of spells and incantations but were not dowsers.

Not until the Middle Ages do references unmistakably concerned with dowsing begin to occur in learned works. It is known that dowsing was used by prospectors for minerals in the Harz mountains in the 15th century, and German miners later brought the practice to England during the reign of Elizabeth I. By the mid-16th century it had become well established, enough to cause Martin Luther to abjure it, and Georgius Agricola to include, in a treatise on mining, the first (though hardly extensive) investigation of it.

Scoffers and Sceptics

By the 17th and 18th centuries the dowsing rod stood prominently in lists of essential 'scientific' instruments, and had gathered a considerable documentary background. That background included a sturdy array of scoffers, including Sir Thomas Browne and Jonathan Swift. But in spite of rationalist attacks on dowsing as a superstition, and religious attacks on it as devil's contrivance, it went on gaining in popularity. Hordes of men in Europe and Britain, by the 19th century, were engaged in the practice.

Modern scientists on the whole remain sceptical. They are not impressed with the documented successes from past dowsers: the quantity of the evidence does not necessarily prove (they say) each individual case. Geologists, as would be expected, hold particularly strong views on the subject. They

tend to feel, first, that dowsers are too often wrong, and therefore too unreliable, to be taken seriously; and secondly, that when the dowsers are right it is probable that their experience has made them subconsciously aware of land configurations and other physical signs pointing to the presence of water. But certainly not all geologists dismiss the dowsers' claims: some eminent geologists have themselves been dowsers, using it in their work. And a great many others maintain commendably open minds on the subject.

A few scientists have set up experiments to test dowsing. A number of accounts of experiments can be found in Sir William Barrett's book *The Divining Rod* (1926), including a well-documented account of a test in the 1890s, involving the great British dowser John Mullins, who found abundant water on an estate in Sussex where hydraulic engineers had failed.

D. J. West, an authority on psychical research and allied matters, acknowledges the number of cases in which dowsers apparently achieved spectacular successes 'in the field'. But he adds that in systematic laboratory tests 'the level of success has always been inferior to the reports of outstandingly accurate performances in natural surroundings'.

A Controlled Experiment

In 1968 the British author and broadcaster Brian Inglis made an investigation of dowsing in a television programme, in which his representative sceptic, a university professor and psychologist named John Cohen, asserted that dowsing's reality 'has not been demonstrated yet – not scientifically'. Accordingly, a controlled demonstration was arranged at which a part-time dowser named Robert Leftwich scored considerable success.

Professor Cohen claimed, however, that the experiment was not really scientific and at Mr Inglis's request set up a second experiment entirely under his own control. A patch of ground was chosen and five cans of water, a knife and some dummy containers were buried by the Professor and his assistants at spots unknown to anyone else. The dowser picked up three out of five cans of water but failed to find the knife. Although Leftwich himself considered the result disappointing, Professor Cohen was impressed – particularly because there was no possibility of visual clues having been picked up from the topography – and handsomely admitted his amazement and his agreement that there seemed something more to dowsing than he had thought.

All this can be seen to reinforce the dowsers' standard response to accusations that they usually do badly under test conditions: they reply that being surrounded by scientists and other observers, few of whom are sympathetic and many of whom are openly critical, tends to throw off their finely tuned faculty. In the experiment there was the added pressure from the presence of television cameras and crew, causing natural nervousness which would interfere with Mr Leftwich's concentration.

No one should dismiss the dowsers' excuse too swiftly. The ability, if it exists at all, is not a controlled function of the body or the intellect, like running or reading, both of which can be easily tested in laboratories. It is a non-rational, unconscious or subliminal phenomenon; and science has never been favourably enough disposed towards such matters to develop special laboratory techniques for them. There are indications that considerably more individuals may have the ability, in latent form, than we might think – about one in 20, according to one British dowser's estimate.

A Paranormal Awareness

Obviously dowsing involves some form of extra-sensory perception – a 'sensing' of the presence of water and the rest, but one that does not operate through the normal five senses, setting aside the possibility that some normal, physical explanation can yet be found. Some dowsers, but far from all, actually claim to 'see' the object of their search underground when contact is made. Also, it has been suggested that the ability is more like the operation of a radar screen: a mental 'probe' is sent out that bounces back to register on the rods.

Most often, however, the dowsers turn to another technological area for their explanations. They claim that the water or the metal itself gives off 'radiations', and the dowsing talent picks them up. From this widely held idea has come dowsing's quasi-technical name, radiesthesia (see RADIESTHESIA) – often restricted to mean only the

Engraving showing the different ways of holding a divining rod. Unlike other ESP phenomena, positive proof of success in dowsing can be easily found, by digging

medical form of dowsing, but equally often used to cover the whole field.

Certainly dowsing ought to provide a valuable road to an understanding of ESP in general – perhaps more valuable than the telepathy experiments with cards or the telekinesis experiments with dice, if only because it has in the rod an outward manifestation, and because it is focused on material objects. In telepathy tests the results must always be assessed through statistical probability, which critics seem ready to question. In dowsing the results are ascertained merely by digging. So perhaps we can hope that scientists will look more closely at dowsing, and that eventually they will evolve some specialized new techniques for their experiments.

DOUGLAS HILL

The Dowser's Tools

Dowsing is a skill which can be learnt, and the tools required are of the simplest nature. They are simply mechanical accessories which act as 'amplifiers' of three possible influences. They may react to small neuromuscular reflexes in the hands; or possibly they act as interpreters of subconscious senses of which we are not normally aware; or they react objectively to some kind of otherwise undetectable 'radiation' given off by the target material. No one really knows which.

Dowsers have used a variety of simple tools, of which the following are typical:

The traditional dowser's rod is a Y-shaped or V-shaped twig cut from a hazel or similar tree such as hawthorn or cherry, which should be fairly springy. This is held in the hands so that the V points forward or towards the dowser, and parallel to the ground. Upon reaching a critical point the V-point should dip sharply downwards or upwards, often with considerable force.

Similar to this is the whalebone 'spring rod'. This rod should be held by the hands in a way that induces an unstable tension.

A pair of angle rods may also be used, consisting of two L-shaped pieces of wire, often just cut from coat hangers, each with the short end inserted into a handle so that the long end can swing freely from right to left. The dowser walks forward with the long arm of each piece of wire held horizontally; relaxed balance is most important.

Once he has become accustomed to the 'feel' of these rods, the dowser finds that the wires will tend to cross as he passes over his target.

Pendulums can be made from any small weight suspended on a thread, a fishing line, or something similar. The weight or 'bob' can be made from all sorts of material, but it is better if it is made in a symmetrical shape, so that the pattern of its swing is not distorted. Specialised pendulums are often made of, or contain a small quantity of, the substance being sought, but for ordinary use a builder's plumb-bob is perfectly acceptable.

When a pendulum is being used for dowsing, the equivalent of the rod dipping is for the motion of the bob to change from a backwards and forwards movement to a circular movement, or for the bob to change the direction of its swing, as the target is crossed. The adjustment of the thread's length is said to be important, but the theory put forward to justify this, and the calculation that has to be made, is somewhat complicated.

Procedures

The standard technique of dowsing consists of crossing and re-crossing the area of exploration, marking any points where the rod or wand react. Joining up these reaction points in a line will often show the path or flow of the target, whether it is an underground stream, a pipe, a mineral seam or an archeological feature.

As this early 16th century treatise on mining shows, the divining rod was also used by prospectors to locate coal

Once a pattern has been built up so that the feature being searched for can be mapped, then other questions such as 'how deep down is the target?' can be dealt with. There are several dowsing 'rules' to answer this question. One of the most popular is 'Bishops' rule', which solves the problem easily and neatly.

First the dowser stands directly over the line or feature that has been detected, and relaxes completely. Then he or she raises the rods or wand again and walks slowly away from the chosen point in any direction, while concentrating upon the concept of the target's depth. The point is marked where the rods or wand react. This procedure is carried out several times, starting each time from the same point but moving outward in a different direction, until a rough circle can be drawn round the central point. The radius of this circle, says Bishop's rule, should be equal to the the depth of the target: 'the distance out is the distance down'.

The use of a pendulum to determine a location on a map of the area, rather than physically walking over the ground, has no satisfactory explanation, but it appears to work almost as well as field dowsing.

One such map dowsing experiment was carried out with, as the target, the finding of gold deposits. As the map chosen covered an area in which it was geologically highly improbable that gold would be found, it was assumed that the experiment had proved a failure when several strong indications were registered in densely urban areas. Upon further research, however, it was discovered that these points coincided with the location of several major bank branches with safety deposit vaults, apparently vindicating the result of the experiment.

STEPHEN SKINNER

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The greatest mystery of all faced the creator of Sherlock Holmes when he tried to find positive proof of life after death

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

A KEEN STUDENT of all psychic and paranormal phenomena for nearly half a century, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle spent the last 12 years of his life as an active and leading exponent of the doctrines of Spiritualism. Born in Edinburgh in 1859, he was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith but while training to be a doctor he was influenced by the works of Darwin, Spencer and Huxley, which caused him to become an agnostic. From 1882 to 1890 he practised as a doctor in Southsea, England, in conditions of considerable poverty, until growing recognition of his literary ability – and particularly of the Sherlock Holmes stories – enabled him to give up medicine (apart from an interlude as an army surgeon in the Boer War) and devote himself entirely to writing and the study of subjects that interested him.

While living in Southsea in 1887 he conducted a series of experiments in telepathy with an architect friend named Ball, transmitting diagrams from one to the other. 'I showed beyond any doubt that I could convey my thought without words,' he wrote in his memoirs. Having established to his own satisfaction the existence of thought transference between living beings, he became interested in investigating the possibility of messages being transmitted in a similar way from the dead, and attended a number of table-turning seances at the home of General Drayson, an astronomer and pioneer of psychical research.

He became interested in Theosophy, and then in Spiritualist beliefs. Daniel Dunglas Home, the celebrated medium (see HOME), had not long before been practising in London at the height of his fame, and Spiritualism was a topic still very much under public discussion. Conan Doyle very soon became a member of the new Society for Psychical Research, and his reading at that time included the Swedish philosopher

Psychic News

Emanuel Swedenborg – whom with Mesmer, he later classed as one of the founders of the Spiritualist movement – Sir William Crookes's *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* and F. H. W. Myers's *Human Personality*. Conan Doyle amassed an extensive library of Spiritualist writings, and his own writings on the subject included – besides numerous articles and letters in the press – *The New Revelation*, *The Vital Message*, *Wanderings of a Spiritualist*, *The Case for Psychic Photography* and *The History of Modern Spiritualism*, a definitive work in two large volumes. *Phineas Speaks* was a collection of reports of seances held in his own home with Lady Doyle acting as medium. Phineas, a disembodied Arab philosopher, was the guide, who transmitted messages from the next world. Conan Doyle's last book on the subject, *The Edge of the Unknown*, came out in 1930, very shortly before his death.

Voice of a Dead Son

In 1902 Conan Doyle met Sir Oliver Lodge at Buckingham Palace, when both men were receiving their knighthoods, and from that time on they were associated in their researches. It was not until after the First World War, however, that Conan Doyle abandoned almost all his other activities and devoted himself entirely to the cause of Spiritualism.

By now he was wealthy, internationally famous, and happily married for the second time; his first wife had died of tuberculosis after a long illness. But the tragedy of the war overshadowed his life; many of his friends had been killed and his younger son Kingsley died shortly after the armistice, of pneumonia aggravated by war wounds. The propagation of a belief in survival after death became, in this sad epoch, Conan Doyle's primary concern. A year after Kingsley's death he attended the seance of a Welsh medium and heard his son speak to him. 'It was in his voice,' Conan Doyle records in *Memories and Adventures*, 'and concerned with what was unknown to the medium.' In the presence of another medium he saw his mother and nephew 'as plainly as ever I saw them in life', and so did two other witnesses.

Psychic News

Conan Doyle's ideas of conditions in the afterworld did much to comfort the bereaved ***Top*** **Spirit photograph, taken by John Myers, of Conan Doyle (right) and Sir Vincent and Lady Caillard** ***Above*** **Photograph of Conan Doyle taken early this century**

In order to proclaim his message of hope to the bereaved he began an extensive series of journeys about the world, giving lectures on Spiritualism and life after death, and meeting well-known mediums and leading personalities interested in psychic matters. Wherever he went he drew large audiences, who were probably attracted in the first place by his fame as the creator of Sherlock Holmes, but who remained to be won over by his sincerity and undoubted gift for public speaking. His lectures were illustrated by slides of 'spirit photographs' taken or developed by himself. One, for instance, showed the corridor of a 600-year-old inn at Norwich in which the ghost of a woman was clearly to be seen.

He became president of various related bodies, the London Spiritualist Alliance, the British College of Psychic Science, and the Spiritualist Community. Until shortly before his death he was writing, and involved in correspondence and meetings with the Home Secretary, Clynes, pressing for an amendment to the law as it affected mediums and their clients. Conan Doyle finally died at the age of 71 in July 1930. Not long before his death he became convinced that some fearful cataclysm was to take place in nine or ten years' time.

Conan Doyle's beliefs had called down on him the disapproval of churchmen, not

only because they involved communications with the dead, expressly forbidden by the Bible, but also because they ran counter to the conventional Christian idea that the souls of the dead sleep for many years before resurrection. The Spiritualist belief was that souls do not always realize that they are dead, although there is nearly always an immediate awakening to a new life of the spirit. Doyle felt strongly that the living should do all that was possible to assist the recently dead to surmount this difficult phase and become adjusted to existence on a new plane.

His beliefs were fairly simple and clear-cut. In a lecture given in Edinburgh in 1922, for instance, he described conditions on the 'other side', as reported in messages given through mediums: those who died in old age became younger again, while those who died as children grew up, so that all were at an age of about 25. The new existence had an exceedingly complex social structure, with a hierarchy of different grades, or spheres; depending on its behaviour in previous earthly life, the departed spirit found its appropriate sphere in the next life, but aspiration could carry it upward in a never-ending ascent. Formulating a Darwinian theory of the evolution of the spiritual life of mankind, Conan Doyle concluded that simple logic showed that the scheme of evolution evident in all physical life must also be reflected on the paraphysical level (a theory later to be taken further in the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin).

As well as the disapproval of the clergy, Conan Doyle had to bear scepticism and mockery from scientific writers of the time. He remarked in his memoirs: 'I have abandoned my congenial and lucrative work, left my home for long periods at a time, and subjected myself to all sorts of inconveniences, losses, and even insults, in order to get the facts home to the people.' The criticisms of scientists particularly irritated him. 'The fact that a man is a great zoologist like Lankester, or a great physicist like Tyndall or Faraday,' he said, 'does not give his opinion any weight on a subject which is outside his own speciality.' This argument was not entirely consistent with his statement elsewhere: 'I felt more and more that the case for the phenomena vouched for by such men as Sir William Crookes, Barrett, Russel Wallace, Victor Hugo, and Zöllner was so strong that I could see no answer to their exact record of observations.'

Ghost of a Boisterous Child

Conan Doyle's own standpoint was that of a 'respectful materialist who entirely admitted a great central intelligent cause.' He was also, in the view of many of his readers, an expert sifter of evidence and had in fact successfully solved several real-life mysteries which were laid before him in his capacity as the creator of Sherlock Holmes. He himself recorded many psychic experiences, including the case of a haunted house at Charmouth in Dorset, which as a member of the Society for Psychical Research he was called on to investigate on behalf of the upset tenants. He says that, 'In the middle of the night a fearsome uproar broke out,' in spite of the fact that the threads which the investigators had stretched across doors and windows remained unbroken. There were no other manifestations after this, but subsequently the house burned down and the skeleton of a child of 10 was unearthed in the garden. Conan Doyle suggested that a young life cut short in a sudden and unnatural fashion might have left a store of unused vitality liable to break out in unexpected ways.

In his disputations on the Spiritualist controversy Conan Doyle did not at any time attempt to deny the existence of some fraud among mediums and psychic practitioners, but he asserted that it was far less common than was supposed, and that he himself had only encountered it three or four times. What could complicate the issue, he said, was unconscious fraud. This sometimes occurred when a medium in a semi-conscious condition, possibly suffering from a temporary failure of real psychic power, submitted to the promptings of his earthly nature, or to telepathy messages from those around him.

He adduced numerous examples of true phenomena, as personally experienced by himself. When his own wife was acting as a medium he had received through her whole notebooks of information which was quite outside her range of knowledge; he had developed photographic plates with messages from, and pictures of, the dead; he had witnessed examples of telekinesis, the movement of physical objects through the air, and through closed doors and windows, without human agency; with his own hand he had felt the materialized hands of spirits, and he had had several dreams in which he foresaw events to come. All these phenomena had been scrutinized in a properly Holmesian critical spirit; as he observed himself, he would be unimpressed by a medium who said 'remember the happy days of childhood', but would pay attention if he said 'remember the day we put frogs in the cook's bed.'

An avowed agnostic, Conan Doyle did not immediately reach the conclusion that there was indeed a life after death, even after he had acknowledged the validity of various supernormal phenomena. For 20 years he was moving towards such a belief, and by 1916 he declared that he was in possession of positive knowledge to this effect. Although opposed to all church dogma he retained a deep respect for the principles of Christianity, as for those of Islam and Buddhism; at one point he proposed an eighth principle, to be added to the seven official principles of Spiritualism, which should recognize the person of Jesus Christ and affirm his leadership in the sphere of ethics. The Committee of the National Spiritualists' Union, however, voted against this.

In a recorded talk shortly before his death, Conan Doyle said: 'People ask, "What do you get from Spiritualism?" The first thing you get is that it absolutely removes all fear of death. Secondly, it bridges death for those dear ones whom we may love. We need have no fear that we are calling them back, for all we do is to make such conditions as experience has taught us will enable them to come if they wish, and the initiative lies always with them. They have many times told us that they would not come back if it were not God's will, and that it makes them intensely happy to be able to help and comfort us, to tell us about their happy life in that world to which we are in our turn destined to come.'

JOAN AIKEN

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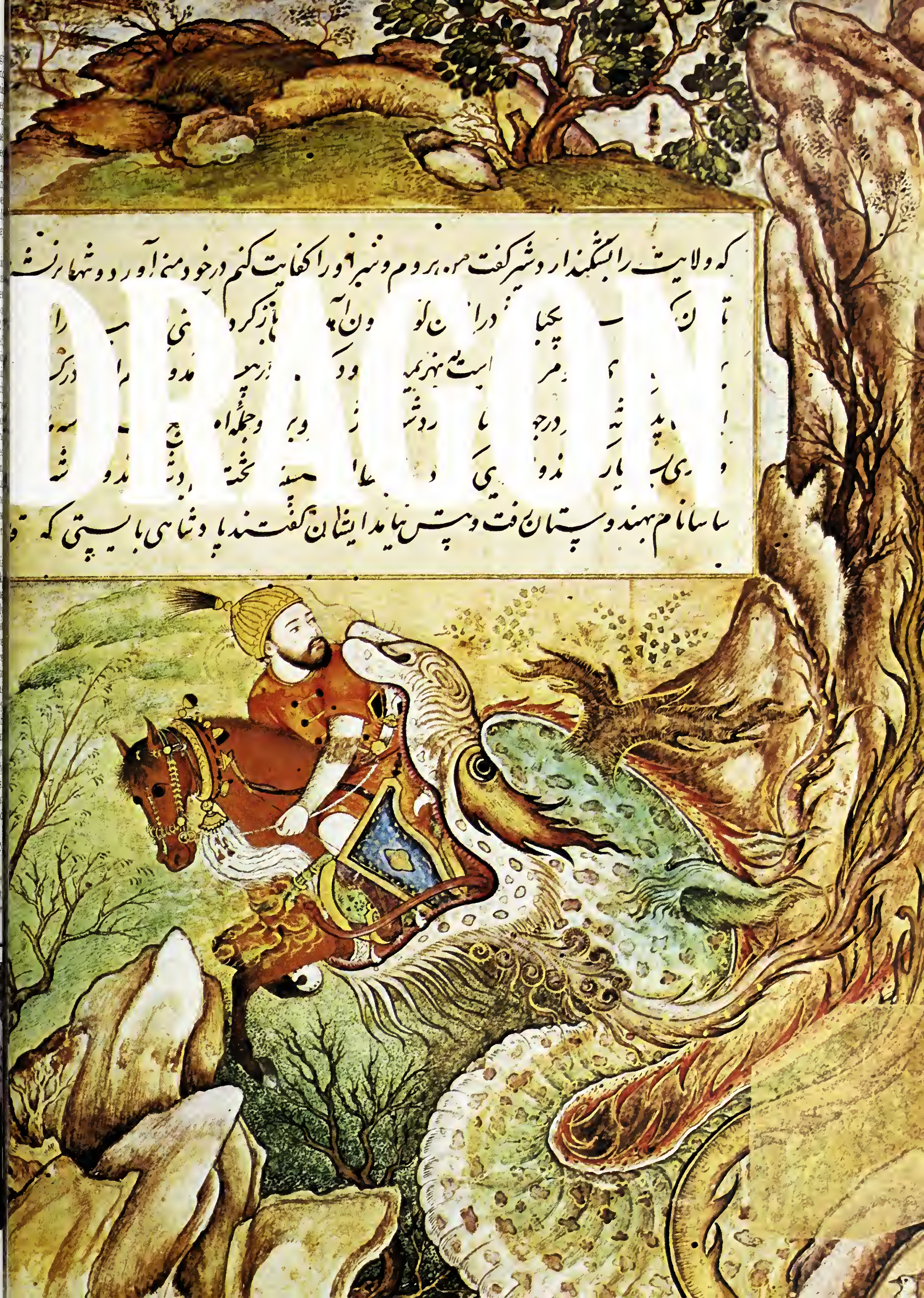
Dracula

The most famous vampire of fiction, central character of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*, published in 1897, and of a celebrated film version, made in 1931 and starring Bela Lugosi: a walking corpse which sucks the blood of the living, Dracula has appeared in many other horror films.

See FILMS; VAMPIRES.

DRAGON



The forked tongue and tail of the dragon, his glaring eyes and ominously flared nostrils, his scorching breath and sharp teeth and talons, add up to a formidable array of weapons

'Here be dragons' claimed the early map-makers and indeed there are few parts of the world where this mythological monster has not raised its scaly head. The ambiguous character of the dragon can be seen as a reflection of its hybrid ancestry; to the early Christians it was the malevolent Adversary, while the Chinese believed it was a beneficent being

WHERE THERE ARE MYTHS, there are usually dragons. But although it would be easy to recognize a dragon, and descriptions and artistic representations of dragons abound, it is not so easy to define the beast. Like other fabulous monsters, such as the chimaera and griffin, the dragon is a mixture of several creatures. One of the earliest dragons to leave a permanent mark in the world (he is depicted in white glaze against a blue background on a gate in ancient Babylon) appears to have the head and horns of a ram, the forelegs of a lion, a scaly, reptilian body and tail, and the hind legs of an eagle. Each race has naturally drawn on the part of the animal world with which it is familiar in putting this composite beast together. The dragon of the ancient Egyptians is a close relation of the crocodile, while elephant dragons appear in Indian myths, and stag dragons in Chinese.

The dragon is even more dangerously equipped than any of his mythical rivals. The forked tongue and tail, the glaring eyes and ominously flared nostrils, the scorching breath, the sharp teeth and talons, and the armour-plating of the body add up to a formidable array of weapons. But strangely enough, the dragon is by no means always hostile to man. In the East, particularly, he is often a symbol or a portent of prosperity, and there are many tales of individual acts of kindness performed by dragons for the benefit of men.

Though most people nowadays would associate the dragon with fire, his primeval element is water, whether the sea, rivers, lakes, water-spouts or rain-clouds, and this watery connection is what chiefly distinguishes the dragon from other mythical hybrids. Even desert-dwelling people insist on it, and their dragons spend a lot of time lurking at the bottom of wells. Indeed, the bottom of the well is often identified with the dragon's eye, and this is a link with another distinguishing characteristic of the dragon: its baleful and searching gaze. There is little doubt that the very word 'dragon' is derived ultimately from an ancient Greek word meaning 'to see'. In the Old Testament the dragon is mentioned several times in the same breath as the owl, another creature with large, bleak eyes.

Descended from Serpents

Like other creatures, both mythical and real, the dragon has evolved. The giant saurians – the whale-sized fish-lizards, the fifty-foot tyrannosaurs and the tank-like dinosaurs – disappeared from the face of the earth millions of years before man appeared, but it is possible that their fossils and remains inspired the earliest stories about dragons. Amongst extant creatures, however, the dragon's earliest identifiable progenitor is the serpent, and some authorities believe that they can trace the lineage of dragons all over the world back to one common ancestor, Zu, the monster of watery chaos in Sumerian mythology.

The Sumerians settled in Mesopotamia in the fifth millennium BC, and their struggle to tame the rivers in that country inspired several myths. Their most important god was Enlil, who himself started life as a river god, but was promoted to the dry land and the upper world. The serpent or dragon Zu stole the tablets, worn by Enlil on his breast, on which were set out the laws governing the universe. On Enlil's orders, Zu was slain by the sun god Ninurta, who thus set the precedent for sun gods who battle with dragons in the myths of other ancient peoples.

The Sumerians were superseded, c 1800 BC, by the Babylonians, a Semitic people, who took over many of their myths and religious beliefs. The legend of Zu left traces in the great Babylonian epic of creation *Enuma elish*, in which the sea goddess Tiamat leads the forces of primeval watery chaos against the gods (see CREATION MYTHS). In her army she has sharp-fanged serpents and ferocious dragons, with crowns of flames, made so like gods that all who look at them die of fright. She is defeated nevertheless by Marduk, champion of the gods, and son of Ea-Enki, the god of wisdom. After the battle Marduk cuts Tiamat's body in two, leaving one half to form the sea and lifting up the other to form the sky. Marduk was originally the local god of the unimportant town of Babilu, but his power grew with that of his people, the Babylonians, and he became eventually the god of creation. Every New Year, which the Babylonians celebrated in the spring, his victory over the dragons of chaos was re-enacted through the recital by priests of the creation epic.

It seems likely that Babylonian or Sumerian influence were at work from an early period in Egypt. The dragon myth in particular is thought to have reached there towards the end of the third millennium BC, and to have inspired the legend of the gigantic serpent Apophis (or Apep, or Apop), the enemy of the sun god. Later in Egyptian mythology, the captive Apophis was identified with the ocean which girt the earth and held it together, but at the same time threatened continually to break its fetters and destroy the world. The Egyptians gradually adapted the dragon myth from one of creation to one of the daily combat between light and darkness. The sunset was interpreted as the swallowing of the sun by Apophis, or alternatively the sun was imagined to do battle with the dragon every night as it travelled through the underworld. The dragon rose from a dark river to attack the sun's boat, but by morning had been cut to pieces, or, in other versions of the myth, had been forced to disgorge the sun.

There was a similar story of battle between the sun and storm clouds, which was also represented as a conflict between the god and a dragon or water monster. In a related Asiatic myth, which also derives from the Sumerian and Babylonian stories of battles between the dragons and a god, the dragons survived but were held down on the sea-bed by fetters or by the hands of the gods; their vain struggles to free themselves caused earthquakes and violent storms at sea.

Servant of the Devil

At a later period in Egypt, the dragon was identified with the god Seth, the violent 'Lord of the South', god of earthquakes, hurricanes, thunder and destruction, who shook the very sea itself (see SETH). The belief arose, too, that after death the souls of the wicked would be cast before a fire-breathing dragon or devoured by the 'Swallower of the West', a dragon-like hybrid which was made up from the crocodile, the lion and the hippopotamus.

Previous page **The dragon's serpentine origins are apparent in the monster that devours Bahman and his horse in this illustration to a Mogul epic: British Museum**

Right **The earliest stories about dragons were possibly inspired by the fossilized bones and remains of giant animals that inhabited the earth millions of years ago; some experts believe that the monster that allegedly lurks in the depths of Loch Ness is the only surviving example of these prehistoric beasts: photograph of the Loch Ness 'monster'**

Below **The dragon's traditional guardianship of treasure is reflected in the Siegfried saga in which the hero kills the dragon Fafnir who lurks in a cave guarding the source of life and power: still from the film *Siegfried*, directed by Fritz Lang in 1923**

Keystone Press Agency

National Film Archives

In the oldest writings in the Old Testament, Yahweh is represented as a storm god, at whose coming 'the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, yea, the clouds dropped water, the mountains quaked before the Lord' (Judges 5.4-5). His power over sea, sky, cloud and serpent is celebrated in passages reminiscent of the Babylonian and Egyptian dragon-myths. 'Thou didst break the heads of the dragons on the waters' says the Psalmist (Psalm 74.13), and, according to Isaiah (27.1), 'the Lord . . . shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.' In fact, the battle between Yahweh and the dragons is a familiar theme in the visions of the later Hebrew prophets, for whom, however, the dragon has a purely symbolic meaning as the enemy – Assyrian, Babylonian or Egyptian – of Israel. The prophet Ezekiel speaks of the Lord God's hostility towards Pharaoh, 'the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams', into whose jaws he will put hooks and whom he will have thrown into the wilderness (Ezekiel, chapter 29). During the Babylonian exile another prophet calls upon the Lord with the cry, 'Was it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the dragon?' (Isaiah 51.9).

Elsewhere in the Old Testament, and in Jewish writings of the 1st century AD, the dragon is a symbol of mourning and desolation. In early Christian texts the dragon represents the Devil or the Devil's servant, an identification suggested by the leathery webbed feet and forked tail common to both beings, and one which is in line with the general conception of the dragon as the enemy or adversary, especially of God or the gods. In the Book of Revelation (chapter 12), the dragon is described in some detail. He is big and red, and has seven heads and ten horns, and in the war in heaven Michael and his angels fight against the dragon and his angels 'and the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.' (See also DEVIL.)

The process in which different peoples develop and adapt a vague concept in a way which suits their own needs and experience, can be traced in the treatment of the dragon myth by the ancient Iranians and Indians. In Iran, where a dualistic view of the universe prevailed, there were many forms of the myth of conflict between the god of light and the dragon. In one of these myths the great god of creation Ahura Mazdah struggles with the three-jawed, three-headed, six-eyed dragon Azhi Dahaka, 'an imp of the spirit of deceit'. In a later version of the same story, prevalent in the 4th century AD, it is the fire god Atar, originally a lesser deity in a polytheistic system, but now the son of Ahura Mazdah, who fights the dragon Azhi. The dragon also evolves with the passage of time, and becomes a human monster with two serpents springing from his shoulders, a guise in which he has passed into the folklore of the Armenians and other people of the Middle East.

In the ancient Hindu hymns known collectively as the *Rig Veda* (c1200 BC), the dragon is represented as the demon of drought, and is slain by the god Indra, who thereby releases the waters from the storm clouds. In a parallel development to the Iranian, another version of the myth describes how Trita, god of healing and life, and bringer of fire from heaven, slays the three-headed, six-eyed serpent Visvarupa. In both these myths there are details which recall the Sumerian Ninurta's battle with the dragons. In Vedic mythology, however, the dragon is occasionally depicted as a friend of man, and in later Hindu sacred texts Indra's defeat of the dragon meets with only qualified approval.

The dragon is described as a three-headed creature in the earliest mention of

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Facing page **In China the dragon was a splendid and generally benevolent beast, associated until 1911 with everything used by the Emperor; but Chinese dragons could cause droughts or an eclipse of the sun when offended, and the Chinese hold special dragon festivals to propitiate them: pillar carved in the shape of a dragon's head, on a floating restaurant at Aberdeen, Hong Kong, where one of the biggest festivals is held each year *Above* An alchemical version of the dragon's legendary guardianship of treasure is illustrated in this 15th century woodcut by Johannes de Cuba of Strasbourg: a dragon is killed to extract a precious gem that the animal has transformed from an ordinary stone**

him in ancient Greek literature (in the *Iliad*), where Agamemnon's sword-belt is decorated with a blue enamel dragon and there are three dragons on his cuirass, which was made in Cyprus. The reference to Cyprus may be connected with the fact that the Greeks probably imported the dragon from Palestine, as is reflected in the myth of Perseus and Andromeda. The daughter of the Ethiopian King of Joppa (Jaffa), Andromeda was chained to a cliff on the coast of Philistia (Palestine) when Perseus saw her, fell instantly in love with her, and rescued her from the female sea-dragon. Robert Graves has suggested that Andromeda's story was inspired by a Palestinian or Syrian icon of the Babylonian god Marduk. The Greek myth did introduce a new element into the tradition about dragons, however, and that is the idea that the dragon must be propitiated by human sacrifice, preferably of a royal virgin.

Another peculiarly Greek notion is that of the sowing of dragon's teeth, from which spring the founders of the city. The dragon has survived in modern Greek folklore as the *drakos*, a word usually translated as 'ogre'. These creatures maintain the time-honoured dragon role of the adversary, and in some stories they have more specific dragon traits: they sleep with their eyes open, and see with them shut, a characteristic suggested by fish, which is also attributed to the Dragon King in some Chinese legends. They are also, in some stories, assigned the role of guarding precious treasure.

Guardian of Treasure

The earliest mention of dragons in connection with treasure appears to be by a Greek author, Artemidorus (2nd century AD) an expert on the interpretation of dreams. Dreams about dragons, he says, indicate wealth and riches, 'because dragons make their fixed abode over treasures'. There may well be some remoter, more obscure link between dragons and treasure that has so far not been explained, because in a culture quite unrelated to any of those we have discussed so far, that of the Maori in New Zealand, the dragon's first cousin, the lizard, is also revered as the guardian of funerary caves, and this is said to be because the lizard represents Whiro, the god of sickness and death. The sacred crocodiles of ancient Egypt may also have had a similar function.

The association between dragons, caves and treasure became very popular in the early Christian period and in the Middle Ages. In a Roman legend of the 5th century, St Sylvester conquers a dragon which lies at the bottom of a cave on the Tarpeian rock outside Rome, to which maidens had been sacrificed. The legend incorporates much of the typical symbolism of dragon lore. There are 365 steps leading down to the cave, an allusion to the sun (linked, as we have seen, with dragons in Sumerian and Egyptian mythology) and its annual journey round the earth, according to the cosmology of the time. In this Roman legend the cave is also a symbol of death, as in the Maori lizard cult.

In Teutonic mythology the dragon Fafnir slain by Siegfried lurks in a cave, watching over a treasure hoard which is the source of life and power. Siegfried is made invulnerable by bathing in the dragon's blood, and through drinking it acquires the language of the birds – symbolic of domination over nature. In the myths of many races, heroes obtain boundless courage by eating a dragon's heart or drinking its blood, or acquire its penetrating gaze as a result of killing it.

In early Christian thought the dragon has the allegorical role, already seen in the book of Revelation, of representing the Devil or the Antichrist, or more generally, evil passions, paganism, or the oppressive powers of this world. Whatever the connection between the historical and the legendary St George, the origin of the story of St George and the dragon seems to lie in this general idea, but as worked up in the Middle Ages, particularly under the influence of the Crusades, the story obviously owes much to the Greek myth of Perseus and Andromeda. The hold of the dragon on the medieval mind is also exemplified in heraldry, where the dragon is featured often, both for charges and supporters. The use of the dragon as an emblem in modern times is, of course, suggested by this heraldic tradition.

The Dragon of the East

Whereas in the ancient Middle East and in medieval Europe the dragon remains an essentially sombre and forbidding monster, lurking in the mythical depths, as it were, in the Orient and particularly in China and Japan he has a certain splendour and panache. Indeed, there can be few mythological figures which have so stimulated the oriental imagination. The mere description of the dragon given by the ancient Chinese writer Wang Fu shows an exuberance not to be found in the West: it has a triple-jointed body, the head of a camel, the horns of a stag, the eyes of a demon, the ears of a cow, the neck of a snake, the belly of a clam, the scales of a carp, the claws of an eagle and the soles of a tiger. The Chinese dragon is, however, just as intimately concerned with water, caves and treasure as his cousins in the West. And cousins all these dragons are, sharing common ancestors, though the Chinese dragon has picked up some of the traits of the Burmese lotus-serpent on his journey from Mesopotamia and India, has assimilated a Buddhist adaptation of ancient Asiatic snake cults, and has of course acquired some distinctively Chinese features on his native soil.

The most striking of these is that the dragon in China is not, as in the West, a representative or symbol of the powers of evil. On the contrary, according to the old Chinese *Book of Rites*, the dragon as the chief of all scaly animals is one of the four benevolent spiritual animals, the unicorn, phoenix and tortoise being the others. How this transformation came about can only be guessed. It reflects the general principle stated by Jung that 'every psychological extreme secretly contains its own opposite', which is expressed in Chinese thought through the classical doctrine of Yang and

When offended or disturbed, Chinese dragons could cause a drought by gathering up all the water of a district in baskets, or they could eclipse the sun

Yin, the good and bad influences. That this principle underlies the dragon's transformation into a beneficent being is confirmed by Wang Fu's statement that the dragon's scales number 117, of which 81 are imbued with Yang and 36 with Yin, because the dragon is partly a preserver and partly a destroyer. Yang is also the male element and, as its representative, the dragon also became at an early period a symbol of the Emperor, and appeared on the Chinese flag (which may have suggested its use in heraldry later in the West). During the Manchu dynasty (1644-1912) the dragon was held in especial esteem, and everything used by the Emperor was described in terms of it: there was the dragon throne, dragon bed, dragon boat and so on.

This kindly view of the dragon entailed significant changes in the dragon lore which the Chinese adopted from other Asiatic peoples. Whereas the Sumerian Zu stole the tablets of destiny from the god Enlil, Chinese dragons frequently appear as the givers of laws. They are also instructors in magic and givers of swords, while the art of painting was introduced to China by a dragon.

Although Chinese dragons appeared at favourable moments to presage periods of prosperity, and had been known to emit foam which had supernatural powers of fertilization, they could also, when offended or disturbed, cause a drought by gathering up all the water of a district in baskets, or they could eclipse the sun. To

Above **The Greek legend of Perseus and Andromeda introduced a new element into popular dragon mythology: the belief that the beast must be propitiated by the sacrifice of a royal virgin. Painting of Perseus slaying the dragon to free Andromeda, daughter of the Ethiopian King of Joppa, by Piero di Cosimo, in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence**

Right **In Christian thought the biblical dragon Leviathan was identified with the Devil and witches were represented submitting to their Master in the form of a dragon, as in this early 16th century drawing by Hans Baldung Grien**

Far right **According to a Yorkshire legend, More of More Hall vanquished the Dragon of Wantley by wearing armour studded with spikes, and kicking the monster: illustration from a collection of old ballads**

The Terror of Smaug

Bilbo the hobbit ventures into the underground lair of Smaug, the dragon:

As he went forward it grew and grew, till there was no doubt about it. It was a red light steadily getting redder and redder. Also it was now undoubtedly hot in the tunnel. Wisps of vapour floated up and past him and he began to sweat. A sound, too, began to throb in his ears, a sort of bubbling like the noise of a large pot galloping on the fire, mixed with a rumble as of a gigantic tom-cat purring. This grew to the unmistakable gurgling noise of some vast animal snoring in its sleep down there in the red glow in front of him.

It was at this point that Bilbo stopped. Going on from there was the bravest thing he ever did. The tremendous things that happened afterwards were as nothing compared to it. He fought the real battle in the tunnel alone, before he ever saw the vast danger that lay in wait. At any rate after a short halt go on he did; and you can picture him coming to the end of the tunnel, an opening of much the same size and shape as the door above. Through it peeps the hobbit's little head. Before him lies the great bottom-most cellar or dungeon-hole of the ancient dwarves right at the Mountain's root. It is almost dark so that its vastness can only be dimly guessed, but rising from the near side of the rocky floor there is a great glow. The glow of Smaug!

There he lay, a vast red-golden dragon, fast asleep; a thrumming came from his jaws and nostrils, and wisps of smoke, but his fires were low in slumber. Beneath him, under all his limbs and his huge coiled tail, and about him on all sides stretching away across the unseen floors, lay countless piles of precious things, gold wrought and unwrought, gems and jewels, and silver red-stained in the ruddy light.

Smaug lay, with wings folded like an immeasurable bat, turned partly on one side, so that the hobbit could see his underparts and his long pale belly crusted with gems and fragments of gold from his long lying on his costly bed. Behind him where the walls were nearest could dimly be seen coats of mail, helms and axes, swords and spears hanging; and there in rows stood great jars and vessels filled with a wealth that could not be guessed.

J. R. R. Tolkien *The Hobbit*

propitiate them, the Chinese flew dragon kites, especially at the mumming parade n the New Year.

In Japanese legends the dragon is a more ambivalent creature than in Chinese. There are dragons who demand the sacrifice of a young virgin every year, and in one myth the storm god Susa-no-wo rescues the princess Inada by making the dragon drink saki and then chopping it to pieces. In Japan, too, the dragon is associated with water. The Dragon King lives in a mysterious marine realm, with a retinue of serpents, fishes and other sea monsters, and tribes of dragons have power over rain and storms. There are many stories of wise Buddhist priests who can tame these creatures and make them give rain in time of drought, or of holy men on pilgrimages who command the dragons to calm the stormy sea.

The Beast Within Us

The dragon is known in many other parts of the world: in Hanoi, which was once known as the Dragon City; in Iceland, where the god Loki has associations with a female dragon; in the British Isles, where there are dragon caves and dragon-haunted lochs; and in Hawaii, where all the dragons are descended from the mother goddess Mo-o-inanea, the 'self-reliant dragon'.

According to some modern psychologists, the dragon is still with us, representing, says Jung, the 'negative mother-imago, and thus expressing resistance to incest, or the fear of it'. The dragon's guardianship of treasure represents, according to the same author, the mother's apparent possession of the son's libido: in psychological terms, the treasure which is hard to attain lies hidden in the unconscious. While this theory can be neither proved nor disproved, the consistency with which a number of well-defined traits have adhered to such an indeterminate monster in many countries and climates throughout 50 or 60 centuries, at the very least, poses an interesting problem. One thing is clear: broadly speaking, people get the dragons they deserve, and the same might be true of psychologists and anthropologists, each of whom will give his own solution of the problem.

DAVID PHILLIPS

Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe

John Webb

'It is natural for all to delight in works of imitation', said Aristotle, speaking of the origin of the dramatic impulse. Yet in the beginning, drama had a more practical purpose, the attempt to encourage the growth of crops by imitative action

DRAMA

MAN IS A NATURAL MIMIC and among the earliest evidences of magical imitation are the representations of animals in the cave art of the Old Stone Age. Our ancestors may have made these drawings to amuse themselves but many anthropologists have concluded that their work had a purpose and was a form of magic for good hunting and bountiful animal life (see CAVE ART). The idea of imitating in order to acquire was continued in the New Stone Age when man had discovered how to grow crops and vary his food supply. The first farmers believed that they could give a hint to the powers of Nature; accordingly when rain was needed they poured water out of a pail, mimicking a downpour in the hope of getting one. One of the origins of drama, therefore, can be said to lie in imitative magic.

Another procedure intended to encourage Nature by imitation was to leap in the air beside the growing grain, with the expectation that it would spring up in fullness and plenty. Here was a game of 'let's pretend', the game which children have never stopped playing. Adults also have continued to delight in pretending to be someone else and have never ceased to enjoy impersonation. In a modern society, we watch 'let's pretend' performances increasingly, because the means of presenting them are so many and so convenient, in cinema and television studios as well as in theatres. There has been continuity of mimicry down the centuries since the relish of pretending is inexhaustible.

Born of Fertility Rites

What has changed has been the purpose of imitation. The mimicry which began as magic has expanded into a huge and money-making entertainment industry. The earliest plays were the progeny of fertility rituals. Life and more life were its objectives. It is worth remembering that recreation did not originally mean 'fun and games'; it meant being re-made and born again.

It is a commonplace that conflict is the essence of drama. The first drama, which developed from routines of song and dance, presented a battle of life and death. If a tribal hero or god was shown to be slain he had also to be resurrected. He was not only a human hero. He might symbolize the death of winter and the resurgence of spring and summer; he might be the corn spirit which was hoped to be indestructible. But there were doubts and fears of pestilence attacking man and soil. So Nature had to be helped and encouraged and man, fearful of extinction, had to be comforted. (Comfort, like recreation, is a word which has been softened; it first meant strengthening, as in the Christian description of the Holy Ghost as the Comforter.) Thus performances were arranged in order to exhibit the defeat of winter and death, and the triumph of life renewed.

The first play of which anything is known was enacted at Abydos in ancient Egypt nearly 4000 years ago during the reign of Sesostris III (1887-1849 BC). In it the deity of life, Osiris, was defeated and killed by Seth, the demon of death. Osiris came back to life. He was impersonated in his resurrection with ears of corn springing from his body. When he rose from the dead here were the tokens, for all to see, of unbeaten vitality and fruitfulness.

The Greek historian Herodotus identified the life-giving Osiris with the god-hero of his own people, Dionysus (see DIONYSUS). Dionysus was long associated with the acted drama, which the later Greek poets, especially in Athens, transformed from crude ritual songs and dances in honour of this god into written plays of high artistry and sophistication. They composed tragedies of literary splendour and comedies which mingled buffoonery with wit and topical satire, but the singing and dancing of the chorus remained. In the comedies

R. K. Singh

The Katha Kali danced dramas of India are enactments of sacred myths, tales of Krishna, Shiva and legendary heroes and demons. Before a performance actors meditate on the gods whose parts they will play: the central figure in this scene is the monkey god Hanuman

here were still the relics of the old lusty revelling and the wearing of the phallic symbol of fertility. The texts have survived as classics to be studied and sometimes revived. When the plays were first written they were part of an annual religious festival, a competitive occasion with prizes awarded, and a ritualistic and traditional one, in so far as the priests of Dionysus were the judges and performances were limited to a holy week. Significantly, the principal time of continual play-going, with a day-long succession of performances, was in the spring.

The drama was still concerned with the gods of traditional mythology although it is probable that these had dwindled to little more than a literary convention by this time. The real faith of the citizens who went to the plays and were not sceptics was in the mysteries of Eleusis about which there had to be silence. The word mystery came from a Greek word for sealing the lips; it described rituals which must remain secret.

'Goat-Song' and 'Revel-Song'

In primitive religions animals, especially the bull and the goat, play a prominent part as the embodiments of physical and sexual energy. Those who now talk of tragedy are rarely conscious that this term meant 'goat-song' to the Greeks, who believed that the origin of tragedy was a tumultuous chant and dance routine in which, as the word implies, the celebrants were seen as half-bestial. When the great dramatic festival was being held in Athens the tragedies in groups of three were followed by the light relief of a satyric play. The satyrs were the semi-human, semi-divine spirits of untamed country, sometimes partly goatish, sometimes partly horse-like. A typical figure was the hairy Silenus, who was shown in pictures seated on a wine-skin (see SATYRS).

The Greek word comedy meant a revel-song. Tragedy developed when one individual, who came to be known as Thespis (hence the name Thespians for actors) stood out from the choric goat-song. He spoke what we call a part, and then was followed by others who thus created the rudiments of a play. Comedy began as a riotous celebration of human fertility and was turned into an art when texts were written. But when the genius of Aristophanes (c 450– c 388 BC), the Athenian master of comic wit, was at its height, the original antics were not forgotten. The players wore the phallus. Perhaps that was a piece of routine which was taken for granted, like the hump-back of Mr Punch. But there remained on public view this reminder of the old caperings. *Caper* is Latin for a goat and so that animal survives today in one of our words for a frolic.

The coming of Christianity to Europe diminished dramatic performances but could not kill the impulse for a ritual release from normal canons of behaviour or the fascination of 'let's pretend'. The coming of the New Year was a natural occasion for rejoicing because the shortest day had passed. The Romans had their midwinter Saturnalia, with its topsyturvy festivities, and so strong was the impulse to celebrate the death of the Old Year and the coming of another season of ploughing, sowing, and eventually reaping, that the Christian Church had to accept a season of wild and even anarchic rejoicing. While the new religion celebrated its Christmas, the feast had to include some of the old pagan rites and liberties (see CHRISTMAS). At the Feast of Fools, first heard of in France in the 12th century AD, an Abbot or Lord of Misrule was appointed to preside over the astonishing proceedings, which were not confined to France and had some English replicas. The Saturnalian spirit could not be suppressed.

The Bessy and the Fool

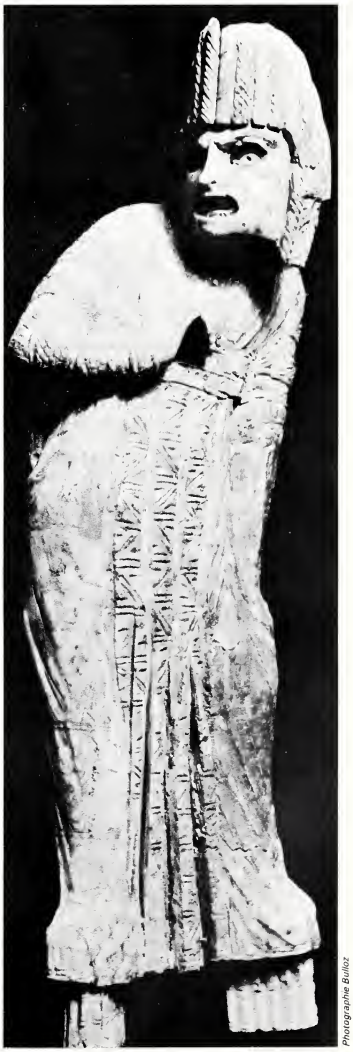
The junior clergy behaved as though they were seniors. There was drinking and turbulence; there was even sacrilege with a mock Mass and priests playing dice on the altar. There was interchange of garments; men were disguised as women and women

Mansell Collection

The Athenian poets transformed acted dramas from fertility rituals into highly sophisticated written plays which were originally performed as part of an annual festival that was held in honour of the god Dionysus; the masks traditionally worn by the actors in classical dramas gave them a superhuman appearance that was in keeping with their roles as participants in a sacred ritual

Below left **A Greek actor in his dressing room with the masks of a young man, a maiden and an angry father: Roman terracotta panel, copy of a Greek relief, now in the Lateran Museum, Rome**

Below **A Roman statuette possibly of an elderly female character, made from ivory and dated about 2nd century AD: from the Musee du Petit Palais**



Photographie Bulloz

as men. There was a curious survival of the goat-song and its mummery since some revellers put on animal skins and paraded with frisking and antics through the streets. The force of tradition in this game of 'let's pretend' is shown even today in the English midwinter pantomime. In it the part of the principal boy was, and often still is, played by a girl, and a horse or cow is represented by two men concealed under an animal's hide. Ritual is continually found to have an extraordinary power of survival in the theatre as elsewhere.

The farmers all over Europe celebrated Plough Monday, the Monday after Twelfth Day early in January, with mummery. It was the day on which, if the weather was favourable, the turning of the soil began. The young men who drove a ceremonial plough painted their faces and had grotesque attendants: the Bessy, a man dressed as a woman, and the Fool, who wore an animal skin, a hairy cap and an animal's tail. An important feature of the Plough Monday rites was the driving out with brooms of supposed ghosts. There is an afterthought of that old magical practice in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in which the elfin Puck, endowed with magical powers, ends the play as a sweeper with a broom in his hand. The dramatist was likely to have seen the mummeries of January and June in his native Warwickshire.

Civic Charades

He could also have seen similar performances on May Day when, in the fullness of blossomy spring, there was good reason to implement the fertility ceremonial of the New Year. There was clowning, singing and dancing round the hoisted and decorated Maypole which began either as a tree-symbol of shooting upwards, or a permitted survival of the ancient comedian's phallus. The animal-cult came into the May Day caperings with the riding of the hobby horse.

Out of such seasonal masquerades and miming eventually came the planned and scripted performances of the earliest theatre, such as the pageants and mystery plays of the Middle Ages, in which paganism was replaced by Christian legends and devotion. These were amateur performances and free-for-all spectacles. The members of the craft guilds enacted biblical stories on wagons drawn through the towns, or in or outside churches. They were devised with simple texts and with no inhibitions about introducing comedy into sacred subjects. The title of the mystery plays was taken from the Latin *ministerium* meaning 'a service', and has no connection with the 'sealed lips' mysteries of the classical world. In these civic charades of the English cathedral cities the connection with magic was severed. They were works of faith, not of superstition. The Reformation struck a fatal blow at them, as at all forms of community drama. To the Puritans any kind of 'let's pretend' was an abomination. In their opinion, to impersonate another was to act a lie, and therefore sinful. The theatre was described as Satan's workshop, in which vice and vanity were mingled.

As the professional theatre developed during the 16th century the Puritans did their utmost to kill it but failed because the Queen and the noblemen, as well as many of the common people, enjoyed it. To this the great dramatists of the period owed their careers and English literature some of its finest poetry. The plays and players contributed a magic of their own, that of word-music and the spell of language used at its highest power. There was the magic, too, of the actor's personality and skill in presenting a wide range of characters in tragedy and comedy. The Clowns and Fools

Slide Centre

Below **The classical tradition of performing plays in honour of the gods was continued in the regions colonized by the Greeks and, later, the Romans: stone mask from the ruins of a theatre at Side, Turkey**

Right **Passion Plays, the enactment of Christ's sufferings and his death on the cross, developed in Europe in the Middle Ages: scene from the famous Passion Play at Oberammergau, a village in Bavaria. In 1633 the inhabitants vowed that they would perform this drama every ten years, in gratitude for deliverance from the plague**

in the plays carried on the practice of the old Dionysian revels; they were bawdy celebrants of sex. The Puritans raged and the public were delighted.

The Folk Plays of Europe

None the less the old spirit of pagan mummery was not crushed. It lived on in the rustic folk plays which were performed, chiefly in midwinter, by the country people and were still to be seen in the 19th century. These maintained the primitive belief that a performance must contain a death and a resurrection. They were thus in direct descent from the drama of the Greeks and even of ancient Egypt. The battle of Seth and Osiris was long continued in the farmhouses of many European countries and there are a number of the simple texts preserved. The characters were given various names in various places but the essential part of the story was much the same. There had to be a contest, a killing, and a life-giving cure.

Sir Edmund Chambers made a careful and most interesting survey of scripts collected from near and far. There were many variations of detail, but the normal performance had permanent characters and episodes. The mummers, sometimes called guisers, arrived and demanded entry at a house where there was a Christmas party with dancing and singing; this sometimes took place at Easter as well. Their leader, known as the Presenter, asked for the room to be cleared and then explained in rhyme that the hero was St George who 'fought the fiery dragon, drove him to the slaughter, and by these means had won the King of Egypt's daughter.' To him entered Slasher, the Turkish knight, challenging St George to combat. They bandied words: 'One shall die and the other shall live.' From words they proceeded to sword-play. Usually the Turk was killed, sometimes St George. In either case the Presenter cried for a doctor and the doctor arrived with his magic bottle containing a herbal medicine. 'The stuff therein is elecampane. It will bring the dead to life again.' The dose had its miraculous effect. Then the clowns came in with songs and capers. Typical drolls were called Big Head, Beelzebub, Little Johnny Jack and Devil Doubt, who carried a broom.

> If you don't give me money, I'll sweep you out.
> Money I want and money I crave.
> If you don't give me money, I'll sweep you to the grave.

The players were labourers with very low wages and were grateful for the smallest tip

Daily Telegraph Colour Library

nd a drink of any size. A typical guising vas described by Thomas Hardy, doubtless rom youthful memories of Dorset, in his ovel *The Return of the Native*. The resenter in that case was disguised as ather Christmas.

Research has shown that all the elements f primitive mummery and fertility rites vere brought in. The performers in some laces blacked or coloured their faces. Being poor, they had to improvise their ostumes and weapons and there was much se of coloured ribbons. There was the itual broom. There was occasional use of nimal skins for the players of comic parts. There was even mention of Egypt since St George had strangely gone to the land of Osiris for his bride. The main event was always the fight between the hero and the villain with its killing and reviving by the wonder-working doctor.

The folk play has been traced from the north of Scotland through Yorkshire to the south of England and across Europe to Bulgaria. There were differences in names and local allusions but all emerged from the universal feeling that midwinter demanded a recognition of light, warmth and growth to come.

Inevitably when the drama went to town and the playwright became a poet instead of a rustic rhymer the celebration of agricultural needs was forgotten. Play-making had begun as a mimetic form of prayer and became an art and a secular entertainment. But the pantomime survives with some of the old ingredients. Its plot is a myth, and its staging asks for magical effects. It draws on the archaic tradition while it reappears with songs and jokes of the present.

(See also FOLK PLAYS; HOBBY HORSE; MAY DAY; MYSTERY PLAYS.)

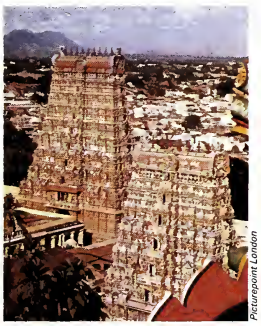
IVOR BROWN

FURTHER READING: Sir Edmund Chambers, *The English Folk-Play* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1933); Gilbert Murray, *A History of Ancient Greek Literature* (Frederick Unger, New York, 1965 reprint); Allardyce Nicoll, *World Drama, from Aeschylus to Anouilh* (Harrap, 1949); E. Welsford, *The Court Masque* (Cambridge University Press, 1927).

Draupnir

The magic ring of the Germanic god Odin: also the name of a dwarf who may originally have been the maker of the ring: Odin placed it on the funeral pyre of Balder.

See RING.



Picturepoint London

Dravidians

Early inhabitants of India, ancestors of the modern Tamils: they settled the Indus valley and penetrated into southern India and Ceylon, before being conquered by the invading Aryans from c 1500 BC: they seem to have believed in reincarnation, and there is evidence of cattle and tree cults, snake spirits and a goddess of vegetation, all of which appear in later Hinduism, and of the worship of a god similar to the later Shiva.

See INDIA.

Daily Telegraph Colour Library

New York Times

Facing page The unexpected juxtaposition of familiar objects in a hallucinatory setting gave many surrealist paintings a dream-like and sometimes nightmarish quality: in Magritte's *Hardy Sleeper* a man lies sleeping in his coffin, with objects that have the curious otherworldly clarity of a dream vision below him

Above Research into dreaming has established that a man who is not allowed to dream may become insane. Laboratory equipment for research into the subject includes machinery *(left)* that records physiological changes that occur during dreaming, and *(right)* flashing lights directed at the eyes of the sleeper

DREAMS

'For Jung, dreams were a kind of impartial photography of unconscious life': from the ancient world to the present day, dreams have been regarded as ventures into a mysterious otherworld

THE EXPERIENCE OF DREAMING is one that can still profoundly disturb and puzzle the modern educated person, even though he is disposed to seek a scientific rather than a supernatural explanation of it. Moreover, the theories of Freud and Jung, as well as the practice of psychiatry, attest to the importance of dreams as evidence of the deeper levels of personal existence. It is understandable, therefore, that in earlier ages dreams assumed a far greater significance and played a very important role in human affairs. Dreams gave every person, each night, apparent contact with another world or form of existence, mysteriously different from that experienced when awake. Sir Edward Tylor rightly emphasized the importance of dreams in causing primitive man to conceive of himself as possessing a soul, a non-material self that moved and acted in the dream world.

The variety of dream experience, which can be both pleasant and horrifying, naturally stimulated speculation. Beings of all kinds were encountered in dreams: some were recognized as the dead; some seemed superhuman in appearance and power; some had monstrous forms. Then there was experience of events that had never happened in the waking world, and sometimes the sense of supernormal insight or knowledge. Inevitably the dream acquired an aura of supernatural. It was regarded as a source of information about future events in this world, by way of divine warning or encouragement. Through dreams, the gods might reveal their will, and demons tempt to ill. Dream experience made men aware that they were constantly in contact with a mysterious supernatural world, from which much might be learned about their own destiny in this world and the next.

Egyptian texts record a number of the dreams of kings, in which gods were concerned; their preservation doubtless owed something to the political and religious issues involved. The most notable example has also the most dramatic setting: it is

Scala

recorded on a stele of pink granite placed between the paws of the great Sphinx of Giza. The inscription tells how the future Pharaoh Thothmes IV (1425–1408 BC) once rested, during a hunting expedition, in the shade of the colossal image which represented the sun god Re in his form of Harmakhis, 'Horus of the Horizon'. He fell asleep and dreamed that the god appeared and spoke to him. Harmakhis told the sleeping prince that he would confer the kingdom of Egypt upon him and give him a long and prosperous reign. Then he told Thothmes to observe the sorry situation of his image, the Sphinx, which lay half buried in the drifting desert sand, and charged him to preserve it. When he became king, Thothmes remembered the dream and cleared the Sphinx of the encroaching sand, recording his pious deed on the stele.

The meanings of this and of other royal dreams, in their recorded forms, are clear; they generally attest to the divine providence enjoyed by the kings. But this was not so with most of the dreams which other Egyptians had, and they were evidently much concerned about their interpretation. A science of dream-divination (oneiromancy) was established to meet their need, and something of its technique may be learned from the fragmentary remains of 'keys' to dream-interpretation that have been found.

The following extracts come from the *Papyrus Chester-Beatty* III, which possibly preserves a tradition dating from the Middle Kingdom period (2000-1785 BC). They occur in a long list of dream experiences, presented in a set formula: 'If a man sees himself in a dream looking at a snake – Good, it signifies (abundance of) provisions.' 'If a man sees himself in a dream looking at a dead ox – Good, it signifies (the death) of his enemies.' 'If a man sees in a dream his bed on fire – Bad, it signifies the rape of his wife.' These written 'keys' were for specialist use.

The practice known as incubation, meaning sleeping in a temple to obtain divine advice through a dream, or a cure by dream-contact with a healing god, is attested in Egypt during the Graeco-Roman period; it is not certain whether it had existed there in the earlier period.

The records of ancient Mesopotamia provide ample evidence of a widespread concern about dreams among the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians. The types of dreams and the manner of their interpretation are generally akin to the Egyptian tradition, thereby indicating that human reaction to dreams, like the experience of them, follows a common pattern. On the whole, however, the Mesopotamian evaluation reflects the morose spirit that characterizes Mesopotamian culture. Thus, the Sumerians called dreams Ma-Mou, which meant 'creation of the night'. A dream god, An-Za-Qar, was also recognized, who ranked among the nocturnal demons, suggesting that dreams issued forth from the underworld, the grisly place which the Babylonians called the 'Great Land'.

Mesopotamian literature reveals that warnings of impending doom often came in dreams. For example, in a Sumerian version of the flood legend, the hero Ziusudra learns of the coming catastrophe in a dream 'such as had not been (before)'. The famous *Epic of Gilgamesh* describes the ominous dream which Enkidu reported to his friend Gilgamesh: 'My friend this night I saw a dream. The heavens (groaned) and the earth answered. I found myself alone.' Then he tells how the death god appeared and dragged him off to the underworld. Oneiromancy was an established practice in Mesopotamia.

The cuneiform texts of Ugarit (Ras Shamra), which document the culture of the ancient inhabitants of Canaan before the settlement of the Israelite tribes, show the importance attached to dreams by these people also. Of particular interest is the curious fact that they imagined that gods also dreamed: the great god El learns of an important event through a dream.

Biblical Dreamers

Ancient Hebrew literature abounds with accounts of dreams through which Yahweh communicated his will and purpose to his devotees. To cite a graphic example, the patriarch Jacob, when fleeing from the wrath of his brother Esau, learns of his destiny in a marvellous dream at Bethel, which was probably an ancient Canaanite sanctuary. 'And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!

In ancient Greek and Roman society dreams were regarded as one of the chief means whereby the gods communicated with men, and men might learn the future

Previous page **Divination through dreams was an established science in the ancient world. The Old Testament tells how Joseph was able to forecast seven years of plenty for Egypt followed by seven years of famine, by interpreting Pharaoh's dream in which seven gaunt cows and seven thin ears of corn devoured the same number of plump animals and grain: Florentine mosaic depicting the dream of Pharaoh *Left* Marc Chagall's *The Dream*: in his paintings Chagall transformed the material world into a dream-country in which men and women behave with the rational illogicality found in dreams**

And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants; and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth . . ."' (Genesis, chapter 28). The sequel is also significant: 'Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it" And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place. This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."'

What is probably the best known account in the Old Testament of dreams and their interpretation is the episode of which Joseph is the hero, and which is significantly located in Egypt (Genesis, chapters 40 and 41). The Hebrew writer presents his Israelite hero as a highly skilled interpreter of dreams; yet he is careful to represent Joseph as attributing the power to interpret dreams to God: 'Do not interpretations belong to God?' he asks, and he says of Pharaoh's dream: 'The dream of Pharaoh is one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do.' However, although the dreams are represented as divine warnings to those who receive them, the recipients cannot themselves understand the meaning of them. Joseph shows his superiority, and his god's favour to him, in being able to interpret Pharaoh's dream which the Egyptian sages have failed to do. The three dreams concerned in the story, those of the butler, the baker and the Pharaoh, all involve a number-factor (three vine-branches, three baskets, seven cows and seven ears of corn). The first two contain warnings of personal fate to be accomplished in three days, the third concerned the fate of Egypt in seven years of plenty and seven of famine.

Oneiromancy appears as an established practice in ancient Israel. It is related of Saul that when 'he enquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by lots (Urim) or by prophets' (I Samuel, 28.6). There seems to be a reference to the custom of necromantic incubation in Isaiah 65.4: 'who sit in tombs and spend nights in secret places'. In Hebrew apocalyptic literature, dreams have a major role. The book of Daniel is the classic example of this, with Daniel presented as one who had been divinely endowed with 'understanding of all visions and dreams'.

The Shadowy Gates

In ancient Greek and Roman society dreams were again regarded as one of the chief means whereby the gods communicated with men, and men might learn the future. The dramatist Aeschylus, writing early in the 5th century BC, reckoned the science of oneiromancy among the chief benefits which the 'culture hero' Prometheus had conferred on mankind. Both Greek and Latin literature abound with stories of notable dreams. The poems of Homer provide the earliest and some of the most vividly recounted examples. Zeus is the sender of dreams, and sometimes he deceives men thereby as in the case of Agamemnon (*Iliad*, book 2). Dreams usually take the form of a visit to a sleeping person made by a dream figure (*oneiros*), which could be a god, a ghost or specially created *eidolon* (image) that had the shape of some person known to the sleeper; the oneiros that visited Agamemnon, for example, took the form of the venerable Nestor. The oneiros stood at the head of the sleeper's bed. He saw it and heard its message: the Greeks always spoke of dreaming as 'seeing a dream'. A dramatic example of such a visitation occurs in the *Iliad* (book 23) where the appearance of the ghost of Patroclus to the sleeping Achilles is graphically described.

Dreams were very highly regarded by some philosophers. For instance, Plato in the *Republic*, represents Socrates as maintaining that the dreams of a good man are pure and prophetic, since when he is sleeping his soul is free and is not fettered by bodily concerns.

The problem of interpreting dreams was recognized in a curious distinction that is drawn in the *Odyssey* (book 29). Penelope says to the disguised Odysseus: 'Stranger, verily dreams are hard, and hard to be discerned; nor are all things therein fulfilled for men. Twain are the gates of shadowy dreams, the one is fashioned of horn and one of ivory. Such dreams as pass through the portals of sawn ivory are deceitful, and bear tidings that are unfulfilled. But the dreams that come forth through the gates of polished horn bring a true issue, whosoever of mortals behold them.' The problem naturally produced a class of professional interpreters (*oneirokritai*), who evolved their own esoteric methods of solution. Dream books were written in the Graeco-Roman world, as elsewhere; one of the most notable, the *Oneirokritika* of Artemidorus (2nd century AD) has survived.

Dreams of divine origin were frequently sought by the Greeks and Romans. A favourite means of obtaining them was incubation, a practice already noticed in describing Egyptian oneiromancy. Delphi, the famous shrine of Apollo, was probably once the location of a dream oracle. More notable was the practice of medical incubation, particularly in connection with Asclepius, the god of healing. Patients would sleep in his celebrated temple at Epidauros, in the hope that the god would visit them in a dream and ordain their cure. The many votive-inscriptions found in shrines of Asclepius witness to the faith of those who believed that they had thus been cured (see HEALING GODS).

Dreams figure prominently in the records of early Christianity. Indeed, in the New Testament they are the usual means by which God communicates his will. Joseph is instructed in a dream to marry the pregnant Mary, who was to bear the Saviour (Matthew, 1.20). The Wise Men and Joseph are advised about the evil Herod in dreams, and in a dream Joseph is told to flee with the infant Christ and his mother (Matthew, chapter 2). Pilate's wife is prompted by a dream to warn her husband at the trial of Jesus (Matthew, 27.19). Peter is prepared by a dream to accept the gentile Cornelius as a convert (Acts, 10.9) and Paul is directed in a dream to preach the Gospel in Macedonia (Acts, 26.9).

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When part of Alfred Maury's bed fell on the nape of his neck, he dreamt that he was being tried by a French Revolutionary tribunal; he was condemned to death and put to the guillotine

Dreams in the Modern West

The art of interpreting dreams and, more especially, of using them for divination, was likened to witchcraft by the Christian Church, but dreams played an important role in mediaeval life. They were, on the one hand, the inspiration of great vocations – as in the case of St Francis of Assisi or St Dominic – and on the other they probably formed the basis of many accounts of witches' sabbaths. During the Renaissance the publication of the first interpretative keys to dreams, inspired by Arab writings, did at least free the subject from the illicit aura which surrounded it during the Middle Ages, although the interest did not go much beyond the level of parlour games.

It was not until the 19th century and the Romantic Revival that dreams became acceptable in the West, although they had never lost their significance in ancient societies, in which they were regarded as a cultural phenomenon deserving the attention of the greatest intellects. The subject attracted the attention of scholars, mystics and poets, whose approach to dreams was more poetic and metaphysical than experimental and scientific. Several of the Romantics kept dream diaries: the German writer Jean-Paul, for example, did not limit himself to the observation of dreams but also experimented, trying to retain consciousness and to impose his will, in short to control them.

The publication of *Dreams and the Means of Controlling Them* (1867) by Hervey de Saint Denis, a professor of Chinese at the College de France, marked an epoch in the scientific study of dreams. It echoed the work of Alfred Maury, whose book *Sleep and Dreams* (1861) was the culmination of a series of researches into the analogies between dreams and mental illness, and between the images which occur during the intermediate states between waking and sleep (known as hypnagogic images) and the hallucinations of the mentally sick.

From all sides valuable observations were being made concerning the association of ideas by which the dream thread was woven, the discovery that even people who deny dreaming do in fact have dreams, and the connection between dream images and external sensory stimuli. But without doubt the chief importance of the work of these two scholars was that through them the dream emerged from the mediaeval secrecy and popular superstition in which it had been held since the Renaissance.

The first approaches to the dream in the 19th century were based on an essentially physiological theory, and Alfred Maury was among those who tried to establish that the fundamental cause of dreams lay in external stimuli. He made many experiments attempting to prove this. On one occasion, he got somebody to tickle his lips and the tip of his nose while he slept – this made him dream that his face was being tortured. When a bottle of eau de cologne was placed under his nostrils, it made him dream that he was in a bazaar in Cairo.

Maury's most celebrated dream occurred when part of his bed fell on the nape of his neck, which made him dream that he was being tried by a French Revolutionary tribunal; he was condemned to death and put to the guillotine. One wonders whether the same incident would produce a similar dream sequence in dreamers who had different backgrounds and different memories. Maury seemed to doubt this and his doubts were confirmed by Hildebrandt, another scientist working on the theory that dreams were caused by external stimuli, and author of an important study, *The Dream and Its Value to Life* (1875).

Hildebrandt's experiments showed that the same external stimulus produces different dreams even in the same dreamer, and even more so in different dreamers. Although he was woken up from sleep in the same way three days running, three different dream scenes resulted. The experiments showed without doubt that the external stimulus is never the cause of the dream sequence but, at most, its pretext.

It remained to be demonstrated that the same was true of internal stimuli. The way was opened to Freud who was to describe dreaming as an autonomous psychic process. Jean-Paul and Hervey de Saint Denis, as a result of their attempts to control dreaming, came to recognize the autonomous character of this process; concentration and will could introduce images and themes of their choice into dreams but they were unable to create the dream sequence in which those images and themes would appear: this sequence remained unexpected and unpredictable. The field of physiological experiments with dreaming is still being explored today.

It was in 1900 that Freud published his celebrated work *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Of all his works this was the one he valued most and which he considered would earn him the gratitude of posterity. Freud reinstated the 'science' of dreams and presented in clear analytical terms observations often scattered among numerous ancient treatises, as well as those of more recent authors.

Complexes and Repressions

The use of dreams for therapeutic purposes, and the sexual interpretation of them, were two characteristics of psychoanalysis in 1900. They had been used for healing in the ancient world but Freud made use of dreams for therapy, not for the purpose of tracking down organic illnesses undetected by ordinary examination, nor to cure by healing images, but to reveal through the association of ideas and analysis the conflicting complexes and repressions which hinder the development of the personality. In Freud's time, and especially amongst the rich women who formed the majority of his patients, repression was of a sexual type. This is why at the conclusion of his dream analyses, Freud so often discovered sexual meanings, though he protested very strongly against the accusations of being obsessed with sex which were maliciously levelled against him. He was always aware that dreams can have non-sexual causes, such as hunger or thirst.

The Freudian technique of interpreting dreams is not very different from that of the ancients: the difference is that instead of appealing to the interpreter's association of ideas, it appeals to those of the dreamer himself. It has above all the merit of being expressed in a new language, which made sense to modern man. In deciphering dreams Freud talked of a 'manifest content' and a 'latent content'. The manifest content is the memory the consciousness retains of a dream on waking. The latent content is something which is disguised but which can

Freud likened the dream to a neurotic phenomenon, a concept that is reflected in this 'dream photograph': in the foreground are the distorted figures of two women, while a sinister masked figure lurks in the background. Photograph by Ira Cohen

Mansell Collection

'To sleep: perchance to dream:' in his famous soliloquy Hamlet links sleep and death, echoing an age-old association and also the belief that dreams are part of an existence mysteriously different from daily life. In Greek mythology, Hypnos, god of sleep, and Thanatos, god of death, were brothers: scene from a Greek urn showing the two gods carrying the body of Sarpedon, a son of Zeus

be uncovered by means of analysis. This becomes possible when you put yourself into a receptive state. You have to isolate each dream scene and every detail of the dream, to unleash everything that each suggests, even if it is utterly repugnant, grotesque or immoral. The rule of the game, as for the whole process of analysis, is 'the truth and nothing but the truth'. According to Freud, only the latent content can reveal the meaning of dreams.

Why, one may well ask, should there be a latent content and a manifest content? How does the latent content become the manifest content? It is possible, of course, to adopt the attitude that 'it's only a dream': dreams would therefore be absurd and insignificant. Freud took the opposite attitude to this sterile viewpoint. He took the view that all dreams have meaning, even though he was unable to find any meaning in some of them. To explain the existence of a hidden content and a manifest one, he elaborated a theory of resistance and censorship. These ideas were born not so much from the study of dreams, as from that of neurotic phenomena, particularly hysteria. In the course of treating neuroses, Freud was able to establish that hysterics know the 'whole truth' at an unconscious level but refuse, or are unable, to admit it. He likened the dream to a neurotic phenomenon. The manifest content he attributed to a resistance which prevents the latent content from revealing itself. This is where the 'censor' exerts itself, imposing from that time onwards a 'dream work' by which the latent disguises itself in the manifest.

The dream work operates by means of processes more or less known to the ancients. Firstly, there is a process termed identification, often linked to a play on words, a pun, or verbal assonance. Freud himself recounted a patient's dream which he called 'a pretty instance of the verbal bridges crossed by the paths leading to the subconscious' (*The Interpretation of Dreams*). A young woman, apprehensive about her approaching marriage, dreamt of arranging a bunch of flowers, amongst which were violets, as a centre-piece for the table. Freud detected a significant play on words between 'flowers' and 'defloration', between 'violets' and 'violate'.

Displacement is the name for another process in which the emphasis is shifted from one symbol or figure to another more 'neutral' one in the dream. Say you have an illness which you prefer not to think about; your dream may present this in the form of a woman with cancer of the throat. Yet another process has been termed projection; you have done something dishonest and in your dream this action is attributed not to yourself but to someone whom you dislike.

If the Freudian description of the working of dreams seems satisfactory, indeed obvious in many cases, the interpretative technique lends itself to as much discussion as the theory itself. On the one hand, Freud maintained that all dreaming is the expression of a desire, even if a masochistic one, and on the other, that its primary function is to be the guardian of sleep. The dream was a hallucinatory realization of a desire that reality or prejudiced morality prevented from being satisfied, and this hallucinatory realization allowed it to unfold in sleep without any barriers.

Jung's 'Voice of the Other'

C. G. Jung (1875-1961), taking a different viewpoint, showed that dreams upset sleep as often as they protect it. Other authorities have held that a dream is less the realization of a desire than its expression, so that drinking in a dream does not quench your thirst; you have to drink when you wake.

But if dreaming has other functions than those attributed to it by Freud what are they? What purpose do they serve? Jung, instead of enquiring into the causes of dreaming, preferred to look into its purpose. He detected a surprising gap in the Freudian approach: the latter escaped from the need to examine the manifest structure of the dream under the pretext that it was only a 'facade'. But what would a house be without a facade?

For Jung, dreams were a kind of impartial photography of unconscious life, the compensation of our rational vision of things, the voice of the 'other' in us. But this voice uses a language which is strange or lost to us. It is a language which it is important to decipher not because it deliberately hides something but rather because it is archaic, symbolic. And since the unconscious life is not static, dreams also express a search motive, a delving into the future.

Jung believed that dreams opened up to the individual the paths of the future, hidden to his conscious mind. This is why he attached less importance to the study of a single dream than to a series. These series of dreams revealed the lines of force of the unconscious and, through what he called the 'individuation process' urged the individual to integrate the unknown parts of his personality and thereby achieve the Self, or wholeness. This is why he contrasts the 'reductive' analysis and causal analysis of dreams which he attributes to Freud with an 'amplifying' one, appealing to the creative imagination.

The Universal Dimension

Jung attaches more importance than Freud to what the latter had called fixed or universal symbols and what Jung termed 'archetypes', belonging less to the stratum of the individual's unconscious than to those of the collective unconscious. Freud had already noted that dreams contained fixed elements, not to be detached from the technique of analysis by association of ideas, just as there also exist certain types of dream, such as those of earthquakes, the end of the world, journeys by night across the sea, death, or (more simply) nakedness, loss of teeth, or missed trains. Jung sought the meaning of these general symbols, not only in the fields in which Freud had researched but in the study of comparative mythology and religion. Henceforth these archetypes would help to bring to light the universal dimension of individual problems.

Freud denied that dreams can reveal the future, their roots being found, according to him, in the past. However, he recognized that 'the dream can lead us into the future since it shows the realization of our desires. But this future, which is present for the dreamer, is moulded by indestructible desire to the image of the past.' Jung has been interpreted in slightly different ways, although his theory of the value of dreams in this respect does not differ greatly from

Freud's. With regard to telepathic dreams, Freud was less reserved. But it is significant that he did not choose to publish the conclusions he had reached during his lifetime. Jung strongly affirmed the reality of telepathic feats which he called 'synchrones', while at the same time emphasizing the difficulty of finding a satisfactory theory to explain them. Some psychoanalysts have taken note of phenomena of a telepathic or clairvoyant nature which often arise during psychoanalytical treatments.

Chickens Dream Inside the Egg

In the '50s the American physiologists Kleitman and Dement attempted to establish an 'objective' method for the study of dreams. Specializing in the physiology of sleep, they rediscovered what the Hindu treatises described 3000 years ago: the existence of two distinct sleeping states. The one is endowed with dreams, the other deprived of them. This distinction between dreaming sleep and deep sleep became evident thanks to the discovery of rapid movements of the eye which occur at the same time as remembered dreams and which are referred to as 'REMs'.

Physiologists were also able to show that everybody dreams, including those who claim they never do. They showed that dreams only became evident during certain periodical phases of sleep and that these phases became less with age; with newly-born babies 80% of the total sleeping time is taken up with dreams, falling to 35-40% with children and 20-30% with adults. This seemed to show that dreams, far from being only the relics of the previous day's memories, as Freud had claimed, are predominant at a time when these memories are non-existent. In the case of chickens, physiological signs of dreaming were apparent even before the hatching of the egg and in the case of kittens before their eyes opened. All this suggests that dreams occur before individual memory is able to nourish them.

The experiments conducted by Dement and Kleitman in 1959 seem even more significant. They prevented subjects from dreaming by waking them up when their eyes began to move. These people exhibited such alarming psychotic characteristics that the experiment had to be discontinued. Meanwhile the physiologists thought they had discovered the 'seat' of dreams, or what we prefer to call their 'relay station', at the level of the pontine reticular formation in the most primitive part of the brain. In France, Dr Jouvet and his colleagues at Lyons also established that the prevention of dreaming in human beings resulted in alarming psychotic symptoms, and produced death 'while in perfect health' in cats and rats. They came to the conclusion that dreams are an essential function of life and that it is less dangerous to undergo hunger and thirst than to be deprived of dreams.

They thus came back through their laboratory experiments to the belief of Jung and others that the dream expresses a self-regulating and compensatory function of the organism. Dreams are indispensable to life. Indeed, physiologists of sleep are incapable of providing us with a guide to the meaning of dreams in general or of particular dream images. In this respect the analytical and symbolic method remains privileged. But apart from the possibility that physiologists may one day achieve this, it is essential to understand that their discoveries strike at the root of all Freudian views and throw light on the general function of the dream in a remarkable way. This function cannot be the realization of a particular desire, since it is at its height in infancy, at a time when the desire has not yet been born and when dreams can be nothing other than the expression of an ancestral desire, and it diminishes with age. The 'seat' of dreams may be situated in the most primitive part of the brain and not in the cerebral cortex, confirming the ancestral, hereditary and collective bases of the dream, which Freud found so difficult to admit.

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A gateway to heaven, a release from the prison of self, an opening-up of new vistas of experience: man has found many uses for the drugs which affect the mind and which are being increasingly exploited in modern society. The problem is, as it has always been, to ensure that drugs remain our servants rather than our masters; in primitive societies it has long been recognized that there is a need for a ritual setting to channel these dangerous forces

DRUGS

THE POET BAUDELAIRE described drugs which affect the mind as 'artificial paradises'. The phrase is apt and Lewis Lewin, the German biochemist, repeated it in his pioneering study of these drugs (*Phantastica*, 1924), where he divided paradise into categories: five of them in all, the paradises of narcosis, stimulation, euphoria, intoxication and hallucination. More simply we might say: of dreaming sleep, energetic wakefulness, well-being, drunkenness and the inspired imagination.

In palmistry, a certain small line near the bottom edge of the palm is called the paradise line. Some people, however, call it the poison line, because it indicates the capacity to enjoy a private and rarefied pleasure which in large doses cuts a man off from reality and infects him with an unattainable hope. A substance known as a drug in the pejorative sense of that word also has the characteristic of being paradisiacal and poisonous, as though it were one product of the serpent coiled about the Tree of Life.

One cannot read widely about drugs these days without coming across persistent references to the 'drug problem'. Drugs are indeed a problem in that they are addictive and encourage strange forms of narcissism which, though they may end fatally, are still attempts to regain paradise. The desire to do so is one of the fundamental ambitions of human nature which nearly every religion encourages, and this illuminates the drug problem from another aspect. If drugs can be used to enter paradise, what are the uses of paradise itself?

Drugs are used the world over, sometimes for entertainment, often for therapy or as a religious observation. Thus the soma plant celebrated in the early Vedic hymns of the East gave such bliss to those who took its juices that it was regarded as a divinity, and the visionary worlds of splendour praised by its devotees are certainly descriptions of the images which it induced. Opinions are divided as to what plant soma was originally; at one time it was thought to be a species of either *Asclepias* or of *Sarcostemma*, though it has recently been identified as *Amanita muscaria*, fly agaric.

The use of this toadstool and of other hallucinogenic mushrooms may have been much more widespread in the past than we realize, and their effects quite possibly helped to give form to a number of traditional descriptions of heaven. Indeed, the most famous mysteries of antiquity, those of Eleusis, may have used the fly agaric in order to initiate the worshippers into a realization of the divine, which could well account for the veneration in which the mysteries were held.

In Mexico before and after the Spanish Conquest several plants were held sacred because of their illuminating properties, ranging from the peyote cactus from which mescalin is derived to a species of ipomea containing a relative of lysergic acid (LSD); the psilocybe mushroom which was called teonanactl or 'god's flesh', whose active principle is psilocybine, and *Datura stramonium* or thornapple with its scopolamine and atropine.

Such plants were used to cure illnesses of the soul and of the body, to divine the future and to gain a sense of supernatural knowledge. In South America other plants are used for similar purposes: one Brazilian curer has tracked down some 80 such plants in his own country, including a hallucinatory tree-toadstool. These plants include lianas like *Banisteria caapi*, peppers like *Piptadenia*, cocaine in the Andes, and at least one hallucinogenic animal, a caterpillar found inside bamboo stems.

In Africa, Asia, Siberia and Australia the list of plants which produce psychotropic (mind-changing) effects is long, and where no such plant is available alcohol may be used instead. Modern pharmacology has added to the number of psychotropic substances with highly potent and dangerous

derivatives of opium, with anaesthetics, synthetic narcotics, tranquillizers – the original one being a synthetic based on the active principle of *Rauwolfia*, a plant used for centuries in India to calm the mind – pep pills, hallucinogens and others. However, no modern doctor considers such substances to be sacred, as they would be amongst traditional cultures and as they are, up to a point, among those who use these products for their own enjoyment. This fact in itself has much to do with the existence of a drug problem.

The Religious Use of Drugs

The widespread use of drugs around the world, and especially in our society, makes it plain that man is a discontented animal beset by psychological and physical troubles, by boredom and spiritual ambitions. He uses drugs to relieve pain and illness, and also to change his entire way of looking at things. In religious language, human nature is always wishing to transcend its usual limitations. For waking consciousness is by no means the only kind which it is possible or desirable to experience, and other states can be reached by the use of psychophysical techniques and also by drugs.

Because they change the degree of alertness of the mind in one way or another, it seems probable that drugs interfere with the sleep cycle, either by allowing one to dream while still awake or by using the force of dreams to power action. It seems hardly credible, however, that maté tea, made from the leaf of a South American shrub and containing caffeine, could ever be used to induce trance. Tea, which contains tannin as well as caffeine in quite large quantities, certainly does not have this effect normally, and it was originally celebrated in India and China for its refreshing qualities that allowed the mind to stay awake during meditation. By itself maté could not bring about an oracular state of trance – as it does amongst Indians still living in the Mato Grosso – unless its actions reinforce a process already set in motion by the seer and, by this working together of a psychological technique with a physiological agent, bring about a state of dissociation in which the mind finds a new faculty of expression.

The religious use of drugs, in fact, usually accompanies the practice of shamanism, though shamanism often does without drugs. Shamanism is a technique by which a man, and sometimes a woman, prepares himself by singing, dancing, training and long periods of seclusion during which he meditates, for an influx of untoward inspiration that can carry him into the world of spirits where events on earth are ordained and carried out (see SHAMAN). It is often a hereditary calling, but may equally well be embraced by those who have either a surplus of mental energy or who have suffered from what we would call a nervous complaint of some severity. Such unsatisfied or unbalanced states of mind are continually looking for a resolution of their frustrations and ambitions, and they do so by using traditional methods which articulate their powers coherently.

Drugs can help to do this because their effects are so similar to those produced by other methods of shamanistic training. An instructive case concerns tobacco, which like maté was used for getting into trance. Throughout the Americas this plant was used much as we use it today, for pleasure and to aid concentration, though it was sometimes accounted a fault in an ordinary man if he smoked it in private. But its most significant use was by shamans who smoked large amounts at one sitting to achieve their ecstatic experiences. The combination of tobacco smoke and overbreathing (causing oxygen intoxication) produces that kind of giddiness and nausea which most people experience with their first cigarette. Giddiness is one of the universal symptoms of ecstasy – the word giddy comes from the Old English *gidig*, meaning possessed by a god – and it is by entering into this giddiness and following down the physiological pathways which it opens up that a shaman is able to dissociate himself from his normal waking self and arrive at a place in his mind where all is certain and a quite different conscious process begins.

What such people have done is to use the forces within the paradisiacal experience for definite ends. The lack of such ends in modern society, as has already been implied, is one reason why we have a drug problem: without a ritual support the mind is often not strong enough to resist the effects of a drug, and so loses its sense of direction. When we consider the power of some drugs, this is not surprising. The incredibly small quantity of 100 microgrammes of lysergic

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Shamans in parts of Southeast Asia take opium to increase the ecstatic effects of dancing; but the drug is a soporific, and the devotee usually soon reaches a passive state where 'one no longer dreams, one is dreamed': Chinese men smoking opium. As with many drugs, the last stages of addiction to opium are marked by psychic and physical horrors

acid is enough to bring about a psychedelic experience in which the mind is profoundly altered in its normal functioning and of which it previously had but the barest suspicion. Indeed many investigators have been so taken aback by these changes that they prefer to call the drug a psychosomimetic, one which produces a condition resembling madness.

The purpose of a ritual setting for the taking of a drug is to prevent madness, by directing the energies which the drug releases into a number of specific channels, and to put paradise into relation with objects in the outside world by establishing a dogmatic plan within the imagination, through which social events can be seen as psychological ones, psychological as physical ones, and physical ones as spiritual.

By such a method even opium, the grandmother of all narcotics, has occasionally been used not merely to enjoy its sumptuous and pearly visions but to carry out a conscious intention. Such is the habit of shamans in parts of Southeast Asia, who take opium to increase the ecstatic effects of dancing and through them to send their spirits upon a supernatural adventure for the curing of illness or the foretelling of the future. The soporific effect of opium is such, however, that its devotees are much more liable to become physically passive, which must be why it is so seldom used in an active and practical manner. It is true that opium is used in the East for conviviality, but its solitary use is difficult to control. Coleridge, who first took laudanum, a derivative of opium, to dull a particularly ferocious toothache and eventually became addicted to it, did manage to write at least one great poem under its influence: or perhaps we should say that *Kubla Khan* composed itself when his mind, still active in its poetic function, directed the opium into a creative activity. But such feats are rare, for the mind's ability to hold its own against the sweetly insidious effects of opium in large quantities is limited, and the drug soon brings about that passive state in which, as Henri Michaux, the modern French poet, has said, 'One no longer dreams, one is dreamed'.

'O just, subtle and all-conquering opium!' cried de Quincey, author of *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1822), who took laudanum as an elixir for his neurasthenia and declared it to be the centre of the true religion of which he was the high priest. But religions have hells as well as heavens, and the last stages of his addiction were marked, as they always are, by psychic and physical horrors from which he at last managed to free himself. What is this paradise, as Baudelaire said of hashish, which one buys at the price of one's eternal damnation? But this progression from paradise to the inferno allows one to draw a most interesting parallel between the possessive effects of a drug and those of a spirit, as in Voodoo (see VOODOO).

In Voodoo ceremonies we might say that a pact has been entered into with any one of the many gods or spirits of the Haitian pantheon, which are called *loa*. The worshipper is possessed by the loa in such a way that he no longer has conscious control of his actions, and has no memory of what passed when he was possessed. The loa who rides him, as the phrase goes, always has a definite way of behaving – a stereotype, we might say, or schema – and this ability to act out the character of a loa is only achieved after training and initiation. Those who feel the influx of divine energy before they are initiated into Voodoo suffer not only from unfortunate accidents but often from manic outbursts ending in madness. It is the business of Voodoo to avoid this outcome and to see that its initiates can become possessed by this energy and still remain sane.

A Pact with the Devil

We might thus call an addict one who has been possessed by a drug after a private initiation which has no aim other than the desire continually to be possessed, unlike a Voodoo ceremony with its definite beginning and end. The addict cannot but wish his experience will continue for ever, even if he realizes that his body will disintegrate under the impact of the drug and that he then can no longer call his soul his own. The narcotic drugs, which slow down physical activity, and the excitants like amphetamine

which speed it up, are particularly apt to bring about this state of living on borrowed time; this is presumably not only because they bring out long-term metabolic changes but also because the will cannot detach itself from the pleasures it seeks.

The question of whether it is ethical to take drugs is a difficult one to answer. They have been and still are being used as an aid to meditation, but the masters of this art are unanimous in condemning them, since they tend to inflame the imagination and give it a wrong idea of its powers. From his own experience, Jean Cocteau has said that no one becomes an opium addict unless he has made a pact with it: a pact in which he dedicates his will to the power of the drug. There is no doubt that the mythology surrounding drug-taking reflects certain basic notions about black magic for this reason. Black magic is rightly regarded as a dangerous pastime because it provides immediate gains without immediate payment: it is a pact with the Devil, who comes later when it suits him and presents a bill on which are written the ominous words, One Soul.

What does it mean, to enter into a pact with the Devil? Freud was much interested in the subject and wrote a study of it at the time when he was still taking cocaine, which he did for ten years. The traditional reasons for such a pact include the obtaining of wealth, of power over men and Nature, and over the hearts of women. But Freud concluded from the case he studied that the central reason was to overcome depression and to find a father-substitute. About cocaine he wrote: 'One senses an increase of self-control and feels more vigorous and more capable of work', and he suggested that its effects were due, not to direct stimulation but to the removal of anxiety symptoms, which produced a return to a state of normal euphoria. Anxiety has to do with the super-ego in his system (see FREUD), and we can enlarge this description by remarking that by removing the 'censor' cocaine also removes anxiety. Because of this cocaine may have been an indispensable tool for Freud during his self-analysis: it allowed him to follow the lines of his reasoning into the subconscious without his mental censor putting up a resistance. That Freud escaped from addiction while one of his friends, to whom he had recommended it, died from its effects, suggests that he only did so because he had found a method by which the effects of the drug became subservient to the force of his intellectual drive. He had created a special form of ritual.

Separating Mind from Body

Without this drive cocaine is undoubtedly a danger, as we may see from the religious taking of coca amongst the Kogi of Colombia. This tribe uses it ceremonially to learn the lengthy genealogies and liturgies of their worship, and to fill their minds with the proper religious awe and sense of significance. Coca however has the unfortunate effect of making its takers impotent after a while, and the Kogi are suspicious of their womenfolk (who are not allowed to chew it) and so inefficient as farmers that their children are undernourished. Ironically, the atheists of the tribe who have dropped out of the religion altogether are much healthier and happier, though their neighbours scorn them for losing their chance of immortality. This petrifying effect of coca, even with a religious system to direct it, is certainly partly caused by the fact that the Kogi way of life is beset on all sides by the creole population and has withdrawn into a state of apathy.

Coca is used elsewhere in the Andes to ward off hunger and fatigue, and it does so by numbing these sensations and dissociating the mind from anxieties arising in the body. But anxiety may persist even if its symptoms disappear with the use of a drug. These symptoms emerge again after a long time in an even more disagreeable form, as the nightmare effects of addiction show. When at such a time the use of the drug is stopped, this anxiety must be at least one of the constituents of the most unpleasant withdrawal symptoms.

Attacking the Self

The drugs used in other religious rites tend to be hallucinogenic rather than narcotic or stupefying, and these have a quite different effect upon anxiety. Common to plants with such different active principles as *Banisteria*, *Amanita* and *Datura* is the production of a sudden and violent surge of energy with visions in which terror and splendour may be equally present. The Viking berserkers seem to have used *Amanita* to endow themselves with a blind and warlike frenzy no opponent could withstand, a frenzy that might last more than a day and after which they sank into a long torpor of exhaustion.

In South America the Indians who take *Banisteria* and other plants fall victim to a similar frenzy (though they do not use it when on war parties), and European travellers who have tried the drug in their company report experiencing the traditional visions, amongst which are those of beasts of prey about to tear them into pieces. Such drugs seem to work by putting psychological anxieties into touch with the musculature, and what is dissociated is the ego from the imagination rather than, as in narcotics, the imagination from anxiety. There may be a connection between the fact that hallucinogens are not physically addictive and that they do not inhibit anxiety.

All these drugs, however, can be used for delicate purposes as well as frenzied ones. One must remember that all shamanistic traditions speak of an initiatory experience in which the body is felt to be torn apart, after which a crystalline body is given by the spirits. Both the dismemberment and the illumination of the body are commonly felt under hallucinogens, even if in a mild fashion, and one can understand dismemberment as the outcome of a drug-induced dissociation in which the normal persona or expression of the personality, is forced to give up its defensive reactions. What is known as a 'bad trip' is caused by the anxiety which the approach of such a psychological dismemberment evokes, and which generates an increasing feeling of loss and horror when it cannot be properly discharged. From all accounts a really bad trip has certain similarities to a schizophrenic attack, and hospitals report many instances of bad trips which last for days or even months. The taking of tranquillizers is certainly one way of bringing such an episode to an end, but the traditional method is to accept the attack which the drug makes on the self without fear, an acceptance which transforms anxiety into knowledge and makes it give up its energy to a higher faculty.

But no two drugs attack the self in quite the same way, and they activate different parts of the same underlying process and give rise to different types of anxiety. The drug found in *Amanita* seems to be particularly effective in putting the motor system into spasm, and the shamans who use it must go through a long education in this experience and have grappled with the startling visions it produces before they can master its immediate effects and use them according to their will. *Datura* also activates a sense of physical power together with a psychic ambition that may lead a man so far out of his normal range that a spasm of timidity at the wrong moment may leave him stranded upon an ungovernable activity. Different is the effect of the *psilocybe* mushroom which clinically is said to be that of depersonalization. But there are two sides of every coin, and what is depersonalization to one man may be dematerialization to another: tribal practitioners in fact call upon this effect when they wish to penetrate material obstacles, to free consciousness from its bodily entanglements and allow it to inhabit bodies other than its own.

Drug of the Aztecs

Peyote traditionally used has yet other consequences. It was one of the first hallucinogens to be experimented with in Europe, and is famous for its visions of fantastic and grotesque architecture, of prodigious landscapes and giant figures striding about or petrified into ancient statuary, and of jewels shining with abundant colour. All these visions occur without apparent reason, and the Indians phrase this by saying that peyote is a power in itself that works from the outside, a teacher who can show a man the right way to live and answer his questions by giving him an experience to live through.

This quality of the peyote experience allows one to qualify the remark of Michaux that under such drugs one does not dream, one is dreamed. If used correctly peyote has the power of personifying a dream in such a way that it allows the dreamer to keep some part of his self-awareness intact and still questioning. The consequence of searching for a meaning within the visions which inhabit one is that they become increasingly full of meaning themselves.

Peyote is of particular interest because it is the sacrament of the Native American Church, a religion based upon Indian practices and having Christianity for its justification. It was used by the Aztecs for

South American shamans smoked large quantities of tobacco at one sitting to achieve ecstatic experiences, but it was also smoked for pleasure: Brazilian Indian smoking cigar

divinatory purposes, and by the Tarahumara and Huichot of northern Mexico as the body of divinity on which all their beliefs centred. This religion was picked up by the Plains Indians at the time of their defeat by the whites and used to rally the wisdom of the Indian past to cope with the degrading changes that overcame them. It was in fact a type of cult such as we often find springing into existence when old ways of life are being destroyed by a powerful and technically more advanced culture, and it is also the only surviving one of several such cults which arose in the Plains.

The Search for Power

The drug problem in the West should probably be seen in the same light: the popularity of drugs is at least partly due to the very rapid changes now occurring in our society. Drugs have always been used to search for power, a power which can be used to enlarge the capacity of the imagination and to bring about change in society. When society itself changes, drugs give a certain kind of life to the imagination which is being stripped of its ancient forms, and a confidence in its ability to live in a strange world. Cannabis has certainly been used in this way from time to time: in Jamaica, for instance, the Rastafari smoke it both for religious and political reasons in the hope that they may soon return to their promised land – Abyssinia, where the Lion of Judah still reigns. Half a century ago or more, cannabis was also the motive cause for a new religion being set up by the Baluba of the Congo: they destroyed their fetish houses, and proclaimed the drug to be a power under which they could live in perpetual friendship and protected from calamity. The drinking of alcohol was forbidden, and those who had committed misdeeds were condemned to smoke a number of pipes of cannabis in order to reform their misconceptions.

Wherever a drug is used by a religion to gain a view and foretaste of divinity, it is treated as though it were a god itself. 'We have drunk Soma, we have become immortals, we have arrived at the light, we have reached the gods: what power has malevolence over us now, what can the perfidy of mortals do to us, O Immortal?' So runs one of the hymns of the *Rig Veda*, one of the sacred texts of the East. Opium has been called the hand of God and anchor of salvation, though Cocteau has remarked that it resembles religion as an illusionist resembles Jesus. Tobacco has been called the blessed plant, honour of the earth and gift from Olympus, and both wine and beer have been similarly praised down the centuries. 'Our glass was the full moon, the wine is the sun. If a grave is moistened with such a wine, the dead man will rediscover his soul and the corpse will revive', said Ibn al Farid, the medieval Arabian poet. But the wine he talks of here is that of the Spirit, which also descended upon the Apostles at Pentecost so that they spoke with tongues and were accused of being drunk.

A drug is nothing unless it kindles the spirit in a man, though this spirit may be thought of as divine or demoniacal according to predilection. Whichever it may be, the spirit is not man's possession but a gift made to him, and as a gift it has a nature and a morality of its own which must be both wrestled with and obeyed if it is not to bring harm to its host. Every religion has its own way of experiencing and ordering this power, and their often stringent ritual requirements are the product of a long experience in bringing the spirit in touch with the world of men. The religious taking of drugs is one particular example of this: it says plainly enough that amateurism in these matters does little but create a problem, and that if the mind is to reach beyond itself by the use of a drug it must be placed in the service of an idea and a method that makes for wisdom and communion rather than folly and isolation.

(See also MUSHROOM; PEYOTE CULTS.)

FRANCIS HUXLEY

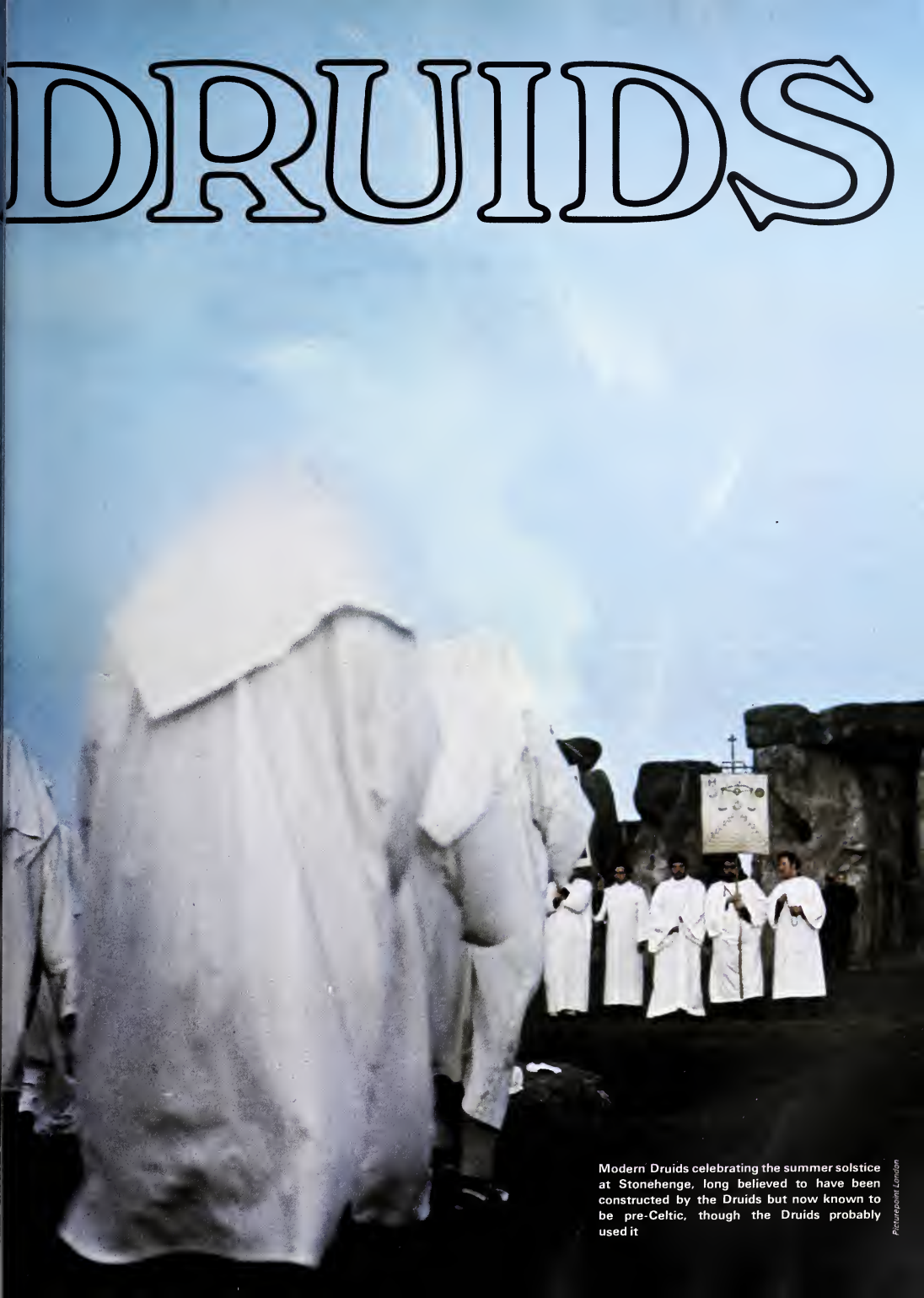
FURTHER READING: Lewis L. Lewin, *Phantastica: Narcotic and Stimulating Drugs* (Dutton, rev. edn, 1964); E. Josephson, *Drug Use* (Halsted Press, 1974).

'Human nature is always wishing to transcend its usual limitations *Left* Certain Indian tribes in South America take drugs for the visions and hallucinations that they cause: chief of a Sucumbio River tribe in South America *Right* Similarly in the modern West taking drugs to penetrate into another order of reality is steadily on the increase, despite the appalling dangers of addiction

Camera Press London

Jack Manning/Hollywood Feature Syndicate

DRUIDS



Modern Druids celebrating the summer solstice at Stonehenge, long believed to have been constructed by the Druids but now known to be pre-Celtic, though the Druids probably used it

Picturepoint London

C. M. Dixon

Nicholas Barrington

Top Stone circle popularly associated with the Druids at Castlerigg near Keswick in Cumberland *Above* Menhir or long stone at Cap Frehel in Brittany: these monuments, connected with prehistoric burials, have also become part of the Druid legend *Left* Aerial view of Stonehenge; some classical writers believed that Stonehenge was a temple to Apollo the sun god

The classical writers were surprised and perplexed by remote woodland shrines rather than civic temples as the cult centres of Gaul, and invested them with romantic attributes of terror

The history of the Druids is closely interwoven with strands of folklore, legend and romantic literature. The first of these articles deals with what is known of the Celtic priesthood which was proscribed by the Romans because of its predilection for human sacrifice; the second traces the revival of interest in them from the Renaissance on, and the appearance of Druid groups in modern Britain

MEMBERS OF THE PRIESTHOOD of pre-Roman Celtic religion in Gaul and Britain, the Druids are mentioned by name in some thirty references in Greek and Roman writers between the 2nd century BC and the 4th century AD. In addition, functionaries known as Druids are mentioned in the earliest Celtic literature, that of the Irish hero-tales and law tracts, which can be shown to represent a pre-Christian state of affairs older than the 5th century AD. The religion in which Druids functioned was proscribed and largely exterminated in the Roman provinces of Gaul and Britain during the 1st century AD.

With the rediscovery of classical literature from the Renaissance onwards, the Druids in France and especially in Britain were built up into myth and folklore in accordance with contemporary changes in taste; the Romantic Revival in British art and literature was especially productive of the type of Druid folklore which survives today, but is not much earlier than the late 18th century.

The social and economic background of the Celtic culture to which the Druids belonged can to a fair extent be reconstructed from the evidence of archeology and that of the classical writers who commented on the Celts, with the vernacular sources, as in the case of Ireland, as supporting evidence.

In archeological terms Druids belong to the final phases of the La Tene culture of the late Iron Age. References to Druids, however, relate exclusively to Gaul, except for two mentions of them in Britain, found in Caesar and Tacitus.

The classical sources relating to the Druids may usefully be divided into an earlier and a later group, the first being based on first-hand knowledge, the second on an idealizing and romantic conception in which barbarous qualities are minimized or even ignored. The two viewpoints represent the contrasted attitudes of 'hard' and 'soft' primitivism in which civilized societies view barbarians; in the idealizing process, concepts of the noble savage, and of a Golden Age at the world's edge, play a large part.

The first group of sources are mainly derived from the comments and observations on the Gauls made by the Greek Posidonius, a Stoic philosopher writing at the end of the 2nd century BC, from his first-hand knowledge through travel and contacts with the people of Massilia (Marseilles) in Gaul. His work survives only in quotation, particularly in Strabo, Diodorus Siculus and Julius Caesar. These comments are consistent with those of other writers of the 1st century AD such as Lucan, Tacitus, Pomponius Mela and Pliny, and also Ammianus Marcellinus (b 330 AD). This Posidonian group constitute our most reliable sources.

The second, idealizing, group of sources centres on scholars working in Alexandria from the 1st to the 3rd centuries AD, and may conveniently be named Alexandrian. These are mostly works of compilation, and the philosophical attainments of the Druids are enlarged upon and in general put on an equal footing with those of the other non-Greek philosophers of antiquity, such as those of India or Persia. Stoic philosophy had led to a slight idealizing tendency at times in the Posidonian sources, but in the Alexandrian group we move into a romantic tradition anxious to establish profundity and sublimity in what little was known of the Druids and of Celtic religion.

The contrast between the two groups of sources is paralleled in the different reactions of Europeans centuries later to the discovery of the American Indians and later of the islanders of the Pacific. The reactions have been characterized as 'hard' and 'soft' primitivism. The first attitude, which usually stems from first-hand contact with a newly discovered people, tends to be realistic and often distinctly unflattering to the 'barbarian' society. The 'soft' attitude takes a more romantic view and finds much to admire and idealize.

The Mistletoe and the Oak

The native Irish sources, though of the greatest importance for the light they throw on pre-Christian Irish Celtic society as a whole, are not very informative about pagan religion and the Druids, and since the tales in the form in which they survive are the versions of medieval Christian clerics, this is perhaps not surprising. Furthermore it must be remembered that they relate exclusively to Ireland, and represent the uncritical view of a barbarian society from within. From the foregoing sources, it is possible to piece together the following incomplete information.

The name druid presupposes a Gaulish *druvis*, from *druvids*, and probably related to the Greek *drus*, an oak tree, with the ending cognate with the Indo-European root *-wid*, 'to know'. Pliny makes a direct association between Druids and oaks in his account of the mistletoe ceremony in which the Druid cut mistletoe from an oak with a knife or sickle of gold on the sixth day of the moon (see MISTLETOE). Woodland sanctuaries are characteristically Celtic. The name Druids occurs only in the texts, and is not represented in any pre-Christian inscription. Druids seem to have been a designated branch of the Celtic hierarchy together with bards, and the seers known as *vates*, and, as we have seen, are recorded only in Gaul and Britain in antiquity.

The Celtic priesthood as a whole formed an honoured element in society, and Caesar places Druids on an equal with the warrior-aristocracy, the *equites*, in Gaul, and stresses their exemption from the tribal obligations of war and taxation. The remaining Posidonian sources class them with the poets, the seers and the prophets of the Celtic world, and in the Irish sources they rank among the 'men of art' or of special gifts, immediately below the nobility.

Julius Caesar Reports

Much the largest quantity of information about the Druids comes from Julius Caesar, in his *Gallic War*, and relates to the priesthood in Gaul. 'The Druids,' he said, 'officiate at the worship of the gods, regulate public and private sacrifices, and give rulings on all religious questions. Large numbers of young men flock to them for instruction, and they are held in great honour by the people. They act as judges in practically all disputes, whether between tribes or between individuals; when any crime is committed, or a murder takes place, or a dispute arises about an inheritance or a boundary, it is they who adjudicate the

Times

matter and appoint the compensation to be paid and received by the parties concerned.

'Any individual or tribe failing to accept their award is banned from taking part in sacrifice – the heaviest punishment that can be inflicted upon a Gaul. Those who are laid under such a ban are regarded as impious criminals. Everyone shuns them and avoids going near or speaking to them, for fear of taking some harm by contact with what is unclean...The Druidic doctrine is believed to have been found existing in Britain and thence imported into Gaul; even today those who want to make a profound study of it generally go to Britain for the purpose' (translation by S.A.Handford in the Penguin Classics edition).

Sacrificed in Fiery Baskets

Caesar also describes colossal images of wickerwork, which the Gauls filled with living men, who were then burned alive as offerings to the gods, under Druid supervision. Generally the victims were thieves and criminals, but if there were not enough of them for the purpose, innocent men were sacrificed.

On Caesar's authority alone, there was a chief Druid for all Gaul, who convened annual meetings in a sacred precinct within the territory of the Carnutes tribe. Such sanctuary sites are attested by Gaulish names such as *nemeton*, and seem to have been cleared areas in the forest, in some instances enclosed by a palisade or bank and ditch: there is archeological evidence of such sites. In these sanctuaries wooden

The first summer solstice ceremony held by the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, which was formed in 1964, took place not at Stonehenge, but at Hunsbury Hill near Northampton

images of deities are mentioned by Lucan, and are again corroborated by archeology. The classical writers were surprised and perplexed by remote woodland shrines rather than civic temples as the cult centres of Gaul, and invested them with romantic attributes of terror.

Recruitment to the Druid order seems to have been from the noble classes, and instruction in the oral tradition of memorizing verses for periods of up to 20 years is mentioned by Caesar. Such traditional instruction for bards and poets was characteristically Celtic and, with periods of training of up to at least 12 years, continued in Ireland to the 17th and in Scotland up to the 18th century. Prehistoric Celtic society was non-literate except for an occasional ability to write in Latin (or very rarely Greek), as the languages of literacy.

The functions of Druids in Gaul, at least, seem basically to be those of the acknowledged repositories of traditional lore and wisdom, and particularly of customary law. They are attributed the prophetic powers of the seers but this may have arisen partly from their practical knowledge of the calendar. They certainly appear as lawgivers, and as being directly concerned with animal and human sacrifices, including those holocausts in huge wicker constructions attested by Strabo and Caesar. It was the practice of human sacrifice under Druid auspices in the Celtic world that was largely the cause of the proscription of the religion by the Romans from the 1st century AD onwards.

What we know of the Druids' corpus of knowledge is sketchy and not very impressive. So far as their speculations on the supernatural are concerned, we have to be on our guard in the classical texts against taking literally the loaded terminology of ancient philosophy, which was all that could be used to describe the situation in an alien and barbarous society. All that really emerges is a belief that the Druids knew the divine will and the actions of the gods, with whom they had communication. Their beliefs about the immortality of the soul struck the classical world as very unfamiliar: an otherworld which was a magical renewal of life exactly as on earth, but in another body and in another place. To accommodate this simple barbarian concept within classical thought, the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls was invoked, though in Druid belief this is nowhere implied. The literal reliving of life beyond the grave as a Celtic belief is documented by other references in the texts, unconnected with Druids, and by the evidence of the elaborately furnished princely tombs of the period.

Knowledge of Stars and Time

That a belief in the Druids' prophetic powers may have had some basis in fact is suggested by evidence of their practical

Building of Eternal Death

Howling the victims on the Druid Altars yield their souls
To the stern warriors; lovely sport the Daughters round their victims...
Terrified at the sight of the Victim, at his distorted sinews,
The tremblings of Vala vibrate thro' the limbs of Albion's Sons.
While they rejoice over Luvah in mockery & bitter scorn,
Sudden they become like what they behold, in howlings & deadly pain.

Spasms smite their features, sinews & limbs; pale they look on one another;
They turn, contorted; their iron necks bend unwillingly towards
Luvah; their lips tremble; their muscular fibres are cramp'd & smitten;
They become like what they behold. Yet immense in strength & power,
In awful pomp & gold, in all the precious unhewn stones of Eden,
They build a stupendous Building on the Plain of Salisbury: with chains
Of rocks, round London Stone, of Reasonings, of unhewn Demonstrations,

In Labyrinthine arches, (Mighty Urizen the Architect,) thro' which
The Heavens might revolve & Eternity be bound in their chain,
Labour unparallell'd, a wondrous rocky World of cruel destiny,
Rocks piled on rocks reaching the stars, stretching from pole to pole.
The Building is Natural Religion, & its Altars Natural Morality;
A building of eternal death, whose proportions are eternal despair. . .

William Blake, *Jerusalem*

knowledge of astronomy and the construction of calendars. The Posidonian sources contain several references to such knowledge, of course not uncommon among the priests of many comparatively barbarian societies of their time, and the references to 'Pythagorean knowledge' believed to be known to the Druids may well refer to some Greek mathematical concepts transmitted to the Gauls via Massilia.

The surviving fragments of a monumental calendar-inscription from Coligny in Gaul are an objective testimony to considerable calendrical expertise at this time, and a recognition of the problems of reconciling the solar and lunar years. The other scraps of information about Druidic knowledge imply among other things some knowledge of herbs and their medicinal properties.

Such first-hand references as there are to the later Druids show them as hardly more than magicians and medicine-men on the fringes of Romano-Celtic culture, and even female Druids, who are little more than fortune tellers, appear in the stories. Human sacrifice was obnoxious to Roman sentiment and, while we need not see the Gaulish or British Druids as leaders of a national resistance movement, we can appreciate how, as the tribal repositories of traditional Celtic learning and sentiment, they would embody the incompatible barbarian tradition which the Romans were stamping out from the provinces of their empire. The Elizabethans in Ireland and the anti-Jacobites in Scotland later encountered a similar situation in their forcible assimilation of the final Celtic world.

STUART PIGGOTT*

The Druids Romanticized

Medieval Christian intellectuals had no interest in the Druids and the pagan past before Christianity had conquered Europe. It was not until the Renaissance and the rediscovery of the classical authors and texts in which the Druids were mentioned that an interest in them appeared in Western Europe. It did so in the context of the powerful new nationalism of France and England. In 16th-century France the Celts and their Druid priesthood could be admired as ancestors who had fought against Roman domination, and the same idea emerged in Elizabethan England as well. Even so, on both sides of the Channel, the Druids were not yet clothed in any roseate romantic glow and the human sacrifices they conducted in their blood-smeared groves were not glossed over.

By the 17th century in England, however, the Druids were beginning to be caught up in a tide of enthusiasm for the 'ancient wisdom' of the pagan, pre-Christian world and admired as sages. In his *Polyolbion* of 1622 the poet Michael Drayton saw them as 'sacred Bards' and wise philosophers 'like whom great Nature's depths no man yet ever knew.' John Aubrey, the antiquary, writing in 1649, took a much grimmer view of them, but connected them with Stonehenge, Avebury and the other prehistoric stone circles of the British Isles, which he believed had been their temples.

Aubrey was a pioneer of field archeology and correctly identified Stonehenge and its sister circles as the remains of pre-Roman religious sites (they were still being attributed to the Romans, Danes or Anglo-Saxons at this time). Though his suggestion that they were Druid temples contradicted the testimony of classical authors that the Druids used forest groves for their ceremonies, it took firm root and has flourished ever since.

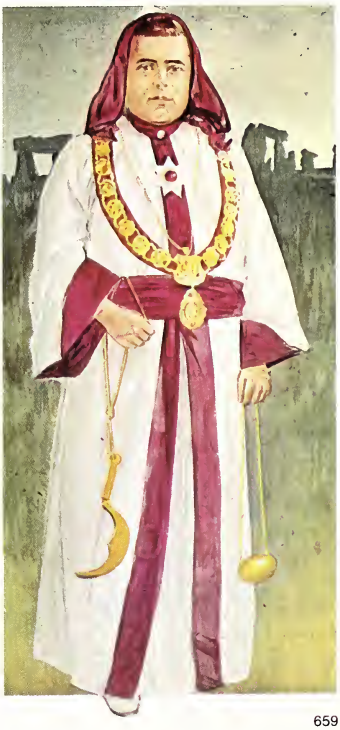
It has been suggested that it was of Stonehenge that the Greek poet Pindar wrote in his 10th Pythian Ode, in which he describes a temple sacred to Apollo in the land of the Hyperboreans (the dwellers beyond the northwest wind). Other writers also referred to this temple. 'In the island of the Hyperboreans' wrote Diodorus Siculus (1st century BC) 'is a grove of Apollo, exceedingly beautiful, and a temple worthy of notice, of a round form.'

The Arch-Druid

The writer John Toland (1670-1722) took up Aubrey's idea and, according to modern Druids, Toland organized a meeting of British Druids in 1717, but there is no convincing evidence of this, or of any British Druids at that date. A much more important figure in the evolution of romantic Druidry – also esteemed as a founding father by the modern Druids – was William Stukeley (1687-1765). An enthusiastic and eccentric clergyman, Freemason and amateur archeologist, he excavated at both Stonehenge and Avebury, and in the 1740s published books on both sites as 'temples of the British Druids'.

Stukeley regarded the Druids as forerunners of Christianity. They had come to Britain in Abraham's time or soon after, he thought, and brought the 'ancient and true Religion' of the Old Testament with them. They looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, and the sole difference between

Imaginative representation of a Druid at Stonehenge, which appeared in Vanity Fair in 1911: he holds the cosmic egg and the scythe used in the ceremonial cutting of mistletoe. Scholars working in Alexandria in the early centuries AD were the first to produce an idealized picture of the Druids as profound philosophers



Andy Weir

Danish National Museum

The Druids were the priests and prophets of Celtic paganism: the head of a Celtic god from the Gundestrup cauldron. The Celts worshipped the head as a symbol of divinity and supernatural powers

them and Christians, he explained, was that 'they believed in a Messiah who was to come, as we believe in him that is come.' Stukeley, who strongly influenced William Blake (see BLAKE), laid out his own Druid shrine surrounding an apple-tree in his Lincolnshire garden. His friends, who loved him dearly, affectionately called him 'the Arch-Druid of this age'.

The idea of the Druids as predecessors of Christianity and the link between them and Stonehenge now passed into accepted British folk belief. In France, too, prehistoric standing stones and tombs were firmly believed to be Druidic by the end of the 18th century.

'He Who Knows'

The picture of the Druids as custodians of an ancient revelation in Britain had exciting connotations for Welsh nationalism. In London in the 1770s there was a group of Welsh expatriates who were passionately interested in the native culture, language and history of Wales, and who felt themselves exiled among the English who had oppressed the Welsh for so long.

One of them was a stone-mason named Edward Williams (1747-1826), who tramped all over the south of England in pursuit of work. He had grown up immersed in the poetic traditions of his native Glamorgan, and he took the bardic pseudonym of Iolo Morganwg (Iolo of Glamorgan). The English romantic poets admired him as a heroic figure from the 'Celtic Twilight', and Robert Southey hailed him as 'Iolo, old Iolo, he who knows.'

The bardic traditions in Wales were of perfectly genuine antiquity, stretching far back into the Middle Ages. Iolo decided that in them there lay preserved the entire ancient lore and profound wisdom of the Druids, handed down generation by generation through the poets of Wales. He did not share Stukely's fervent enthusiasm for Christianity, but he was only too pleased to accept that the Druids had known the true monotheistic religion of Moses, the parent of both Judaism and Christianity.

'I am giving you,' he announced, 'the Patriarchal religion and theology, the Divine Revelation given to Mankind, and these have been retained in Wales until our own day.' To make this distinctly improbable claim stick, Iolo forged substantial quantities of 'early' Welsh literature (with considerable poetic skill, according to those qualified to judge).

Part of the genuine Welsh poetic tradition was the holding of *Eisteddfodau*, 'sessions' or gatherings of bards and musicians to compete against each other, which goes back to at least the 12th century – one is recorded at Cardigan Castle in 1176 – and probably earlier. The custom had practically died out, but it was now being revived, and an impressive Eisteddfod was held at Corwen in 1789. Iolo invented a *gorsedd*, or guild of bards, not just as a poets' professional association, but as a spearhead of the revival of Welsh culture and national identity. In 1792 he organized a small ceremony 'according to ancient usage' on Primrose Hill in London on the day of the autumn equinox. A naked sword, placed on an altar at the centre of a ring of stones, was solemnly sheathed by the assembled bards.

The ceremony's claim to antiquity was dubious to say the least, but Iolo was nothing if not audacious and he contrived to infiltrate it into the ritual of the Eisteddfod held at Carmarthen in 1819. The stone circle was not yet of the imposing grandeur it later achieved – being formed of pebbles small enough to be brought to the scene in Iolo's pockets – but the ceremony has remained firmly attached to the Eisteddfod ever since and has become an important element of the proceedings, which now involve much stately Druidic mumbo-jumbo accepted by those taking part as genuinely ancient.

In 1858 a committee was appointed to organize the National Eisteddfod every year. It is now the most prestigious annual event in the Principality and the occasion is presided over by the Archdruid, in his white robes, golden crown and neck-ring, supported by ranks of Druids in the robes of white, blue and green which the 19th century deemed suitable to their dignity (they were designed by Sir Hubert Herkomer, the painter).

The Modern Druids

In the 1820s, William Danby, the squire of Swinton Hall, near Masham in Yorkshire, built a splendid Druid Temple, a miniature of Stonehenge with a ceremonial approach lined by standing stones, as an enjoyable folly and also as a way of providing badly needed employment in the district. There is a local story that he hired a succession of hermits to occupy his creation, offering food plus a generous pension to any hermit who could last there seven years, letting his hair and beard grow wild and never speaking to anyone. One hermit stayed for four years and a half, it is said, but that was the longest flesh and blood could endure.

Vincenzo Bellini's opera *Norma* (1831) is set largely at Stonehenge and most of the characters are Druidical, and Druids also enliven Edward Elgar's *Caractacus* (1898), which has an Archdruid, a brave young Druid and song and dance by Druid maidens. By this time groups of Druids were appearing to salute the midsummer sun at Stonehenge. An earnest interest in

In the old form a trumpet summons to attendance, the Chief with half-drawn sword asks to the four quarters 'Is it peace?' and the Gorsedd or gathering is proclaimed

romantic Druidry had grown up earlier in the century on the fringes of Freemasonry. From it there emerged a fledgling Druid Order, the ancestor of today's Druids, under the leadership of Edward Vaughan Hyde Kenealey (1819-1880), a flamboyant Irish lawyer and Member of Parliament. Fiercely anti-Roman Catholic in his sympathies, he was much better known as counsel for the Tichborne Claimant in a celebrated court case of the day.

It is said that Kenealey was succeeded as head of the Druid Order by Gerald Massey (1828-1907), a poet and Christian Socialist, interested in Spiritualism and psychical research, and deeply enamoured of the occult wisdom of Ancient Egypt. A more impressive and effective Druid leader, or Chosen Chief, was Lewis Spence (1874-1955), the Scottish occultist who wrote numerous books on Atlantis, mythology and European legends and fairy lore. He published an *Encyclopaedia of Occultism* in 1920 and his books are still reprinted from time to time. In his day the group seems to have recruited a larger number of occultists as members.

'Is it Peace?'

After Spence's time, in 1964, the Druid Order split into two mutually antagonistic factions. One kept the original name. The other, which called itself the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, was led by the late Ross Nichols, who died in 1975. The Druid Order continued to observe the mid-summer solstice ceremony at Stonehenge, until all public access to the circle itself was forbidden for conservation reasons. The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids held its ceremonies on Parliament Hill in London. It was influenced by the modern witchcraft movement and the Margaret Murray theory of witchcraft (see MODERN WITCHCRAFT) and, in addition to observing the solstices and equinoxes, celebrated the four major witch festivals of the year.

The Druid rituals were as much a product of 19th-century romantic fantasy as the Druids' robes and regalia. As Ross Nichols described them: 'In the old form a trumpet summons to attendance, the Chief with half-drawn sword asks to the four quarters, "Is it peace?", and the Gorsedd or gathering is proclaimed. The reception of honoured visitors follows...Then, if it is the spring or autumnal equinox, the Lady Ceridwen Cariadwen is received and offers gifts appropriate to the season including the horn of plenty.'

Druids At Bay

In the year AD 61 the Roman general Suetonius Paulinus led his troops across the Menai Strait in a fierce attack on the major Druid centre on the island of Anglesey, off the coast of North Wales. The historian Tacitus wrote a vivid account of the Roman legionaries preparing to wade across the strait, while on the opposite bank stood the Druids, their hands raised, invoking their gods and calling down appalling curses on the foe. There were frenzied women among them too, clothed in black, their hair loose and streaming, bearing torches in their hands (and strongly reminiscent of the terrible war-goddesses of Celtic mythology). The soldiers hesitated, awe-struck for a moment, before recovering their nerve and advancing to the attack. They quickly wiped out the Britons, and the groves where the Druids had carried out their rites were levelled to the ground.

It is interesting that centuries afterwards a great quantity of Celtic metal objects, including chariots, were discovered in a small lake in Anglesey, Llyn Cerrig Bach. A plausible explanation is that this represents a desperate sacrifice of valuable objects to the gods as the Roman army advanced.

Lindow Man

It is possible that a yet more valuable sacrifice was offered to try to stave off the Roman conquest of Britain. In 1984 a sensational discovery was made when the upper part of a male torso was found embedded in the peat of Lindow Moss, on the southern outskirts of Manchester in England. The police treated it at first as evidence of a murder, but it became evident that it was a murder committed some 20 centuries ago. In their book, *The Life and Death of a Druid Prince*, Anne Ross and Don Robins described the body in the peat. 'He lay face-down in a slumped position, arms bent under his torso. His left hand was missing and his right only poorly preserved. A squashed and elongated head, which seemed too large for the body, was turned sharply into his right shoulder and tucked in snugly like that of a sleeping bird. A short but full beard and moustache could be seen clearly on the exposed face. This was joined to a full head of short hair plastered against his crown...No clothing was in evidence, save a band around his upper left arm.'

The band was an armlet of fox fur. The corpse, dubbed Lindow Man by the academics, and matily christened Pete Marsh by the media, proved to be that of a young man, aged about 25 to 30, who had apparently – there were no signs of a struggle – gone willingly to his death as a human sacrifice. He had suffered a ritual 'triple death' (a motif which occurs in Celtic folklore), being first knocked unconscious with an axe, then swiftly garrotted – a cord made of animal sinew with three knots in it was still embedded in his neck – and finally dropped face down into a pool of water some four feet deep so that, symbolically at least, he drowned. In addition, during the garrotting his throat had been cut, to drain the blood from his body. The last thing he ate before his death had been a burned barley cake, which was found to have a few grains of mistletoe pollen in it.

These and other points about the body suggested to Anne Ross and Don Robins that Lindow Man was a young Druid priest of high princely rank, sacrificed at some especially grave and threatening juncture of events in Britain. The state of Britain in AD 61, when the Romans had defeated the native Britons in battle and were determined to destroy the Druids, would seem to fit the situation. If the theory is right, and the reconstruction which was made of Lindow Man's head is accurate, then for the first time we can look upon the face of a member of that ancient priesthood around which so much mystery and fascination has gathered. (See also CELTS; STONEHENGE.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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The throbbing beat of the drum in many societies forms a bridge to the supernatural. As an aid to the trance state, as a means of frightening away evil spirits, it is part of the equipment of the priest, the magician and the shaman

DRUM

Buckland Abbey, Devon

MAN'S USE OF DRUMS for a wide variety of practical and magical purposes seems universal and of the greatest antiquity. They have been employed to mark the occurrence of special occasions and events; in religious ceremonies of all sorts; as conveyors of messages, often in sophisticated codes; and, of course, as straightforward musical instruments. In many different parts of the world, drums have been beaten to prevent storms or earthquakes and to drive away demons and evil spirits, especially those that cause sickness.

They are sometimes linked with initiation rites. In the Port Moresby region of New Guinea, for instance, the main task which boys are set at their formal entry into manhood is for each to make himself a drum. They go into the forest in groups and are obliged to observe certain strict rules. They must not see or be seen by a female; if they were, their drum would have a poor tone. They must not eat fish, lest the bones tear the skin of the drumhead. They must not drink running water but only water trapped in the great leaves of the jungle foliage; for running water would put out the fire and power of the music of their drums.

Particularly in Africa, where musical skill in drumming is highly varied and developed, drums have been often connected with royal authority. In many western areas, every chief had his own sacred drum, which was played only at important religious ceremonies and offered its own libations of blood. When it was made, a slave would be sacrificed upon it and the spirit of the slave was believed to inhabit the drum thereafter. This recalls the royal drums of certain Malay rulers which were the dwelling-places of mighty spirits.

Above **Drake's Drum in Buckland Abbey near Plymouth, believed to have been taken by Drake on his voyage round the world and to sound of its own accord when war is imminent; some claimed to have heard it just before the First World War** ***Left*** **During a Royal Tour, Nigerians salute the Queen by beating their drums. In some parts of West Africa every chief has a sacred drum as a symbol of his royal authority**

The ancient kings of Buganda, a region especially renowned for the virtuosity of its drummers to this day, had a royal drum which was the object of the greatest veneration and was, indeed, the symbol of their kingship. When it was first made and whenever it was given a new skin, the blood of the ox whose hide was used was poured over the drum, as was also the blood of a human sacrifice. When the drum was beaten, it was believed that the life and strength of this blood flowed into the king, renewing his power and authority. The royal drums of some Buganda tribes also marked places of sanctuary: escaping slaves and straying animals who touched them were regarded as sacred.

The drum is probably most famous, however, for its ability to induce strange states of mind, conditions of trance and ecstasy and weird powers. There are the throbbing drums of magical ceremonies, the drums of Voodoo, of the Maenads of ancient Greece and of our own contemporary music. But in most cases the drum itself is not particularly significant, it is no more than one ingredient in a rich magic brew. In one region, however, the drum itself is of special importance and interest – the far north of Europe and Asia. Here, the drum (in the form of a kind of tambourine) has been used as the chief instrument of divination and has been particularly connected with the shamans of Lapland and Siberia (see LAPLAND; SHAMAN). He would beat on his drum to send himself into a trance. Then, it was believed, he would journey, mounted on the drum, through the world of the spirits. When he returned from the underworld, entranced, he would describe his travels in frenzied song, to the accompaniment of his drumming.

The Siberian shamans' drums were often carved and painted with pictures of men and animals, heaven and hell and hunting scenes. Some had metal images inside them which would rattle when the drum was shaken. (Some believed that thunder was caused by a great shaman beating and shaking his drum in the heavens.) These images were intended to record the visions that the shaman had seen in his trances.

In Lapland, before the coming of Christianity, there was the same veneration for the shaman and his drum. But the Lapp shaman, as well as employing his drum for inducing a state of trance, also used it as a direct tool of divination when he was fully conscious. The head of his drum was painted with many images, done in alder juice or reindeer blood. These images represented the gods of sun and moon, or wind, fertility and thunder, men, women and animals and the underworld. If he wished to foretell the future, the shaman would take his drum from its special skin bag, place little brass rings on the head and tap it with a hammer. As the rings danced on the images, so could the future be seen. This could be done not only by shamans. It seems that in the 18th century nearly every Lapp household had its own magic drum. Whenever an important practical decision had to be made (about, for instance, in which direction to hunt), the father would put on his best clothes, spruce himself up and consult the family drum. But it was always left for the shaman, rapt in his delirious trance, to seek solutions to the questions of greatest moment. He, above all, trusting in his drum, was the only one who could heal the sick by rescuing their souls from the dread world of the spirits.

The Drum in Ashanti Religion

The religion of the Ashanti in Ghana lays great emphasis on drumming during public worship, for drums are versatile instruments capable of performing both musical and non-musical functions, and serving as an aid to worship by creating the appropriate mood for worship, or they can be used as a means of worship and a bridge to the supernatural.

The majority of Ashanti drums are made out of *tweneboa*, a species of cedar formerly also used for building houses, which is believed to be the abode of the spirit, Tweneboa Kodua. It is cut down only after the appropriate ritual has been performed. Before the finished drum leaves the drum carver's workshop, it is first consecrated to Tweneboa Kodua irrespective of what it is to be used for. On any occasion that a master drummer has to perform, he must also begin by pouring a little libation to Tweneboa Kodua.

In organizing the sounds of drums, three functions are considered; the need for alerting or rousing people, the need for verbal communication and the need for movement. Accordingly three modes of drumming are employed: the signal mode, the speech mode and the dance mode. The signal mode consists of single drum beats played intermittently, or a short rhythmic figure played over and over again as a call signal or warning signal.

In the speech mode of drumming the emphasis is not just on selected rhythm patterns but on coherent verbal messages: an attempt is made to reproduce the spoken word as closely as possible on drums. This is facilitated by the nature of the Ashanti language, for Ashanti is a tone language, a language in which the tones of particular words, phrases and sentences tend to be fixed. Because of this it is possible for any drum which gives clear pitch contrasts to reproduce the tones of words, phrases and sentences. The second element of speech which is reproduced is rhythm. The relative durational values of the syllables of the spoken word can be imitated on drums. When these are combined with the appropriate tones, the Ashanti ear is able to re-interpret the sequence of drum sounds in verbal terms.

On ritual occasions the speech mode of drumming is much more frequently exploited than the signal mode. For then the drums can be used for addressing the focus of worship, for invoking his presence,

for praising him, or for communicating the wishes of his worshippers to him. Similarly the drums can be used for addressing the priest who, in Ashanti, also functions as a medium. They may spur him on to dramatic action or give him encouragement in the dancing ring. They can also be used for addressing the community of worshippers or individuals such as elders of a cult group, or ritual officers. The mood for worship can thus be greatly heightened through verbal texts played on drums.

The speech mode of drumming is greatly exploited in rituals devoted to ancestor chiefs. These rituals take place every 43 days and consist of food offerings, blood sacrifice and libations. As a libation is poured for each chief his name and praises are sounded on drums. Ashanti tradition also requires the drummer of the talking drums to play alone at about 4 o'clock on the morning of the *adae* festival, recounting the names of ancestor chiefs in their order of reign, playing a poem for each one of them, and ending with appropriate greetings of the occasion. The drummer usually prefaces this roll-call with a drum prelude called the Awakening, in which he addresses nature spirits, the Supreme Being, the earth and malevolent spirits personified in the witch. At the end of each poem he greets each one and is heard by the entire community as they lie awake in bed or as they start to prepare for the festival. For those who understand the language of the drums, the mood for the events of this day set aside for remembering and revering the memory of ancestor chiefs would have been set by the drummer as he plays in the speech mode.

The dance mode of drumming is equally important in Ashanti religious practice for the dance is a form of dramatic expression which can be combined with music to express a variety of thoughts and emotions. Hence for the Ashanti it is a vital element of worship and gives an added importance to drum music played in religious contexts. The drums are usually played in small ensembles or in larger groups, each ensemble being associated with social or cult groups who play them on ritual and ceremonial occasions. The ensembles played by cult groups are of several types. The *bommaa* type of ensemble, consisting of five or seven drums, is played on important public occasions of worship for state gods. Stylistic differences are maintained between the music played for the gods and that played for the chief. Another type consists of three small drums augmented by a master drum; in the music played by this type of ensemble the pieces follow each other in a prescribed order and are intended to build up to a climax. If the priest is not already possessed by the god before he comes publicly to the place of worship, he is expected to reach this state in the course of the music and to sustain it in various dramatic forms as the different pieces are played.

Drums used in ritual contexts in Ashanti society have distinctive repertoires which set them apart from those used for other purposes. Those that are dedicated to the gods are regarded as sacred and are kept in the temple or in its vicinity. However it is not only such drums that need care. The Ashanti believe that all drums used in ritual contexts must be protected from chance defilement lest they cease to be an effective bridge to the supernatural.

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Drumming is frequently used to induce strange states of mind, conditions of trance and ecstasy. In Africa a slave was sometimes killed on a drum so that his spirit would inhabit it. This Tibetan drum is made of human skulls

Horniman Museum/Michael Holford

Drummer of Tedworth

Poltergeist, probably the earliest well-attested one in England: at Tedworth, Wiltshire, in 1662 an itinerant drummer was arrested by a magistrate, who confiscated his drum; about a month later the magistrate's family heard drumming noises on the roof and pieces of furniture began to move about of their own accord.

large group of Moslems belong to a sect founded y a ruler who believed himself to be God; after early ten centuries, they still await his return.

DRUZES

A MOSLEM SECT, the Druzes differ from other orthodox Moslems most strongly in their practice of an esoteric or secret religion, known fully only to those initiated into it. Their name is derived from that of Darazi, one of the two original apostles of the cult, which was founded in the 11th century.

In Islam there have been from early times a number of schisms (see ISLAM). The main orthodox Moslems are the *Sunnis*, but in the first century of Islam a split began to occur between the Sunnis and the *Shia*, who followed the leadership of the Prophet's son-in-law, Ali. Much later came the *Ismailis*, who split from the Shia in a power struggle for the succession to the Imamate, the headship of Islam. The Druzes were an off-shoot of this important schism. In common with the Ismailis, they believed in emanations of the deity, in supernatural hierarchies, and in the transmigration of souls.

The most extraordinary feature of the Druzes' history is the life-story of the real founder, Hakim, a Caliph of Egypt of the Fatimid dynasty. Hakim was born in Cairo in 996 AD and succeeded to the throne when barely 12 years old. He was closely cared for by a tutor – too closely for his liking, since the tutor rarely let him out of the palace and stopped him from giving his companions lavish presents. He therefore authorized his parasol-bearer to kill the tutor – an act of decisive brutality which his disciple, Hamza, was later to cite among the proofs of his divinity.

Curfew at Sunset

When he was 20 years old, Hakim began to display a marked eccentricity of behaviour, an intolerance not characteristic of the Druzes in more recent centuries, and an excessive prudishness. He persecuted both Christians and Jews. Christians had to wear blue clothes and hang from their necks crosses a foot long. Jews had to wear yellow clothes and hang from their necks blocks of wood, supposed to resemble the head of the calf which they had once worshipped.

He banned the brewing and sale of beer. Town-criers rang bells in the streets and warned men and women not to enter the baths without drawers. Fishmongers were not to sell fish that had no scales. Curfew was at sunset. Once, when a dog frightened Hakim's horse when he was out riding, he had every dog in Cairo shot. Another caprice led to the execution of a number of grooms and valets.

By the time he was 30 years old, Hakim had intensified his oppression of the Christians. Nearly 500 of their churches and

Druze villagers in Upper Galilee celebrate the attainment of religious autonomy for the Druze Community in Israel. Members of this Moslem sect await the return of their saviour, Hakim, who disappeared in 1020 AD

Israel Government Tourist Office

monasteries had been demolished and their lands seized. He himself professed a fervent devotion to the cause of Islam. He wore a coarse black woollen shawl when riding to the mosque on a donkey, and bestowed gifts on the poor sheltering in the mosques. Women had to stay indoors all the time: to enforce this rule, Hakim forbade the shoemakers to make shoes for women.

Women Walled up to Starve

A sacred book of the Druzes describes this period of Hakim's life thus: 'Our Lord before his disappearance wore black garments during seven years; he let his hair grow long for seven years; he kept all the women shut up in their houses for seven years; he rode on a donkey for seven years. This he did out of his great compassion for us, to conform himself . . . to the number Seven, which is so important in the system of the Ismailis. He wore black garments . . . to signify to his faithful friends and servants that for seven years after his disappearance they would be in a state of trial and darkness.'

One day, passing some public baths, he heard the sound of female voices and learned that there were women in one of the baths. He at once had all the doors and windows walled up and left the women inside to starve to death. When his spies reported that some women had managed to evade his ban and leave their homes, he invited them to the palace. A number of them, flattered by the honour, gathered there, whereupon he ordered his guards to sew them up in sacks and throw them into the Nile.

When Hakim was 32, his Islamic piety began to yield to a conviction of his own divinity. His apostle Darazi came to Cairo as Hakim's chief vizier and wrote a book proclaiming this doctrine. Hamza, Hakim's second apostle, attended by 12 disciples, converted many to the new cult. Hakim himself no longer went to the mosque or observed Moslem feasts or the fast of Ramadan; and he suppressed the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca.

No doubt his orthodox Moslem subjects were dismayed; but this development brought relief to many of the other religions. Since Hakim now believed himself to be God, he thought that he should not discriminate between various modes of worship. The Christians were allowed to rebuild their churches, their properties were restored to them, and in one week 6000 Christians, who had become Moslems under pressure, returned to their faith.

In order to promote belief in his divinity, Hakim pretended – with the help of a network of spies, many of them old women who could enter the harems – to know everything that was going on in Cairo, and often startled his courtiers by repeating to them things they had said at home the night before.

Again, he issued an order that all shopdoors should be left open at night: the owners would be compensated for any goods stolen. In one night there were 400 thefts. Hakim confronted the owners with a statue; in it was concealed a man who told them where the stolen goods were and who had taken them. The thieves were hanged – but it was Hakim who had employed them for this task, in order to provide further proof of his omniscience and his stern sense of justice.

Terrible as a Lion

Hakim himself used to patrol the streets, often in disguise. Once a paper was handed to him: on it was written an insult to his sister. He gave his army orders to burn and pillage Cairo and kill any who resisted, and went to watch the fire from a nearby height. After one-third of the city had been destroyed, he called his men off, apologized to the townspeople (explaining, however, that he was not responsible for all that had been done), and granted a general amnesty. Such was the terror he inspired that this was received with humble gratitude.

A 19th century student of the history of the Druzes sums up thus the personality of Hakim: 'His aspect was as terrible as a lion; his eyes were full, and of a light brown; no one could stand his look; his voice was strong and sonorous. Inconstancy and caprice, joined to cruelty; impiety united to superstition, formed his general character. It is said that he adored, in a special manner, the planet Saturn.'

His death – or, as the Druzes believe, his disappearance – occurred in 1020 AD. Early one morning before daybreak, he rode on his donkey out of Cairo, first embracing his mother and telling her that, according to his horoscope, he would that day run a great risk. On the mountain top from which he had watched the city burning, he gazed at the stars and said to his attendants: 'We all belong to God, and we shall all return to him'; then, striking his hands together: 'Thou hast appeared then, fatal sign!' No more is known; he never went back to Cairo. The Druzes believe that he was the last incarnation of God and that he is not dead and will one day return in glory.

Oneness of God

With such a founder, it is not surprising that the Druzes have often, down the centuries, been embroiled in violence and civil wars – the last of these having occurred in Lebanon as recently as 1958. A 12th century observer said of them: 'They are subject to no king or prince . . . and are so nimble in climbing hills and mountains that nobody can successfully carry on war against them.' Sometimes they have warred with those of other faiths; but at other times Christians under Druze sovereignty have enjoyed more toleration and security than in any other Moslem land.

It would, indeed, be misleading and unfair to suggest that the Druzes of modern times emulate the savagery of Hakim. In the 1958 war, for example, a leader of their side was a hereditary Druze chieftain, Kemal Jumblatt – a man of intelligence and culture who has held office in successive Lebanese governments. He may be assumed to interpret the traditional teachings of the Druzes in a highly spiritual sense. These teachings, in any case, have always emphasized the oneness of God: they may be compared with the doctrines of the Gnostics in early Christian times.

In 1979 it was estimated that there were around 400,000 Druzes, scattered throughout Lebanon, Syria and Israel. They worship in small, bare shrines, empty but for boxes adorned with shreds of coloured rag. A modern traveller, Robin Fedden, writes of their elegance, their courage, and their 'astonishing beauty'.

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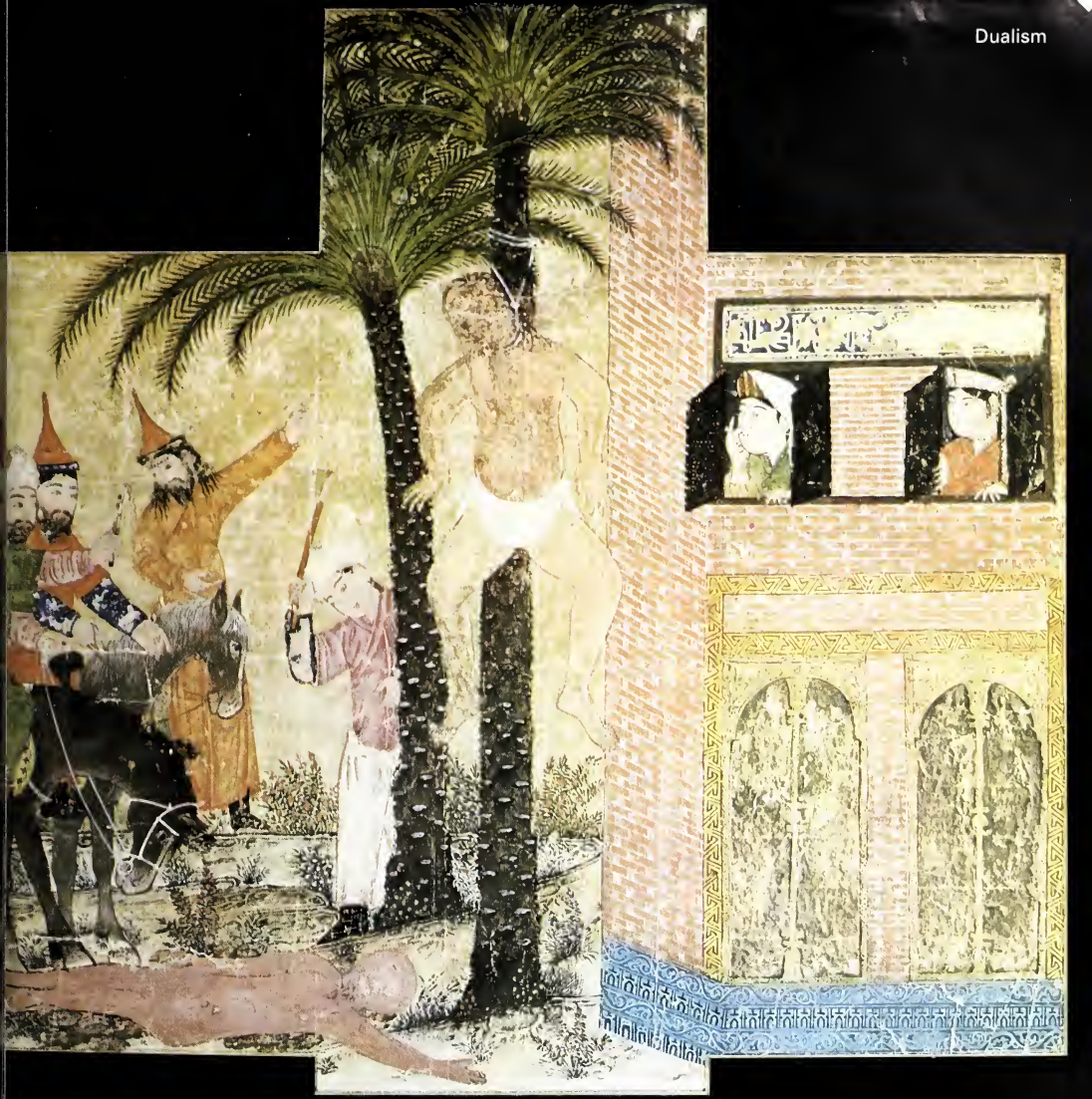
Dryads

In Greek mythology, female spirits who guarded oak trees and are shown dancing around them: they were later connected with groves and woods in general; mortal daughters of Zeus, they were long-lived and generally benevolent to men: a hamadryad was the life-spirit which lived in each tree and which died when the tree decayed: tree spirits are also known in many other parts of the world.

See ANIMISM; NYMPHS.



Sotheby's/Michael Holford

The martyrdom of Mani, founder of the Manichean religion; his flayed body lies on the ground, and his skin, stuffed with straw, hangs from a palm tree. The Manicheans were dualists, believing in the eternal opposition of two great principles, the powers of Light and Darkness; from a 14th century Persian manuscript

Where does evil come from? Many answers have been given to this question: one of them is that evil stems from some great god, force or principle which is separate from and opposed to the good

DUALISM

IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS, dualism means the belief that there is a radical opposition between two great principles which underlie the existence of what, in one way or another, is found in the world. In Zoroastrianism, for example, the two opposing principles are Ohrmazd, the creator and champion of the good, and Ahriman, the champion of evil. Ahriman and his army of evil beings harass the good creation of Ohrmazd, into which they have penetrated from outside, until at the end, far in the future, they are expelled and deprived of all their destructive power.

In Zoroastrianism, the theory of opposite principles takes various different forms. In the *Gathas* or 'Songs' of Zoroaster there is the opposition between the beings belonging to the good god's creation and the demonic beings who try to annihilate it. The *daivas* or demons joined the side of evil by their own choice. But an earlier choice had been made by the two 'spirits', the Holy Spirit and the Evil Spirit. They are described as twin brothers, which can be interpreted as indicating the symmetry between them. They are equal and contrary, the inspiring agencies and at the same time the opposite terms of the 'choice' to which all reasonable beings are committed.

Zoroastrianism soon became a clearly dualistic system in which Ohrmazd was opposed directly and from all eternity to Ahriman. Some non-Iranian sources testify to the existence in Iran of a myth recounting how Zurvan (Time or Destiny) gave birth

to the twins Ohrmazd and Ahriman. This seems to have been an attempt to 'bridge' the dualism of Ohrmazd and Ahriman, with Zurvan as the impersonal principle of Time or Time-Fate, the sphere in which the actual agencies of the cosmic drama exist and operate. But the myth was finally rejected by the Zoroastrians themselves. (See AHRIMAN; ZURVAN.)

The Evil Rival

Another example is the 'anticosmic' dualism of Gnostic teachers and sects, like Valentinus, Basilides, the Manicheans and the Mandeans (or much later the Bogomils and Cathars). Here, this world itself is evil, made of a dark and essentially negative substance, and created not by the supreme God but by an inferior supernatural power, the Demiurge. Man's body and the lower level of his soul were created by the Demiurge but contain, imprisoned in them, the divine spark, the spirit which comes from God and which can only be freed from its prison by the *gnosis*, the liberating knowledge of God.

In the doctrine of some Gnostics, including Valentinus (2nd century AD), evil manifests itself only at a late stage in the creation of the universe. There is a succession of emanations from the divine world. The last of these is Sophia (Wisdom) and her 'fall' brings matter into existence. The dualism of the Manicheans and the Iranian Gnostics was more radical, for Light and Darkness were in opposition from all eternity. (See GNOSTICISM; MANICHEANS.)

According to the Bogomils in the Balkans, the evil principle, Satanael, who corresponds to the Demiurge of the Gnostics, derived from God but created an earth and a heaven for himself. He also created the body of man, which he treacherously caused to be animated by a spirit, sent by God (see BOGOMILS).

A dualism partially analogous to that of the Bogomils can be found in a number of legends from eastern Europe; among some sects of western Asia, including the Yezidi of Iraq, the 'worshippers of the Devil' who venerate the Angel Peacock, a demiurge who is a rival of God but is later reconciled with him (see YEZIDI); and among a number of peoples of central and north-western Asia, including the Tartars and eastern Finns. An example is the story of Erlik, a rival who co-operates with the Supreme Being in the work of creation: he digs up for him a particle of earth from the bottom of the primordial sea and tries, with little success, to create a heaven of his own.

These stories imply a feeling of some inadequacy on the part of the Creator. Generally, the adversary is conquered in the end but the nature of his malignant deeds brings them into the fold of dualism proper. He breathes his own bad spiri into man or he soils man's person, and this is not because of any fault on man's part especially as the intrusion of evil is described as occurring during the creation o man.

Something very similar occurs in a number of primitive mythologies from north eastern Asia and from North America, where we have the tales of Coyote, a typical trickster-demiurge who is an unhappy but no ineffective competitor of the Creator during the work of creation. Stories detected among

the Dogon in Mali imply that reality has resulted from the opposing actions of a Creator and a competitor, the Pale Fox. The wide diffusion of dualistic myths warns us against always attributing dualism to Iranian or Manichean or Bogomil influence.

The Serpent's Descent

Another strand of dualism appears among the Orphics, in Empedocles and other early Greek philosophers, and in Plato. The world is thought to consist of two principles, which are seen as complementary to each other but usually unequal in value. In Plato there is the dualism of Matter on the one hand and the Ideas (with the supreme one, the Idea of Good) on the other. In Empedocles there is the dualism of the two opposite principles of Love and Discord, which prevail in turn in the universe. In Pythagorean doctrine there is the dualism of the Monad (Unity, perfection, eternity, infinity) and the Dyad (Duality, imperfection, limitation in time and space).

Gnostic dualism has something in common with this type of speculation, especially in the variety of Gnosticism which is called 'ophitism', in which the serpent (*ophis* in Greek) symbolizes the descent of the superior spiritual element (*pneuma*, literally 'breath') into the inferior world of matter, and its subsequent ascent again, or reintegration into the divine, heavenly realm. This concept of descent and ascent is related not only to the theory of the salvation of the human spirit, escaping from its imprisonment in this world, but also to the nature and creation of the universe. The spiritual element is conceived of as animating matter and giving it life, form and movement, even if only precariously and provisionally.

The term dualistic can also be applied to certain Indian doctrines, found in the *Upanishads* and the Vedanta tradition, which are 'monistic' in that they reduce all that exists, in its manifestations in the realm of multiplicity and appearance, to a first principle, the ultimate ground and substance of the universe (*Atman*, *Brahman*, *Purusha*), which is immanent (pervading all things in this world) but also transcendent (surpassing, going beyond them). But these Indian systems are also dualistic, in the sense that they oppose the visible and illusory world with its limited and imperfect gods to the transcendent substance of Atman and Brahman (see also BRAHMAN).

Or there is the Chinese theory of Yin and Yang, the two ultimate principles of the universe, whose opposites – day and night, male and female, celestial and terrestrial, and the rest – underlie all manifestations of being. Again, in Taoist doctrine, these two principles are transcended by one first principle, the Tao itself, which is inexpressible, not reducible to a mere expedient to 'bridge' the Yin-Yang couple (see CHINA; TAOISM).

Fra Angelico's painting of the *Last Judgement*; the souls of the righteous, on God's right, go to heaven and the souls of the wicked, on his left, are subjected to the tortures of hell. Christian concepts of God and Satan, of good and evil, are not truly dualist for God remains the supreme Creator and Lord; Satan is a creature of God and creates nothing

Scala

Ethical Dualism

Sometimes the opposition between the two principles of a dualist system seem to reach into the very interior of Godhead, or whatever is substituted for it, as in some Iranian or heretical Islamic speculations. Peculiar developments of classical dualism, with its tendency to split soul or society or reality into opposing segments, can be detected in some forms of modern existentialism, of Freudian psychoanalysis and of Marxism.

But it is important to distinguish between dualism in the true sense of the term and so-called 'psychological' and 'ethical' dualism. A duality of ethical and psychological possibilities, the good ones and the bad, is to be found in every form of human thinking and behaviour. For example, it would be misleading to assimilate to true dualism the Jewish concept of the two 'spirits' which act in the soul of man, the good inclination and the evil inclination. For these do not detract from the biblical idea of a supreme Creator and Lord of the universe. The Dead Sea Scrolls expressly state that these two spirits were appointed by God to give man a choice (see DEVIL).

Similarly, the Jewish and Christian concepts of Satan are not truly dualist, for Satan is a creature of God and creates nothing himself. Nor are the Jewish and the somewhat different Christian ideas of original sin, which are very different from the dualist Orphic, Platonic and Gnostic notion of a primordial crime, committed in the heavenly world by a divine or semi-divine but invariably non-human and pre-human agency, a sin 'previous' to the world and to man, and producing the very existence of man in the world. This notion did influence some Jewish and Christian thinkers, including Philo of Alexandria in the 1st century AD and Origen in the 3rd, but is foreign to biblical thought. St Augustine formulated the orthodox Christian refutation of dualism, according to which evil is not a principle or a substance but a deficiency of good within created rational beings (either angelic or human).

(See also EVIL, OPPOSITES.)

UGO BIANCHI

Michael Holford

Right **Above the sacred tiger hang the interlocked symbols of Yin and Yang, encircled by eight trigrams. In Chinese belief, the Yin and Yang represent the two principles of cosmic energy which are opposite and complementary. Yin is of the earth, dark, female and heavy, and Yang is of the heaven, bright, male and light. The eight trigrams are mystic symbols, used in divination**

Left **According to Hindu belief Vena, the wicked king of the world, dies as punishment for his haughtiness. From his lifeless body spring two spirits, a dark evil one who goes off to lurk in the desert, and the resplendent Prithu, who is the saviour of men**

FURTHER READING: R. M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (Harper Torchbooks, N.Y., 1966); Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1963); R. C. Zaehner, *The Teachings of the Magi* (Allen & Unwin, 1956).

C. M. Dixon

Dung-Beetle

Or scarab, venerated in Egypt because it lays its eggs in a ball of dung which it rolls along the ground: a symbol of the sun, of the creation of life in matter, or resurrection; amulets in the shape of a scarab were worn as good luck charms or placed in the tombs of the dead to ensure eternal life.

See SCARAB.

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Dunkers

Christian sect whose members emigrated to Pennsylvania from Germany in the 18th century to escape persecution: the name comes from their practice of baptism by immersion, administered to adults only; they model their way of life on that of the early Christians and hold 'love-feasts' twice a year; the sect has gained many converts in recent years through missionary work.

Mansell Collection

Dunmow Flitch

The side of bacon awarded at Dunmow in Essex to a married couple prepared to swear that they had not quarrelled in the previous 12 months: the bacon may reflect the old fertility symbolism of the pig: the custom, said to have been founded in the 12th century, was revived in the late 19th.

DWARFS

The small, dark people of Norse mythology, renowned as workers in metal and magic, may have a historical origin

IN FOLK LEGENDS and fairytales, dwarfs were always described as creatures of small stature, ranging from the size of a man's thumb to the height of a two-year-old child. In appearance and feeling, they roughly resembled human beings, but magical powers endowed them with special skills and wisdom far beyond those of any mortal men. Inhabiting the dark and secret places of the earth, dwarfs could appear or disappear with bewildering rapidity.

Although dwarfs were a regular feature of northern folklore, references to such diminutive beings can be found in Greek literature. Crowds of tiny men climbed ladders to reach the top of Hercules's wine cup, when that hero visited their country; and in Greek paintings they were depicted as hewing ears of corn with miniature axes. Such writers as Pliny and Aristotle claimed that tribes of these minute people dwelt in caves on the banks of the River Nile.

Very occasionally, dwarfs were described as incredibly beautiful. Fair Idun, of Norse mythology, was utterly unlike her dark, ugly brothers and father, dwarfs who were skilled smiths. Old Ivaldir sometimes allowed his lovely daughter to walk abroad in the sunlight, which she much preferred to their gloomy underground kingdom of Svartalfheim. Because she was so beautiful the sun's rays did not turn her to stone, a fate which befell other members of the race of dwarfs

Bragi, the handsome god of poetry and eloquence, fell in love with Idun, and married her; and she was given the special task o keeping the golden apples, which gave the gods eternal youth and vigour.

The more usual Scandinavian and Teutonic dwarfs were hump-backed, dark little men with large, wise heads and long beards Sometimes their feet resembled those of a goat, or a goose. All lived to a great age and considered unwholesome food to be the cause of the brief span of human life. Their kingdoms and tribes were ruled over by kings and chieftains, and possessed large armies. Dwarf territories were situated deep inside mountains, mines, or under water. In the main, the creatures feared and detested

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sunlight, and one named Alviss, who was compelled to remain all day above ground, was turned to stone by exposure to the sun's bright rays. Garbed in black, brown or grey, they found no difficulty in merging into rock clefts and cave mouths, or gaining unseen access to their dark, subterranean abodes.

All That Glitters

Dwarfs were particularly the jealous custodians of gold, precious metals and jewels, and this guardianship also included the glitter of the sun's and moon's rays. Their vast underground halls were reputed to contain the most priceless of treasures. Anyone who stole from these hoards suffered great misfortune, and if a robber did manage to transport some of the gold to his home, he would abruptly discover that the fortune had turned into a pile of dead leaves.

To the mortal men they favoured, dwarfs were the givers of wise counsel, for they were considered to be the repositories of great knowledge. This secret wisdom evidently invested them with the power to foresee the future, make themselves invisible, and assume other forms. They were also adepts at magic songs and runes, and brewed the heady mead of poetry, which was guarded by the gods. Anyone aiding them was treated with the utmost kindness and courtesy, and generously rewarded from the storehouses of treasure. Legend tells of human midwives given gold in grateful return for their special services.

Michael Holford/Prado

Dwarfs and little people in general have always held a fascination for man: the tiny hump-backed men of northern European folklore were often credited with supernatural powers and throughout history people of very small stature were exhibited as curiosities *Left* The wise and kindly dwarfs from Walt Disney's highly popular film version of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, whose antics were earlier recorded by the brothers Grimm *Above* Fred Roper's Company of Wonder Midgets, photographed in 1936 at Waterloo Station before leaving for South Africa where they were to appear at the Johannesburg Empire Exhibition *Right* Up to the 18th century dwarfs occupied a favoured position at the courts of Europe, often as playmates of the royal children: painting of the court dwarf, Don Sebastian Morra, by the 17th century Spanish artist Velazquez

These mischievous and sometimes malicious beings teased farm animals, abducted children and beautiful maidens, and stole bread and corn

The dwarfs were chiefly renowned for their ability to produce magnificent metalwork. The foremost craftsmen among their numbers were generally the kings. It was these ugly and often ill-tempered little men who could create wondrous works of art and magic. They forged the armour for the gods, and the strong chain called Gleipnir with which the gods bound the terrible Fenris Wolf. Magic swords and golden rings, so highly prized in many legends, were fashioned by the deft fingers of dwarfs. Fair Idun's two brothers made Gungnir, Odin's magical spear. They also produced for the goddess Sif, the beautiful wife of Thor, exquisite, long golden tresses, to replace her own hair after the mischievous god Loki had shorn it all off.

Another dwarf, Sindri, forced to compete against Ivaldir's two sons by the boasting of his brother Brökk, wrought many wonderful things, including Thor's mighty battle hammer, Mjölnir, which no matter how far it was hurled always returned to its thrower's hands. For the god, Freyr, the dwarf made Gollinborsti. This great boar could either be ridden or draw a chariot, and it travelled as easily through water or air as upon land. The lights from Gollinborsti's special golden bristles ensured that Freyr never rode in darkness, not even in the deepest night. For Odin, Sindri fashioned Draupnir, a golden arm ring. Every ninth night, eight rings, all of similar weight, were formed and fell from this magical piece of jewellery, so that by the end of only one year the owner of the dwarf's handiwork would have amassed a great treasure.

During the 19th and 20th centuries a succession of scholars have advanced evidence to support the theory that the dwarfs of folklore and superstition were real people descended from a race of small, dark men, skilled in mining and the smelting of metals, who had inhabited the primeval forests of Western and Central Europe. Fearful of the threat of peoples invading from further east, they sought refuge in caves – which may be an explanation for the legends that the dwarfs had been swallowed up by the earth. Remnants of their ancient culture were often thought to have survived with the little people of later centuries, giving them a reputation for esoteric knowledge ***Above*** **Detail of a dwarf from a painting by Domenichino in the National Gallery, London**

Lords of the Mine

Anyone who forced the dwarfs to give or make one of their exquisite articles was doomed, and their gain brought only misery. An enchanted sword, Trfing, which two dwarfs were compelled to forge, had a curse laid upon it. It could never be drawn from out of its sheath without bringing death.

Those dwarfs who lived in the mines were regarded very warily by men, and considered more vicious and unpredictable than those inhabiting mountains. Miners often heard them moving about far below in the darkness, and now and then glimpsed the little men. Within the mines, all kinds of catastrophes from broken tools to roof falls and sudden fires were attributed to the fury of these dwarfs. This was their method of punishing over-inquisitive humans, who appeared to treat the tiny 'lords' of the mine without proper respect. However, if mollified with presents of food, dwarfs were known to help with the work in hand, and give advance warning of danger by tapping in the mine shafts. The tales of the 'knockers' from Cornwall and Staffordshire belong among those of the rest of Europe relating to mine dwarfs (see CORNWALL).

Generally, it was human beings who had cause to grumble about the dwarfs' behaviour. These mischievous and sometimes malicious beings teased farm animals, abducted children and beautiful maidens, and stole bread and corn. Yet, apparently, they were considered annoying rather than dangerous, except for the Black Dwarfs, which were a type of malignant elf. In the majority of Scandinavian and German folk tales, the dwarf is quite friendly to men, although sometimes complaining bitterly of human dishonesty and untrustworthiness. The *erdleute* (earth people) of Swiss legend were said to help farmers, to find wandering cattle, and collect fire wood and fruit to leave out for the poor children.

Many North American Indian tales concern little folk explicitly comparable to the dwarfs of European tales. The Paiutes saw all dwarfs as mischievous, but the Cherokee believed they could be good or bad – though seeing either kind was a death omen. Many Eskimo tales depict helpful, luck-bestowing dwarfs similar to those of Scandinavia.

The origins of the dwarf are obscure. Norse mythology suggests that the tiny men either came to life as dark maggots crawling from the decaying flesh of the slain primeval giant Ymir, or from the scarlet billows of the seas, which were formed from the same giant's blood. The gods granted them the wits and shape of men, and gave four of the dwarfs, Austri, Vestri, Svori and Norori the duty of upholding the four corners of the sky. There seems to be little evidence to suggest that any of the dwarfs themselves were ever venerated as gods.

Archeological and anthropological studies have produced evidence to justify the theory that the belief in dwarfs was based on reality rather than on imagination. Some of the first inhabitants of Western Europe were small, dark, shy people, dwelling among the dense forests which covered much of Britain, Brittany, western France and Germany. Like the little Lapps, who inhabited the Scandinavian Peninsula before the invasion of the Gothic-Scandinavian races, they were skilled in mining and smelting the metals which abounded in those regions.

Memory of an Extinct Race

From the East came strong invaders economically and mechanically better equipped than the small natives. As these new people conquered and settled, the dominant features of their civilization became the much-hated incursions on the little people's original environment. Weaker in strength and numbers, they were forced to retreat into the swamps and islands, driven back by the clearing of their forests for the organized agricultural settlements of their invaders. Later came the passionately loathed church bells, as Christianity overcame the old religions. According to popular belief, the little men hated agriculture, the clearing of forests, and the ringing of church bells – anything, in fact, which disturbed the peace of their underground kingdoms.

Some of these original people intermarried with their conquerors, especially the Celts, who were in their turn forced further westwards by stronger Nordic groups. This mingling of races enshrined many of the very ancient crafts and beliefs of the little people, and determined that pockets of the old culture remained.

As in the case of many minority groups throughout recorded history, the invaders had no need to fear serious attacks from the vanquished, yet the seemingly magical

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In more modern times dwarfs have been associated with the circus *Left* Henry Behrens, 30 inches tall, was thought to be the smallest man in the world. He lived in Worthing with his wife, Emmie, who was 36 inches tall, in a house of scaled-down furniture *Below* General Tom Thumb who was exhibited by the 19th century showman, Phineas Barnum, was named after the dwarf hero of a folktale popular in the 16th century

practices of the defeated race gradually became the fearful superstitions of the more powerful majority. All the mysterious customs appeared to belong in the supernatural realms of some dark fairy world peopled with malevolent spirits who could use their incomprehensible knowledge of magic for the overthrow of the physically stronger overlords. Sir Walter Scott suggested that the little people's probable ability to foretell the weather from observing cloud formations and other meteorological phenomena, would have given them, in the eyes of the conquerors, another magical advantage. Thus, it was the invaders' fears, rather than the dwarf people's actual talents, which gave the relatively smaller and weaker race a curious power. Fairies, with whom dwarfs were popularly associated, were always believed to be capable of travelling quickly, and possessing the power of invisibility. Obviously, their slight stature allowed the little dark men to move swiftly, and no doubt they increased this speed in order to escape the attentions of their enemies, which would be accepted as further proof of great supernatural knowledge.

Caves in many parts of Western Europe show traces of having been inhabited from prehistoric times until as late as the 15th century, and it seems likely that the little people, and the descendants who shared their beliefs and magic, were forced to seek protection in caves. This may well have given rise to the widely held opinion that dwarfs were swallowed up by the earth. Right up until the 17th century, superstitious people claimed to have witnessed dwarfs' nocturnal revels in the vicinity of the so-called 'fairy' mounds. These were probably the barrows where once the little people had ceremonially buried their dead. Such tumuli would be considered to possess mystical and magical significance as meeting places for the secret gatherings of similar believers.

So it may be that dwarfs are really the group memory of a long extinct race. They lived on in the minds of later generations, embellished with incredible powers, and transformed into legendary figures, characterized by the beliefs of various cultural groups. Though dwarfs' fictional habits might differ from country to country, all were probably the distant relatives of the dark, little men who lived thousands of years ago.

SANDY SHULMAN

The rites of lamentation for Adonis, who was killed by a wild boar while on a hunting expedition, concluded with a joyful looking forward to his return to life, which was also an expression of hope for future crops. Michelangelo's Dying Adonis

The myth of the god of Nature who dies and is reborn recurs in many religions. Modern scholarship has shown that this is not a single strand but a complex web of myths, the meaning of which differs profoundly according to the social and cultural setting

DYING GOD

SEVERAL RELIGIOUS MYTHS of the ancient Near East have in common certain features which link them together despite important individual variations. Historians of religion since James Frazer have labelled these common features as the myth of the 'dying god'. In *The Golden Bough* Frazer complicated the discussion for later researchers by mixing up the analysis of this ancient pattern of myth with his theory of the divine king, who was believed to be the source of vitality for his people and who was ritually killed for the prosperity of his successors (see KING). Frazer's theories on this last subject have suffered severe criticism and are not now thought capable of being sustained. But in the volumes entitled *Adonis, Attis, Osiris* Frazer collected a mass of valuable material that can be detached from the abandoned theories within which he there presented it. The essence of the matter may be briefly summarized as follows.

In ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and Syria, legends relate how a god is killed, often by a wild boar or by an enemy whose symbol is a boar. The corpse is deposited in a river, or he is drowned. Through his death the vitality of Nature is lost. But his loss is mourned by a goddess who goes out in search of his body. The finding of the corpse is a liberating act for the vegetation, and with this liberation the god returns to life once more. The myth is attached to an annual ritual for the recovery of the vegetation after the heat of summer.

To understand the meaning of this ancient pattern of myth is not easy for a northern European living in a well-watered land, where the contrast between the seasons is marked by relatively small changes. In the Near East, on the other hand, the contrast is extremely perceptible and much more violent in effect. The lovely spring is sadly brief, and rapidly the rich vegetation disappears as it is scorched under the cruel sun. For long months of dry, dusty, burning heat, water comes not from the sky but only from Mother Earth's resources below in wells and rivers. Under the impact of the fierce sun the vitality of Nature, man and beast dwindles to a minimum.

Primitive men watched this annual process with some anxiety. Modern scholars have often supposed that the recurrence of the seasons must have given complete confidence that the cycle would come round again. The ancient evidence shows that this rationalist supposition is false. The seasonal cycle was not an infallible natural law, and the entire prosperity of society depended on a good harvest. A bad year was awkward, a succession of bad years calamitous. Each year the menacing desert threatened destruction. Miraculously, the seed buried in the soil at seed-time sprang up to new life in the harvest but primitive men could not take this for granted.

Weeping for Tammuz

This fundamental experience of man in relation to basic necessities of his physical existence was expressed in many of the ancient Near Eastern myths. One of the oldest attested myths is that of the Sumerian shepherd god Tammuz. In Roman times Tammuz became identified with the Phoenician Adon ('lord'), whom the Greeks appropriated as Adonis. But originally Tammuz and Adonis were independent. The ritual of Tammuz took place at a festival in July when the vegetation had already gone, and consisted of passionate lamentations. The prophet Ezekiel describes with pain and displeasure a vision in which he saw Israelite women at Jerusalem who had so far compromised their loyalty to Yahweh that they were weeping for Tammuz. Mourning for the god's death was certainly the principal feature of the rite. Sumerian hymns tell how Tammuz was drowned and how the mother goddess Inanna (or Ishtar) descended to the underworld to bring him back from his imprisonment there (see also ISHTAR; TAMMUZ).

The purpose of the lamentations is not certain. It may have been an expression of sympathy for the tragedy that had befallen Tammuz. Or it may have been an attempt to avert wrath by disclaiming responsibility for the catastrophe.

The ceremonial mourning at a time when the seeds were sown was universally known, and can be seen to have influenced the proverbial saying of the Hebrew psalmist, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.' But the Hebrews did not believe that there was any annual loss and recovery of vitality in Yahweh, and did not lament his demise in the hot summer.

The Mesopotamian rites for Tammuz were for the crops and flocks. The worshippers did not suppose that if they identified themselves with the god through participating in the mourning incantations, they could gain any personal survival of death or privilege hereafter. Like the ancient Hebrews, they expected no immortality other than that of their posterity.

It is a paradox of the history of Adonis that the cult is Semitic and yet that virtually all the extant sources for the study of the cult are not Semitic but Greek. In Greek myth Adonis, young son of the Cypriot king Cinyras, died from a wild boar when he was on a hunting expedition (see also APHRODITE). The boar was proverbial for its ravages in growing crops. In the *Iliad* (book 11) Homer gives a vivid description of the disastrous damage done by a wild boar. So the animal was an appropriate killer for a vegetation god. Adonis, however, represents not the harvest so much as the spring grasses and flowers destroyed by the summer heat. It was natural that in later times (as for Shelley) Adonis stood for the tragedy of noble youth cut off in its prime.

As with Tammuz, the rite for Adonis was one of lamentation, in which the women played the leading part. At Byblos in the 2nd century AD there were impressive ceremonies at Aphrodite's shrine, with an open-air procession and hymns which concluded with a joyful looking forward to Adonis's return to life. Unfortunately no document records, either explicitly or implicitly, the interval between the day on which Adonis was ritually mourned and the day on which his future revival was celebrated. The cheerful ending to the festival was in any event an expression of hope for the future crops rather

than of presumptive confidence in Adonis's present achievement of renewed life. The lamentation for his death was always the principal characteristic of the July festival, and several texts which describe or mention the rites conclude with the funerary mourning without going on to describe the return to life which the lamentations were intended to encourage.

Osiris, God of the Dead

Some of the best known passages in the Old Testament express the moving reflection that man's short and transitory life is like the grass that withers and the flower that fades. But once there is a religious context in which there is expectation or hope of surviving death (as there was not in early Mesopotamia), it is no great step to suggest that man's personal destiny may well have some correspondence with the seasonal cycle of spring, the dying of summer heat, and the renewal of life in the golden harvest. If the vegetation revives, may not man do the same?

This step was explicit in the worship of Osiris in ancient Egypt. The well known Book of the Dead, with its immense collection of formulae and passwords that the soul needs to learn now in order to negotiate its passage hereafter, is a sufficient reminder of the obsessive interest of the Egyptians in their proper destiny after death. Osiris was first and foremost the god of the dead, with a special relationship to Pharaoh. But at the same time Osiris had functions and powers closely akin to those of the Mesopotamian god Tammuz. He was the corn growing up to harvest, and above all the Nile itself, on whose annual flood in the summer months the prosperity and welfare of the country wholly depended (until the Aswan dam was built in 1902). Crops were sown on the mud flats which the receding Nile left as it subsided each October, and this fall in the level of the river was Osiris's death. Yet each June the power of Osiris revived in the waters coming down from the Ethiopian highlands, but which in ancient belief welled up from a subterranean water system bubbling to the surface at the first cataract.

Old Egyptian religion had three focal interests above all others – life after death, the monarchy, and the Nile as the source of agricultural prosperity. All three aspects found expression in the sacred myth of Osiris and his wife Isis. From the marriage of Isis and Osiris, earth and water respectively, sprang the life-giving corn (see also ISIS; OSIRIS). But the myth related how Osiris was killed by his wicked brother Seth, who cut up Osiris's body and threw the pieces in the Nile. The death of Osiris was annually commemorated on the 17th day of the Egyptian month Athyr (13 November). But Isis, together with her son Horus, who was to be his father's avenger, went in a ship in search of the pieces to put them together again. On the night of 19 Athyr (15 November) the mourning worshippers of Cairo used to go down to the Nile to join Isis in her search. At the climax the cry went up, 'We have found him, let us rejoice together.' Ceremonies connected with the Nile flood are prominent in Egyptian religion throughout its history.

Side by side with his lifegiving role in relation to the Nile and the fertility of the crops, Osiris was also of the first importance as king of the underworld which was his permanent home. He did not return from it to revisit the upper world. From his kingdom in the nether regions he caused the annual flood of the Nile and daily sent up the sun on its course. But his 'resurrection' was not a resumption of divine life on earth, for he did not leave his infernal throne.

The influence of this Egyptian cult of Isis and Osiris became considerable in the hellenistic age of the Ptolemies and in the age of the Roman empire. In a drastically reinterpreted form the veneration of Isis as a kindly universal mother spread throughout the Roman empire. A festival of Isis on 19 July marked the official celebration of the rising of the Nile waters and of Horus's revenge upon the wicked Seth. This was still being observed in the city of Rome in the

William MacQuitty

In Egypt there was an obsessive interest in the passage to the hereafter. The Osiris myth related how the god was killed by his wicked brother Seth and restored to life by Isis, but his 'resurrection' was not a resumption of earthly life, for he did not leave his throne in the land of the dead. Like each Egyptian king, who became an Osiris after death, he was connected with the Nile flood and the fertility of the earth; with the ascent and descent of the sun, and with life after death. Mummified corpse of the pharaoh Ramses II

4th century AD. In Egypt the Church came to recognize the need for a liturgical commemoration at this time and put a feast of St Joseph on 20 July, making the Christian dragon-slayer, Michael the archangel, the new patron of the Nile flood.

At the winter solstice, on 25 December, the Egyptians celebrated the birth of the son of Isis, Harpocrates, and led the sacred cow of Isis seven times round the temple of the sun. Twelve days later on the night of 5–6 January, in the late Roman period, there was a festival at Isis's temple in Alexandria to celebrate the birth of her child Aion, the god of eternity. On this night the Egyptians used to fetch water from the Nile, believing that it would be invested with healing properties or even (so some claimed) be turned into wine.

After the 4th century this festival of Isis on 5–6 January became important to the Christian Church in Egypt for whom Christ, not Horus or Aion, was the true sun and light of the world. The earliest evidence for the Christian observance of the feast of the Epiphany on 6 January comes from Egypt, and by the second half of the 4th century Christians throughout the Greek East were celebrating this day as Christ's Nativity, his veneration by the Magi, his baptism, his wine-miracle at Cana, and his feeding of the multitude. The greatly overloaded character of the feast becomes explicable if the original motive behind the institution of the celebration was to provide a rival attraction to the rites of Isis. John Chrysostom (c 390 AD) relates how at the great baptismal ceremonies of the Epiphany, simple Christians used to collect some of the water from the consecrated springs and preserve it for its medicinal properties.

In view of this evident influence of the festival of Isis on popular Christian customs associated with the Epiphany, it is remarkable that Isis's feast on 25 December had no influence on Egyptian Christianity. Only Western Christians observed 25 December as the Nativity of the true sun during the first half of the 4th century, and this festival was first accepted into the Egyptian Church's calendar under Western influence in the 5th century.

Attis and Cybele

The religion of the great mother of the gods had its principal centre in Anatolia. In the hills of Phrygia and Lydia she was worshipped under the names of Cybele or Agdistis, with a great sanctuary at Pessinus, not far from Ankara (see CYBELE). At Comana in Cappadocia there was the temple of another great mother goddess of Anatolia, Ma or Bellona, whom Cybele attracted to herself as part of her attendant train. The religion of these fierce Anatolian deities generated fervent and frantic emotion. Monotonous dirges were sung to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals. Repetitive rhythms induced wild excitement among the priests and worshippers who frenziedly scourged themselves and cut their bodies with knives (much like the priests of Baal encountered by the prophet Elijah), sometimes even castrating themselves in their ecstatic condition.

Cybele had a young male consort, Attis. The myth recounted that Attis met his death either by being killed when out hunting a wild boar, or after being put by Cybele into a state of Bacchic frenzy in which he bloodily castrated himself under a pine tree. Violets were born of Attis's blood as the first flowers of spring. Attis's death was commemorated at a spring festival of mourning and fasting during March, culminating in ecstatic dances on the wild Day of Blood on 22 March and on 25 March, the Day of Joy (*Hilaria*). In the 4th century AD this became the feast of his recall to life by his mother and consort Cybele. The ceremonies were preceded by an all-night vigil with lights. The day following, 26 March, was kept for much needed rest, and on 27 March there was a ceremony of washing Cybele's statue in warm water with a procession at which obscene songs were sung to the accompaniment of indecent gestures, the purpose of which was probably to ward off evil spirits.

Much of the surviving evidence for the cult of Attis and Cybele comes from the late Roman period, at which date the interpretations of the rites, and perhaps some of the rites themselves, had undergone development and modification under external influences. By the 4th century AD the climax of the rite was coming to lie not merely in the lamentations and frenzied acts of self-mutilation but also in the self-identification of the initiate with Attis in the dying and rising process. Here he was assured of salvation both now and hereafter, and in the most solemn act of initiation he went down into a dark pit while the blood of a bull poured over him from above. In virtue of this the initiate was 'reborn for ever', *renatus in aeternum*, as a later 4th century inscription records. Before the 4th century, so far as the evidence goes, the intention in the sacrifice of a bull in honour of Cybele was the benefit of some great cause such as the emperor. In the late Roman period it was rather a private purification for the salvation of the individual soul. The original meaning of the vegetation rite for the welfare of society became secondary to the individual's personal quest, and the rites of Attis and Cybele, like those of Isis, were practised with special tenacity by the wealthy pagan families which required a religion capable of being a viable alternative to Christianity.

In the 5th century AD Augustine of Hippo met a priest of Cybele who assured him that the religion of Attis and the religion of Christ were one and the same. Augustine did not believe him. But the story exemplifies the extent to which late Roman paganism sought to oppose Christianity by taking over some of its more characteristic themes and claiming that the meaning of their myths was identical. Nevertheless the rites of Attis and Cybele never wholly lost their significance as a rite of spring for the crops. The representations of Attis in figurines show him as a shepherd with a flute and pine tree, in one example with a scourge of knuckle-bones, or dying by his pine tree, or dancing in frantic ecstasy. The resurrection theme, however, is never clearly expressed; and the mother goddess Cybele is never portrayed as a Pieta, mourning for her dead son. One custom which survived centuries was that of planting violets on a grave. It may have derived from the cult but this is not certain.

The Dangerous God

Dionysus was a deity of Thracian origin whose cult penetrated Greece in Mycenean times (see DIONYSUS). The character of the Dionysian cult provoked opposition, not least from civic authorities in Greece, who were appalled when their womenfolk went off to dance by night upon the mountains, behaved as if they were drunk and in hysterical ecstasy tore up and ate the raw flesh of an animal. The cities tamed the Dionysiac orgies by giving them official status and by controlling their organization. At Athens the cult was domesticated and rationalized by being given the ritual form of tragedy and comedy (see DRAMA). In Rome also there was consternation when Greek missionaries from south Italy first brought the exciting nocturnal revels. Dionysus was identified with Bacchus, the god of wine, and turned into a jovial Falstaff-like figure rather than the dangerous god of ungoverned animal vitality.

Dionysus's myth had various forms. Poems written in the name of Orpheus, the legendary Thracian seer, magician and poet, relate that as an infant Dionysus was torn to pieces and eaten by the Titans. Zeus struck the Titans with his thunderbolt and out of their smouldering ashes fashioned man who thus remains a mixture of high divinity and low aggressions. Or, it was said, Demeter (Ceres) put the pieces together so that Dionysus was reborn. These and other variations of the myth reflect the different settings in which it was interpreted. Some, including Plato (who provides perhaps the earliest evidence for the existence of the myth), took the story as a theological allegory about human nature. Others saw it as a vegetation myth in association with Demeter and her mysteries at Eleusis near Athens (see DEMETER; ELEUSIS).

Dionysus made a late entry into the myths associated with Eleusis. Originally, as in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, the Eleusinian story simply told how Demeter's daughter Persephone was carried down to the underworld and then returned again to her mourning mother for half of each year. Additions were made as time went on. Rites, which perhaps were once for the propitiation of spirits of the underworld, incorporated agrarian features. Demeter was the corn mother, venerated by workers on the land in

Various ancient myths of a dying and rising god, of a goddess who visits the underworld and whose return to the earth's surface brings the reawakening of life in the spring, grew closer together and influenced one another until in the late Roman empire they were all understood as telling the same basic story of an eternal cycle of death and new life. In Greek mythology, the goddess Persephone was carried off to the underworld by Hades. She spent six months of each year there, returning to the upper world with the coming of spring: the *Rape of Persephone*, by Rubens

Hesiod's time. It was natural that she should welcome Dionysus to Eleusis, at least as an occasional visitor, on account of his association with the vintage. Dionysus and Demeter were identified with Osiris and Isis by Herodotus. The Eleusinian mysteries therefore absorbed influence from agrarian types of cult, and were also associated with individual hopes of a privileged life in Hades for those admitted to initiation. But the death and return pattern of Persephone's myth was not important in relation to these personal hopes.

The ancient myths of the 'dying god' of spring and harvest grew closer together as they influenced one another, until in the late Roman empire they were all understood as allegories telling the same basic story – the myth of an eternal cosmic return. The myths themselves incorporated elements from one another, and there was also some ritual borrowing. But the earlier in time the history of each cult is traced, the more individual and dissimilar they come to appear. The crux of the matter is that the meaning of the rites and myths may differ profoundly according to the social and cultural context.

The Dying God and Christianity

The final and perhaps most fascinating question in an inquiry into the ancient myths of the dying god is whether these ancient symbols had either direct or indirect influence upon Christianity. For Christianity has a story of death and resurrection at the centre of the New Testament, a ritual meal of bread and wine, and a spring festival. In its later history it also came to portray the suffering mother and her divine child. The external resemblances are striking. But what of the setting and inner meaning?

The first Christians were Jews. That is to say that Christianity originated within a community that utterly rejected the vegetation cults of the ancient world and would not compromise with them. Ezekiel's condemnation of the women weeping for Tammuz is typical of the Hebrew standpoint taken as a whole. The Judeo-Christian tradition could never accept the notion of a god who suffered periodic loss of power and needed to be revived by propitiatory rites. If the Passover was once the spring

Prado Madrid

Sotheby's/Michael Holford

Ancient myths of the dying god may seem to be reflected in Christ's death and resurrection, but Christianity developed in a climate which rejected the concept of a god who suffered periodic loss of power and had to be revived by propitiatory rites ***Left*** **Early 16th century woodcut** ***Right*** **Mummy of Osiris receiving the dead into the underworld, guided by Anubis**

sacrifice of semi-nomad shepherds, as most Old Testament scholars think (though this view has been warmly contested) nevertheless the Israelites never shared the view of their Canaanite neighbours that the deity's powers required annual revival. Recent investigation of the background of the New Testament, powerfully reinforced by the Dead Sea Scrolls, has seen emergent Christianity as being set almost wholly within a Jewish matrix. The present writer believes that this tendency in recent study has succumbed to the exaggerations which often result from the impact of new material, but could not dispute the broad truth of the position. The first Christians took for granted the traditional Hebraic understanding of the deity as transcendent and as existing independently of themselves and of the world. Such belief stands in the strongest possible contrast to the theology of the vegetation cults for which the god was wholly immanent in the seasonal processes of the physical world.

The Christians simply took over from the Jews the feasts of Passover and Pentecost: why they did not also take the autumn festival of Tabernacles is a puzzle for the solution of which only very tenuous scraps of evidence survive. The origins of Easter as an annual festival lie simply in the continuing observance of the Passover meal among the Christian communities. Nothing could have been more natural. In this traditional form the rite was practised by the Christians before it acquired its full weight of interpretation as the unique annual festival of the resurrection of Christ. But in New Testament times, as can be seen from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, the resurrection was being celebrated each week on the first day of 'Lord's Day', *dominica* as the Latin Christians soon called it. It was not difficult to hold a special commemoration once a year on the Lord's day which fell nearest to the Jewish Passover. Late in the 2nd century AD after some difficult controversy, the annual Easter festival was transferred from the original date, which always coincided with the synagogue Passover, to the following Sunday – that is, to the Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox.

The myths of Attis, Adonis and Osiris were intended to explain the rites of the cult by referring to 'events' of immemorial antiquity; and by the 1st century BC they were generally understood as allegorical myths with a cosmological or psychological meaning. The Christians startled the contemporary world by declaring as sober record that their master who lived recently, and died under Pilate the governor, had risen again and was now living. It is evident from Paul's dry catalogue in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, that they would not have existed as a community if they had not believed themselves to be reporting a fact.

If, however, the ancient legends of the vegetation gods cannot help us understand how Christianity began, it may nevertheless be possible to see signs of influence on later developments in the Church's history. It has already been suggested above that in relation to Christmas and Epiphany the historian is able to discern fairly clear evidence of either indirect or even direct influence. The Church found it necessary to provide counter-attractions on the traditional dates of great pagan festivals like December 25, January 1 and June 24, when the Midsummer festival became the nativity of John the Baptist. Early Christians had no qualms whatever about putting harvest and vintage scenes or the seasonal cycle on their sarcophagi or their mosaic floors. Yet here again the context of these symbols was significantly modified. The seasonal cycle, if taken as being no more than a poetic illustration and analogy, would naturally suggest the eternal round of transmigration or reincarnation. This the Christians utterly rejected as inconsistent with the unique value and meaning of this life.

The difference brings out a point which emerges with clarity from this comparative survey, namely that it is a mistake to assume that beneath the various forms within which religion finds expression there must be some essential similarity. There is not a universal myth of the 'dying god' which is adopted at a certain stage of human evolution and which appears in different societies and cultures dressed up in clothing of various colours. At least, if we begin from such assumptions, it is certain that we shall miss much of the truth about these ancient religions.

H. CHADWICK

FURTHER READING. The classic discussion is to be found in the sections on Adonis, Attis, Osiris in J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (St. Martin's Press, 1980). For discussions of Tammuz and Osiris, see H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (University of Chicago Press, 1978) and *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Harper & Row, 1961). For Attis and Cybele, see E. O. James, *The Cult of the Mother Goddess* (Praeger, 1959). For early Christianity see A. D. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background* (Harper & Row, 1964).

Michael Holford

Ea
Or Enki, the god of the waters, one of the three supreme deities of the Babylonian pantheon, the other two being Enlil, god of storms, and Anu god of the sky: Ea overcame the sweet waters, Apsu, with which he was later identified, and is often depicted in human form with waves about his shoulders: also invoked as the 'Lord of Wisdom', he was the patron of arts and crafts, and was credited with the invention of magic, and the creation of man from clay in the image of the gods.
See MESOPOTAMIA.

Because of its size, strength and aristocratic bearing, and its ability to outsoar all other birds, the eagle became a recurring emblem of divinity and also of kingship

EAGLE

MANY PLACE NAMES such as 'Eagle Rock' and 'Eagle Mountain' remind us that these magnificent birds were once a familiar sight in the mountainous areas of Europe and North America. Even today when the numbers of birds of prey have been greatly reduced in Europe there are localities, as for example in the eastern Mediterranean, where at times of migration considerable numbers may be seen.

It is significant, not only for the natural historian but also for the folklorist, that species and individuals decrease northwards, and it is not surprising to find that eagle lore is most deeply rooted in the mountainous regions of Asia. In religion, magic and literature the eagle achieved prominence in that continent and the European folklore of this great bird is in large part derivative.

Bird with Two Heads

In antiquity the eagle had a more significant role in Mesopotamia than in Egypt, where Horus, the falcon god, was of considerable importance. This is understandable when we take into consideration the differences in climate and topography between the two regions: such geographical factors had much influence on religion. Ancient Egypt was a land of sunshine dependent on the annual rise of the Nile, whereas the Mesopotamian city states came into being in a region fringed by mountains and menaced by storms and floods. As far back as the 3rd millennium BC a double-headed eagle was associated with Ningursu of Lagash, the Babylonian god of fertility, storm and war. These associations are explicable when we remember the eagle's habit of soaring powerfully among the clouds, which were regarded with the greatest concern in such an area, as they brought fertility to the fields but might also be responsible for disastrous flooding. The double-headed eagle was adopted by the Hittites and later cultures down the centuries. Evidence of the prolonged continuity of tradition is apparent in its having been the emblem of Austria-Hungary.

Another example is provided by the eagle-and-serpent motif. It appeared among the Hittites in the myth of the strife between the weather god and the serpent Illuyankas and has continued throughout many centuries and cultures; it appears today in the lectern of Peterborough cathedral, in England, and also in the arms of Mexico. In nature, it is not uncommon to see an eagle carrying a snake in its talons in regions where the snake-eating, short-toed species of this bird are found. In antiquity the conflict between the bird which soars high and the reptile which creeps into holes in the earth impressed people who looked on it as expressing the tension between the forces at war in the universe. Interpretations varied but the motif remained a dramatic portrayal of life's warring opposites.

In Indo-Iranian mythology, the eagle had an important role. It was associated with two themes, both of which had wide ramifications; in the Hindu text, the *Rig-Veda* it figures as the bringer of the sacred *soma*, an intoxicating spirit distilled from a plant of this name. In the *Avesta*, the holy book of the Parsees, it is said to dwell on the 'All-healing Tree Light' which in religion and art is related to the Tree of Life. From the cults in which these large symbolic birds were involved emerged beliefs in monstrous mythical winged creatures, such as the Arabian Anka, the Persian Simurgh and the Roc which carried off Sinbad the Sailor, as well as composite part-bird beings like the Indian Garuda. There are reminiscences of these strange creatures in the Book of Daniel where we read of a lion with eagle's wings and in Revelation in which other composite creatures are mentioned. Underlying such concepts is the attempt to symbolize supernatural power.

Asian influence may be detected in the exalted status of the eagle in Greek mythology, as the attribute or associate of Zeus. His eagle-surmounted sceptre at Olympia was in the tradition of Babylonian processional sceptres and such signs of authority continued into the Middle Ages.

In the Old Testament the eagle typifies swift and high flight and is noted as frequenting battlefields, but in most contexts the vulture is not clearly distinguished from the eagle. Through inadequate observation and the misunderstanding or deliberate embroidery of texts, eagle lore became increasingly divorced from natural history.

Myth of Rejuvenation

Eagles which survive to maturity are long-lived, as Aristotle, Plato and Pliny noted. The references in the Old Testament, such as 'youth renewed like the eagle's' (Psalm 103.5), together with observations of sea eagles plunging into the water to secure prey, contributed to the myth of the bird renewing its youth; this became elaborated and embellished as it was transmitted from scholar to scholar down the centuries.

Albertus Magnus (1200-1280 AD), quoting earlier authorities, wrote: 'They say that an old eagle, at the period the young ones are fledged, as soon as she has discovered a clear and copious spring, flies directly upwards even to the third region of the air, which we term the region of meteors, and when she feels warm, so as to be almost burning, suddenly dashing down and keeping her wings drawn back, she plunges into the cold water, which by the astringing of the external cold increases the internal heat. She then rises from the water, flies to her nest, and nestling under the wings of her warm young ones melts into perspiration, and thence with her old feathers she puts off her old age, and is clothed afresh; but while she undergoes the renovation she makes prey of her young for food.' Like so many medieval scholars Albertus feels constrained by the weight of authority to quote this account but remarks that as he has known two captive eagles moult in the normal way he must regard this as a miraculous occurrence.

Probably the beliefs that the eagle's feathers are incorruptible and that if placed with other feathers they consume them are extensions of the tradition of longevity. There may be another such extension in the legend current in Inishbofin at the mouth of Killary Bay, Co. Galway, and also in the

European eagle lore originated in the mountainous regions of Asia, and the bird features prominently in Indo-Iranian mythology: in this illustration from a 16th century Persian manuscript the legendary Kai Ka'ns is borne aloft in his flying machine by eagles attracted by the raw meat impaled on the four spears

Shiant Isles in the Hebrides, that Adam and Eve continue to live on in these islands as eagles.

The myth of the eagle stone, a nodule said to be brought to the nest by eagles to assist in ovulation, appears to be a variant of a motif in which birds such as the cock, swallow, hoopoe, raven, crow, jay, crane, adjutant stork and the mythical Roc are associated with stones to which magical properties are frequently attributed.

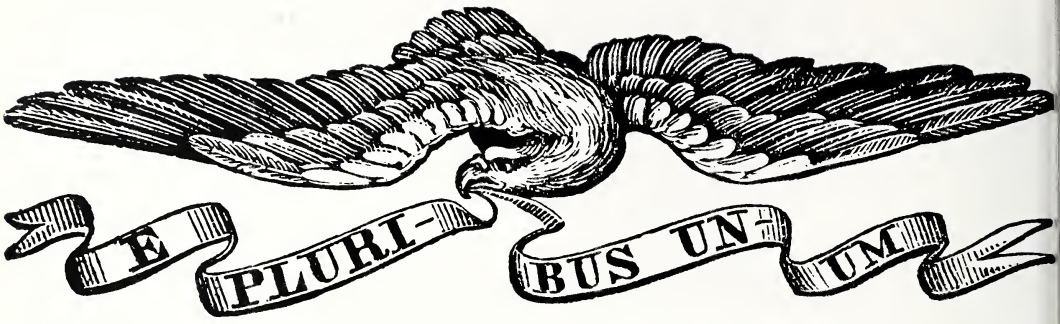
Companion of the Sun

The eagle, because of its upward soaring flight, is a bird of the sun and therefore associated with solar, sky and weather powers, but it also has obscure connections with the stars. The constellation Aquila (Eagle) is opposed to Cancer (Crab) and this was represented on ancient coins by showing a crab on the obverse to the eagle. It was also associated in some circumstances with lightning and the thunderbolt. The Romans believed that the eagle was never struck by lightning – hence the practice of burying an eagle's right wing in the fields or vineyards to ward off the hailstones accompanying thunderstorms.

These ancient associations continued in a somewhat disguised form in the legends attached to various Christian saints. St Medard, bishop of Noyon in the 6th century, was protected during a tempest by the outspread wings of an obliging eagle – and when St Servatius of Tongeren in Belgium was in discomfort from the hot sun, as he slept by the wayside, an eagle shaded him under its wings. In the Christian church the eagle has long been the symbol of St John because, as St Jerome wrote, 'he ascends to the very throne of God'. For this reason most lecterns in cathedrals and churches are in the form of an eagle with outspread wings.

In the British Isles eagles occur in the folklore of Wales where it is said that King Athur lives on in a cavern guarded by these birds. In stormy weather Welsh people used to say: 'The eagles are breeding whirlwinds on Snowdon'; in the neighbourhood of that mountain the cries of eagles were regarded as foretelling disaster. The Greeks and Romans also drew auguries from the behaviour of eagles. Plutarch mentions an eagle's

Michael Holford/British Museum



nest with seven eggs as a portent. At the battle of Arbela in Anatolia (331 BC) a soothsayer rode close to Alexander the Great assuring him that he had divined by an eagle that he would be victorious over Darius. An eagle is said to have lifted the headgear from Tarquinius Priscus and then replaced it, thereby indicating that he would be king of Rome, as indeed he became in about 616 BC.

Roman legions regarded a site as suitable for winter quarters if there was an eagle's eyrie in the vicinity. Shakespeare, who was well acquainted with the lore of the eagle, referred to a number of classical ideas throughout his plays. The eagle is no exception to the rule that auspicious birds may occasionally predict evil. The appearance of one of them was a favourable portent at Alexander's birth, but eagles could also foretell death.

Since the eagle was a powerful aerial creature associated with the gods, portions of its body were considered to have medicinal or magical properties. Its feathers, cooked together with a special herb, were said to cure demoniacs, its liver pounded with honey and balsam cured cataract, presumably on the assumption that as the bird's sight is keen a concoction from some organ should be a remedy for poor vision. Its heart served as a love charm but its marrow could be used as a contraceptive – a somewhat ineffective prescription as birds' bones do not contain marrow. The eagle is prominent in fables and folktales. A number of these stories, such as The Eagle and the Tortoise and The Eagle Shot with its Own Feathers, go back to classical sources, and the story of the wren which outwitted the eagle and won the competition as to which bird could fly highest is found in Aesop's Fables. (See BIRDS.)

E.A.ARMSTRONG

A powerful and impressive bird, the eagle has been a symbol of leadership and conquest through the ages *Above* The American eagle, the emblem of the United States *Below* Like the Roman emperors, Napoleon adopted the eagle as the symbol on his standards: painting by David, showing the army swearing allegiance to the Emperor after being presented with the imperial emblems

Putting a newborn baby on the ground or taking an earth-bath are two of the magical ways of exploiting the fertility of the earth, which has been worshipped as the mother of all living things and the ruler of the dead

EARTH

THERE IS AN OLD IRISH STORY about the invasion of Ireland by a people called the Gaedil. The goddess Eriu opposes the Gaedil and makes an army out of sods of peat and the mountain to fight them. She eventually changes her mind and welcomes the invaders but she asks that the island shall bear her name. Which it does, Eriu being the oldest form of both Eire and Erin.

This connection between a goddess and the land, which are identical because both have the same name, is based on the fact that the earth is not merely the stage on which we strut our crowded hour but the foundation of our existence. On it we live, from it our food grows, to it we return at death. And so the earth has been thought of as a great deity, the mother whose tireless fertility nourishes a man in life and to whose dark belly he returns.

It has been widely believed that man comes from earth to begin with: the first man was made of clay, we are of the earth earthy, we are dust and to dust we shall return. In some cultures the souls of babies are thought to enter their mothers from caves or rocks, and when this is combined with belief in reincarnation the parallel between man and his crops is complete. Both are born of the earth, are buried in it and reborn again.

Michael Halford

The Giants, monstrous sons of Gaia the earth, fought and lost a battle with the gods. There is a tradition that after their defeat they returned to the earth, buried under volcanoes: scene from a Greek vase, about 530 BC, in the British Museum

Figures of Fertility

Among the most remarkable remains of prehistoric hunting peoples are the 'Venus' figures, naked women carved in bone or stone, some with huge breasts and buttocks, the sex organs emphasized, and frequently pregnant. Whether these early figures were meant to embody the fertility of the earth as well as the fertility of woman is uncertain. But as farming developed, and in societies which looked to agriculture for survival, similar figures seem to have been connected with the worship of a great goddess, who was in one of her aspects the earth, the mother of all living things who also ruled the dead buried in her womb.

H. J. Rose has said of the Greek earth goddess Ge or Gaia: 'It is unlikely that she was, to begin with, anything so huge as the planet Earth in general; rather was she the particular piece of earth...with which the particular worshipper or worshippers were acquainted; or, still more likely, the power residing in that patch of ground which made it produce all manner of plants.' The same thing is probably true of other early earth and mother goddesses.

Clay figurines of c4000-3000 BC, found in the Zhob valley near Quetta in Pakistan, of a woman with prominent breasts, round eyes, a beaky nose and a grim slit of a mouth, are thought to represent a goddess who ruled the dead and the seed-corn, both buried in the earth, as well as the crops growing in the spring. Huge sanctuaries, constructed on Malta and the nearby island of Gozo c2000 BC, were used for a cult of both a fertility goddess and the dead. Seen from the air, their ground-plans resemble an immense obese woman and it has been suggested that the resemblance was deliberate. The fact that representations of a goddess are so often found in prehistoric tombs points to a connection between the earth, the mother and the dead. So does the use of caves as both holy places and burying grounds (see CAVES).

An astounding example of prehistoric belief in the earth's fertility was discovered in a Neolithic flint mine at Grimes Graves in Norfolk. At the bottom of one shaft was the figure of a pregnant woman, sitting on a ledge, at her feet a chalk phallus and a pile of picks made of deer-horn. Apparently the miners who dug this shaft had failed to find a bed of flint, and the shrine to the goddess was perhaps meant to neutralize the dearth of flint in this shaft and ensure the fertility of the next.

Heaven and Earth

In south-west Asia and the eastern Mediterranean area, the great goddess had

The Underground Gods

The Olympians taught of gods intensely personal, strong, wilful, possibly honest but by no means invariably so. Man entered into contracts with them because it was his only hope. If they broke the contracts he was angry, but could do nothing. Above all things he must remember his humbler station and keep his distance. It taught him too that all his hopes of happiness must lie in this life, since after it was over he would be nothing but a shadow. The chthonian cults brought us from this human, comprehensible and business-like atmosphere of daylight to gods who were surrounded with an air of mystery. They were approached at night, and often in the darkness of an underground cavern or pit. At these entrances to Hades they brought the worlds of the living and the dead together...

In the coexistence of these two types of religion lies the explanation of the paradox with which we started out, the presence in contemporaneous Greek literature and thought of the two opposite points of view: the advice to 'think mortal thoughts' and 'strive not to become a god' on the one hand, and on the other the exhortations to 'assimilate yourself to God' and 'make yourself immortal as far as you can'.

W. K. C. Guthrie
The Greeks and Their Gods

© M. Diacon National Museum Valletta

Model of temple, in Malta, for the worship of a fertility goddess: the ground plan resembles a huge fat woman *Left* To the Asaro tribe of New Guinea, earth is a symbol of success in battle: the tribesmen once won a great victory when they emerged from a river covered in mud, and frightened off their enemies who believed they were evil spirits

many functions, many disguises, many names – Ishtar, Astarte, Cybele, Hera, Aphrodite and the rest. As Earth Mother she may once have been regarded as the original source and fount of all things, and the dead were perhaps laid to rest in her womb in the belief that like the seed-corn they would be reborn in due time. But in the earliest cosmogonies of the ancient world that are known to us Earth is not the original creator.

In the beginning, according to Genesis the earth was *tohu wa-bohu* ('waste and void'), meaning 'non-existent'. It was not until the third day that God created dry land and called it Earth. In Mesopotamia there was an old Sumerian myth that the primeval sea gave birth to a cosmic mountain in which heaven (the god An) and earth (the goddess Ki) were interlocked together. From their mingling the god of air, Enlil, was born. He parted them, and the air has separated sky from earth ever since. There was a similar Egyptian myth, with the variant that the earth is male and the sky female (see CREATION MYTHS).

Heaven and Earth are a divine pair in many other parts of the world, all through the Pacific, in China and Japan, Africa and North America. The Kumana of southern Africa, repeating a very widespread theme, say: 'the Earth is our Mother, the Sky is our Father. The Sky fertilizes the Earth with rain, the Earth produces grains and grass.' Similarly, a fragment of a lost play by Aeschylus, the *Danaids*, describes how rain falling from the male sky impregnates the female earth, and she gives birth to grain and pasture (see APHRODITE).

According to a report by the philosopher Proclus, but not until late in the 5th century AD, during the Eleusinian Mysteries (see ELEUSIS) the Athenians gazed up at the sky and shouted *Hue* ('Rain') and then at the earth and shouted *Kue* ('Conceive!').

The same idea lies behind poetic imagery which identifies the soil as the womb, and ploughing and sowing as impregnation. In *Oedipus Rex* Aeschylus says that Oedipus 'dared to sow seed in the sacred furrow where he was himself formed, and plant there a bloody branch.' It is still quite a common figure of speech that a man 'sows his seed' in a woman.

Victory Over Older Gods

In Homer the earth is the home of gods as well as men. The three brothers Zeus, Poseidon and Hades cast lots to divide the universe between them. The sky fell to Zeus, the sea to Poseidon, the underworld to Hades. The surface of the earth was their common property (the link connecting sky, sea and underworld together) and they lived there, on Mount Olympus.

But there was a time even before the Olympians ruled the universe, and they won their mastery by a victory over much older gods. This story is told in Hesiod's *Theogony*. First of all Chaos came into existence, and next 'widebosomed Earth' (*Gai*) and gloomy Tartarus in the depth of the ground (*chthon*), and Eros the power of love. Earth gave birth to Uranus, the starry heaven, 'equal to herself, to cover her on every side', to the mountains and to the sea. Then, lying closely locked with Uranus, she bore many offspring, including the wily Cronus, 'youngest and most terrible of her children'. Cronus castrated Uranus and ruled in his stead, a story presumably partly intended to account for the separation of sky and earth (see CRONUS).

Cronus and his brothers and sisters were called Titans, possibly meaning 'honoured ones'. After a fierce struggle a younger generation of gods, Zeus and the Olympians, defeated the Titans and imprisoned them in Tartarus (which was only much later to become a synonym for hell) and there they remained, seldom worshipped but not forgotten. They are referred to with considerable awe. In the *Iliad* (book 14) the goddess Hera is required to swear a solemn oath, 'so that all the gods that are below with Cronus may be our witnesses'.

The Titans are very old gods. They probably belonged to the people who lived in Greece before the Greeks themselves invaded and settled the country, and the myth of their defeat by the Olympians is likely to reflect a reality, the victory of the

Giraudon

C. Reyes-Valerio

Above **Gaia who, in Greek mythology, created the sky, mountains and sea: terracotta statuette from Tanagra, Greece** ***Right*** **Coatlicue, the great earth mother of the Aztecs**

newcomers. But they were not the only chthonian (underground) powers of Greek belief. There were many others, local spirits probably closer to the lives and hearts of ordinary people than the great Olympians. Some of them were spirits of the fertility of the earth, others were semi-divine heroes, who were worshipped at the tombs where they lay in the earth, for the chthonians continued the long-standing tradition of a connection between the dead and fertility.

Dark Worship

Animals sacrificed to chthonian powers were usually slaughtered in a pit or trench dug in the earth, and killed throat downwards so that the blood would fall directly on the ground and soak into it. They were generally black animals (instead of white for the Olympians) and the meat was not eaten by the worshippers but burned.

The chthonians were worshipped in dark caves or shrines underground, and at night. Snakes were very often sacred to them. Erechtheus, for instance, the guardian spirit of the Acropolis at Athens, was a snake and offerings of honey-cakes were given him.

Chthonian spirits not only made the ground fertile but gave oracles and took possession of human beings, inspiring them to divine the future or reveal hidden events. The most famous example is the Pythia, the priestess of the oracle at Delphi, which belonged to the earth goddess herself before the Olympian Apollo killed her sacred snake, Python, and seized the oracle from her. Delphi was believed to be the centre, the navel, of the earth and there was no more suitable place from which the earth goddess could speak.

The Olympians lived in the light of day. They had human passions, for they were quarrelsome, lustful, reckless, moody, sometimes benign and sometimes cruel, but they were far above the level of men, from whom they demanded humility and obedience. Brimming with vitality themselves, they taught men to look to this life for happiness and for nothing but shadowy oblivion after death. The chthonians were dark, fertile, profound, uneasily mysterious and nonhuman. Their ability to possess the living, their lordship of the dead and the rebirth of crops, meant that they held out a hope of happiness after death.

Not that the Olympians and the chthonians can always be sharply distinguished, for many of the Olympians had chthonian connections themselves. Hesiod advises farmers to pray for a good harvest to Zeus Chthonios and pure Demeter. It was in the worship of Demeter, in fact, that the chthonian strand in Greek religion reached its fullest and finest expression. She was originally an earth and fertility goddess, and her daughter Persephone was the wife of Hades and the queen of the dead in the underworld.

The belief that Demeter could give the initiate into her mysteries a happy immortality was probably based on the analogy between the seed-corn resurrected in the spring and the buried dead finding a new life beyond the grave: the Mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis were originally agricultural ceremonies (see DEMETER; ELEUSIS).

Spirits Underground

The ruling god of the underworld and master of the dead was himself an Olympian. But although in the *Iliad* Hades was said to share the earth's surface and live on Olympus, most Greek writers placed him almost permanently in the halls of the underworld (which was afterwards given his name). One of his titles was Pluton, 'the rich one' because living under the earth he was linked with the earth's fertility, and in Latin he was Pluto or Dis, 'wealthy' (see PLUTO). Another Olympian closely connected with the earth was the god of the sea, Poseidon, in his capacity as 'earth-shaker', the maker of earthquakes (see POSEIDON).

Earthquakes are widely believed to occur when the god or hero or monster who holds the earth up changes his hold on it or shifts his position. Among some African peoples the movements of an underground god cause the earth to tremble. The Fijians offered the earth god sacrifices to persuade him to turn over gently. On the East Indian island of Timor earth tremors are believed to be caused by a giant who eases the strain by shifting the earth from one of his shoulders to the other.

In European popular belief, lesser spirits of the earth lived on for centuries, uncanny and dangerous beings like the dwarfs hammering away in their underground galleries (see DWARFS) or the knockers and buccas of the Cornish tin mines. Miners, violating the earth with their shafts and tunnels, always seem to have feared supernatural dangers as well as physical ones.

Belief in the magic powers of earth also survived. Many peoples, including the Romans, Germans, Scandinavians, Parsees and Japanese, had the custom of placing a newborn baby on the ground soon after birth, to let the fertile vigour of the soil pass into the child's body. In the 17th century in England Francis Bacon maintained that the smell of soil refreshed the spirits and improved the appetite, especially in the spring, before the earth had 'spent her sweet breath' in growing vegetables. Ladies, he thought, would do themselves much good by weeding.

James Graham, a celebrated quack-doctor of the late 18th century, strongly recommended 'earth-baths', in which the pores of the skin would draw in the soil's nourishing juices. He used to lecture on this, with his tame 'goddess of health' at his side, both buried up to their chins in earth, their heads protruding from the soil like a couple of cabbages.

(For earth as an element, see ALCHEMY; ELEMENTS; for the earth in divination, see GEOMANCY; and see also FENG SHUI; FERTILITY; FIRST MAN; HELL; LANDSCAPE; LEYS; MOTHER GODDESS.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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EAST ANGLIAN & ESSEX WITCHES

For more than 200 years East Anglia was renowned for its witches and for the severity of its witch trials. Even today the name of Matthew Hopkins, the Witchfinder General, still evokes terrifying memories

Michael Busselle

THE TRAVELLER THROUGH the eastern counties of England and particularly East Anglia will observe on village greens and in market places certain monuments dedicated to the victims of religious persecutions during the reign of Mary I in the first half of the 16th century, in which no less than 277 Protestants were burnt by the Romanists. After Elizabeth I had succeeded to the throne an implacable hatred for all things popish exploded into a violent demand for radical reform. A primary objective of the Reformers was the elimination of the practitioners of magic and sorcery who had been permitted to function almost unchecked by the Church of Rome, and it was no accident therefore that Essex, heartland of dissent, should have become foremost in the demand for a house-cleaning involving every aspect of superstitious usage. At the same time the voices of the returned Marian exiles from the Continent, where witches were being persecuted in many countries, added still further to the clamour for action against the alleged sorcerers.

In a sermon delivered by Bishop Jewel before Elizabeth in 1560, he stressed the need for legal action against the magicians. 'Witches,' he declared, 'had marvellously increased within your Grace's realm,' and he went on to demand that 'the laws touching such malefactors be put in due execution'. At that time there were laws upon the statute book prohibiting witchcraft, for the first abortive Witchcraft Act of 1542 had been repealed in the reign of Edward VI, while a subsequent attempt to introduce legislation had failed in the reign of Mary. The year 1563 witnessed the Convocation of the Church of England urging stronger penalties upon the practitioners of witchcraft and in that same year the Elizabethan Witchcraft Act passed into law. This imposed the penalty of death for murder by sorcery, and the pillory and imprisonment for witchcraft of a less lethal character.

The first person known to have been executed in England after the new Act had come into force was 63-year-old Agnes Waterhouse of Hatfield Peverel in Essex; she was hanged at Chelmsford in 1566 for the alleged crime of bewitching William Fynee to death. Her principal aid and accomplice was her familiar, a cat named Sathan. It is significant that no less a personage than Sir Gilbert Gerard, the Attorney General, participated in the trial of the accused. The first of the victims, like so many who were to follow her to the gallows, was of peasant stock. The English rich, unlike their Continental counterparts, were secured by their wealth from the wild accusations of witch-hating fanatics, for they retained the power as well as the legal right to sue any detractor for defamation of character. In Sir George Croke's *Reports of Select Cases* at law during the Elizabethan period (published in 1661), there occurs the significant instance of Fortescue v. Hext in 1593, in which the court held it to be 'very heinous and actionable' for a woman to say of a man 'He is a witch and bewitched my husband to death for he made his picture in wax and roasted it every day by the fire until he roasted my husband to death'.

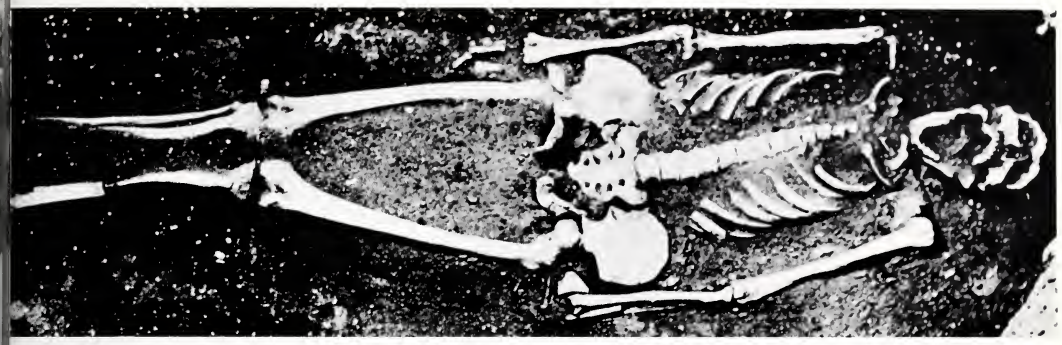
So much for the Witchcraft Act as it affected the well-to-do, and it was no doubt due to this and other circumstances such as the absence of both Inquisition and official torture, that English witchcraft preserved its traditionally peasant characteristics throughout the whole period of the persecutions. The victims were mainly confined to the social outcast or the village scapegoat. The offences with which they were charged

were mostly acts of simple *maleficia* – baleful acts attributed to the vindictiveness of witches – without any signs of the elaborate sabbaths conjured up by the Inquisitors of France and Germany.

It was the misfortune of the county of Essex to remain the scene of continuing persecutions during the whole of this period, the major 16th century trials occurring in 1566, 1579, 1582 and 1589. The notorious trial of the witches of St Osyth, near Brightlingsea, was held in 1582; 14 women were charged with various acts of witchcraft, including murder, upon the evidence of children of six to nine years of age. The tragedy began as a village quarrel with the exchange of such insults as 'old trot' and 'old whore' and the bewitching of cows and geese. It was the St Osyth trial which in all probability impelled Reginald Scot to publish his famous *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) in which the manifest absurdities involved in the witch-hunts were exposed to the acid test of ridicule. Even the most casual survey of the evidence provided by the old court records reveals that the outbreak of the witch mania in East Anglia bore all the characteristics of mass hysteria, with the whole folklore of witchcraft being hurled at the heads of the accused along with the 'evidence' based upon hearsay, and with the testimony of young children being freely accepted by the courts.

At the very heart of this conspiracy, it appears, were the village soothsayers, known as Cunning Men and Cunning Women. They were in fact witch-doctors an had no hesitation whatsoever in denouncin unpopular individuals as witches. This ha been their role from time immemorial whe the punishment had been limited to ecclesi astical penances or the ritual drawing of th witch's blood to neutralize the spell. Now however, with the state as official witch hunter, their influence in village life spe misery and death to every suspect.

Although practitioners of magic them selves, the Cunning People only rarely fe foul of the authorities. They were unive sally respected, for they represented to th peasant mind the anti-witch principle an were therefore regarded as an integral pa of the grand alliance of Church and Stat against black witchcraft. George Gifford, a



The witch-hunting mania in East Anglia had all the characteristics of mass hysteria: one authority declared that any old woman with '. . . a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeaking voice or a scolding tongue' was liable to be pronounced a witch ***Left*** **Still from** ***The Witchfinder General,*** **a film about Matthew Hopkins: he claimed to have the Devil's list of all the witches in England** ***Above*** **Skeleton of a witch, its mouth apparently open in a macabre scream, which was found buried at St Osyth, scene of a notorious witch trial in 1582**

Elizabethan clergyman of Malden in Essex, left a contemporary account of their sinister role in Elizabethan times. Gifford, who regarded Cunning People as agents of the Devil and deluders of the people, observed: 'When the people fear a witch there is much running to the wizards to learn what to do. The Devil teaches these Cunning Men many horrible abominations and foul abuses of the name of God by which they are made believe that they are cured from their harms.' Gifford thus testified to the malevolent power of the practitioners of white witchcraft who were to his mind as guilty of witchcraft as those they so readily denounced, a fact that very few of those in authority were prepared to admit at the time.

It was Gifford's contention that many of the rituals then employed to combat witchcraft were in reality forms of pagan sacrifice, particularly the burning alive of farm animals. He went on to point out that these village witch-doctors were responsible for the arrest of perfectly respectable individuals: 'Within these last few years,' he said, 'the devil has by Cunning Men accused the very religious and godly of having secret marks upon them.'

How to Tell a Witch

The witch fever raged throughout Essex and East Anglia, overflowing into the adjacent counties. In Norfolk, ever-growing numbers found themselves dragged before the magistrates to be executed or confined in prison or the pillory until they were ready to confess their guilt. Suffolk also suffered its spate of denunciations, arrests and hangings.

The death of Elizabeth and the accession of King James I, a witch-fearing fanatic, had little influence upon the general trend of the witch mania in the eastern counties, for wherever the extreme Protestants maintained their militancy witch-hunting was likely to break out at any time and spread like a forest fire. In Catholic areas, needless to say, the magistrates were far less zealous in rooting out evidence of pagan practices and there the witch-hunters were far less certain of their prey.

Handbooks for magistrates, as for example Michael Dalton's *Country Justice* (1618) and Richard Bernard's *Guide to Grand Jurymen* (1627), insisted that the primary evidence of witchcraft was the possession of an animal familiar. Bona fide physicians, as fallible as their unofficial allies, the Cunning People, were generally prepared to diagnose many of the illnesses that they were unable to cure as caused by witchcraft. At the same time the Puritan clergy sought everywhere for the least sign of any religious deviation that could be classed as a 'superstitious practice'.

Tainted Blood

The most primitive types of magic beliefs prevailed among the peasant population all of whom claimed to be staunch Christians. In 1624 John Crushe was presented to the Essex Archdeacon's Court accused of burning a bewitched lamb alive on Hawkwell Common in order to break the spell of witchcraft from which his flock were suffering. It was during this century that the people of East Anglia began to protect themselves against the malice of witches by the use of witch bottles, receptacles containing urine and horseshoe nails which were heated on the fire as a form of counter-magic and which were probably introduced from the Low Countries. Good urine it appears was absolutely essential; bad urine (that of a witch) causing the bottle to blow the cork.

East Anglia underwent its second and infinitely more severe witch-hunt in 1645, led by the self-styled Witchfinder General Matthew Hopkins, a lawyer who had become interested in witchcraft. It was in Manningtree, near the Suffolk border of Essex, that the persecution was revived with considerable intensity. Conditions were ripe, for with the Civil War still raging and its outcome far from certain the Puritan eastern counties had been reduced to a state of tension which only the punishment of a scapegoat could relieve. The population was, if anything, even more fanatically Protestant and therefore witch-fearing than in the times of the Elizabethan witch-hunts and there existed in addition a further factor that has received scant attention from students of witchcraft in the past.

In many of the towns and villages of East Anglia there still lived the children and grandchildren of the victims of the trials of the 1560s and 70s; and since witchcraft was generally assumed to be in the blood and therefore a hereditary taint, these became the automatic first choice, whenever fresh victims were required. In 1645 John Rivet, a tailor of Manningtree, troubled by the illness of his wife, sought advice from a Cunning Woman named Hoyve of Hadleigh in Suffolk, and was told that her sickness was due to witchcraft. Rivet, searching his mind for a likely suspect, remembered that the mother of Elizabeth Clarke, a neighbour, had been hanged as a witch. This information came to the ears of Matthew Hopkins, who seized upon the discovery as an opportunity for publicity and brought Elizabeth Clarke before a magistrate. The prisoner was searched for witch's marks and tormented by being denied sleep, an apparently legitimate form of torture, while Hopkins waited for her imps to visit her. In due course these put in an appearance, taking the form of a kitten, two dogs, a rabbit, a toad, and a polecat.

The unhappy prisoner was finally forced into making a full confession and named as her accomplice Anne West, a poverty-stricken widow who had long been suspected of witchcraft. The latter had the additional disadvantage of being denounced by her own daughter Rebecca, who freely admitted having attended a witch's meeting in company with a number of Manningtree women. What was to become the stock ritual of denunciation followed by prosecution leading to further denunciations then followed. St Osyth village, scene of the terror in Elizabethan times, once again delivered up its quota of suspects into Hopkins's hands, as did many other villages in the vicinity.

Searched for Witch's Marks

Following their trial held at Chelmsford in the summer of 1645 before Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, 19 countrywomen died on the gallows. Arthur Wilson, the Earl's steward, who was present at the trials, set down as his opinion that the prisoners were

The mere presence of a witch-hunter was usually sufficient to agitate a whole community into a frenzy of denunciations

no more than victims of their own imaginations being 'poor, melancholy, envious, mischievous, ill-disposed and ill-dieted,' confirming once again that it was the miserable poor who had become the victims of the witch-hunts.

Hopkins claimed to possess the Devil's list of all the witches in England and, thus armed, set out to find further victims, accompanied by his own group of professional witchfinders. Amongst these were John Stearne who searched the male prisoners for witch's marks while Mary Phillips searched the women. They began systematically to comb the countryside of East Anglia, moving from town to town and village to village, often at the invitation of the authorities, who were by this time utterly overwhelmed by the witch panic. Among Hopkins's charges for his services were the sums of £23 0s 6d for a visit to Stowmarket and £15 for King's Lynn. Witch-hunting had become an extremely profitable profession.

By a deliberate policy of terrorism in which prisoners were tied up, deprived of sleep, made to sit cross-legged on stools for hours on end, or marched backwards and forwards until they dropped from exhaustion, Hopkins secured the confessions he needed without crossing the official boundary between mere duress and illegal torture. There appears to have been no shortage of suspects; for to Hopkins witchcraft meant the possession of animal familiars, hence any unfortunate outcast possessing a pet cat, dog or mouse became particularly liable to suspicion. In the same way any sudden or inexplicable outbreak of disease among human beings or cattle could indicate witchcraft as most contemporary physicians would have been prepared to testify.

Not only Norfolk and Suffolk but also the counties of Cambridge, Northampton, Huntingdon and Bedford became the stamping grounds of the Hopkins gang who took care never to venture beyond Puritan territory. The mechanism of witchfinding appears to have been in the main self-generating and the mere presence of a witch-hunter in the vicinity usually sufficient to agitate a whole community into a frenzy of denunciations. So great was the terror engendered by the witchfinders that a suspect had even been known to volunteer to be searched for witch's marks in order to vindicate his good name in the eyes of his neighbours, as for example Meggs, a Suffolk baker, who offered himself for examination and, having failed the test, was sent to the gallows.

The witch-hunting industry involved all manner of normally respectable citizens. Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, paid its local team of searchers for Devil's marks '12d per day to be divided among them'.

Ordeal by Swimming

With 200 of his victims packing the jails of East Anglia Hopkins staged a great trial of witches at Bury St Edmunds in 1645. Among the 18 who died by hanging was John Lowes, a 70-year-old clergyman who had been denounced as a witch by his own parishioners at Brandeston in Suffolk. Forced to undergo the walking torture until he fainted from exhaustion, Parson Lowes at last admitted to the ownership of familiars, one of which he had dispatched to sink a ship at sea. None of his accusers ascertained whether or not such a ship had existed, let alone had sunk on that day, and the old man was hanged after reading his own burial service, as no other clergyman could be persuaded to undertake it for him.

Among the best known methods used for the detection of witches at this period was the 'swimming test', an ordeal in which the suspect was trailed on ropes in a pool of water or a stream, the assumption being that if she floated she was guilty and that only if she sank could her innocence be presumed. Long pins were also plunged into the bodies of suspects in the search for Devil's marks. The swimming test was forbidden by a Parliamentary Commission in 1645 but no restraint was imposed by officialdom upon Hopkins's other enormities.

In 1645 Hopkins undertook a number of incursions into the county of Huntingdon. Here he came into conflict with a clergyman, the vicar of Great Staughton, Rev John Gaule, who resented his presence in the county and who openly attacked him from the pulpit. Although compelled to recant Gaule returned to the attack, finally publishing a damning indictment in pamphlet form entitled *Select Cases of Conscience Touching Witches and Witchcraft* in which he exposed the cruel tortures used by the Hopkins gang, making the point that 'every old woman with a wrinkled face, a furrowed brow, a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeaking voice or a scolding tongue . . .' was liable to be pronounced a witch. Hopkins attempted a reply to the charges raised against him in his own pamphlet *The Discovery of Witches* but by this time his star was beginning to wane and there was every sign that the day of the unofficial tribunal was over. In the first place the triumph of Parliament in the Civil War had created more settled conditions and, secondly, the voice of criticism was beginning to be raised against him from all quarters. In 1646 Hopkins retired to his house in Manningtree where he died in the following year.

The type of person selected by fate to fulfil the role of witch is a problem for the psychiatrist. Sir Charles Oman, the historian, divided English witches and wizards into four main groups: the conscious charlatans, the malignant persons who really believed they had the power to harm their enemies, the sheer lunatics, and finally the victims of torture and duress. There is not the least doubt that most of those who suffered in the great East Anglian witch-hunts of the 17th century believed personally in the reality of witchcraft, and some possibly that they were guilty of the crimes with which they were charged, for belief in magic was universal among the peasantry. One Newmarket woman who sincerely believed her pet toad to be a familiar spirit received the scientific attentions of Dr William Harvey, discoverer of the circulation of the blood and physician to King Charles I. The doctor, to the witch's disgust, cut open the unfortunate toad, demonstrating to his own satisfaction at least that there was nothing supernatural in its composition. Harvey was many years in advance of the majority of his profession, who were perfectly prepared to use witchcraft as an alibi for their own medical deficiencies.

Livestock Burned Alive

A Dr Jacob of Yarmouth, in the year 1664, basked in the glory of a reputation for 'helping children that were bewitched'. Jacob was involved in the notorious case of the Bury St Edmunds witches of 1665 when Rose Cullenden and Amy Duny of Lowestoft were found guilty of bewitching a number of children, one of whom died. Given in evidence was the astounding fact that at the instigation of Dr Jacobs a toad which had been discovered in the bedding of

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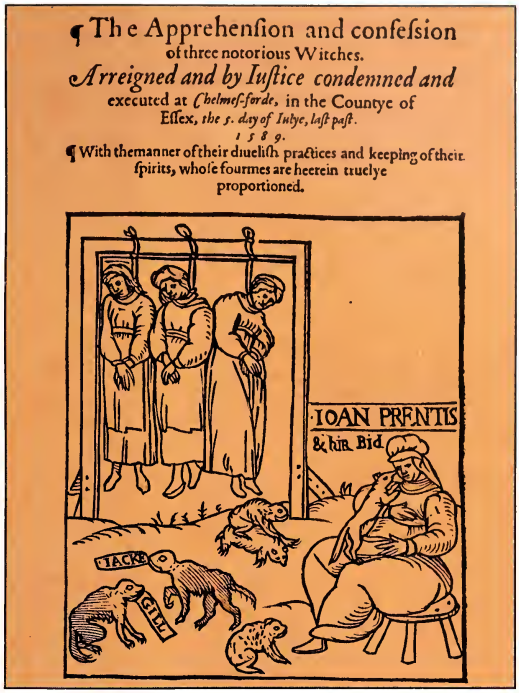

The Archbishop of Canterbury & the Trustees of Lambeth Palace Library

one of the children was thrown into the fire where it exploded, and that afterwards Amy Duny was seen to have burns upon her arms, a sure sign of her guilt. During the court proceedings a number of children testified that Amy Duny and Rose Cullenden were attacking them 'spectrally' when it was quite obvious to those present that the women were doing nothing of the kind. This type of 'spectral evidence' was perfectly acceptable to the witch-fearing judge Sir Matthew Hale who, in spite of doubts raised by other members of the court, sentenced the prisoners to death. Contained in the indictment were the usual stock charges against 17th century witches: the conveying of nails and pins into the bodies of victims, the bewitching of farm carts and the magical killing of cows and pigs.

There is a note of grim humour in the curious case of Abre Grinsett, a beggar woman who was charged in 1665 with bewitching Thomas Spatchett, bailiff of Dunwich, so that he suffered attacks of headaches, and fits. The fact that he had broken his skull as a child appeared to have little bearing on the evidence submitted to the court, which included a full confession, by Spatchett, of a compact with the Devil who had assumed the shape of a 'pretty handsome young man'. One of the magistrates observed that if Abre Grinsett chose to bewitch men like Spatchett she was free to do so, and she was discharged and sent home where she was later found dead, to all appearances murdered by her neighbours.

The possession of animal 'familiars' was at one time synonymous with witchcraft, and any outcast with a small animal as a pet was liable to be accused of the crime ***Left*** **Illustration to Matthew Hopkins's** ***The Discovery of Witches*** **showing the witchfinder and two witches with their familiars, including a legless spaniel and an ox-headed greyhound** ***Right*** **Execution of three witches at Chelmsford in 1589: seated at the base of the gallows is Joan Prentice, who admitted to killing a child by witchcraft, with her familiar, a ferret, on her lap**

Throughout the 17th century and well into the 18th, witch-hunting remained a popular sport in East Anglia and Essex. The repeal of the Witchcraft Act in 1736 had little effect upon the superstitious fears of the common people who continued to believe in witchcraft for a further century. Under the terms of the new Act witchcraft ceased to be a legal offence although punishment limited to imprisonment and pillory was reserved for those who claimed to have supernatural powers, as for example the Cunning People. To a considerable extent the situation had reverted to that existing before the Witchcraft Act of 1563 with witch-hunting now a private matter between the bewitched and his adviser, the Cunning Man.

Faith in white witchcraft as prescribed by the Cunning People remained extremely strong in East Anglia until the 1850s when, following the decline in the belief in magic, witchcraft ceased to be a factor in peasant philosophy. Even as late as 1826 a huckster was swum as a witch at Wickham Keith, Suffolk, and at about this time Ipswich was honoured by the presence of its own Cunning Man 'Old Winter', a notorious white wizard. In 1857 *The Times* cited a not untypical case, in which a magistrate at Hockham in Norfolk was requested by a citizen to submit a suspected witch to the swimming test. Behind the scenes as prime instigator had been the inevitable Cunning Man.

Many magical practices belonging properly to the Dark Ages continued to be practised in the remoter parts of the East Anglian marshlands until fairly recently. Livestock was burned alive throughout the first half of the 19th century as an antidote to witchcraft, while as late as 1866 crosses were nailed to barn doors in Norfolk during an epidemic of cattle disease, to protect the herds from devils and witches. Even in the 20th century iron objects like knives and scissors were placed under cottage doormats to keep witches from the premises.

The marshland coastal fringes bordering the North Sea long remained an area of peasants who were dissenters almost to a man, and almost medieval in their acceptance of witchcraft. Until 1860 Essex possessed the most famous Cunning Man of all times, James Murrell of Hadleigh, an expert exorcist whose prowess with the witch bottle was proverbial (see MURRELL). Even as late as the 1870s the witch bottle was not unknown among country labourers, although as often as not the refinements of the art had been forgotten, a jam jar of urine being used instead. Witch's imps in the shape of

The majority of people who suffered during the great East Anglian witch mania were convinced of the reality of witchcraft, and it is even possible that some believed themselves to be witches; in any case, Matthew Hopkins's deliberate policy of terrorism ensured that he obtained the confessions he needed without officially torturing his victims. Scene from *The Witchfinder General*

white mice were still feared in parts of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex until the close of the century and provided the theme of many macabre legends, some of which are remembered to this day.

The Devil's Harvest

Further north, in the Fenlands, country folk long believed in the satanic compact, considering it possible to secure the granting of material requests from the hands of the Devil by a rite called 'The Gathering of the Devil's Harvest', which was performed on St Mark's Eve. Perhaps the best known survival of witch fear in its most malignant form was the notorious incident of 1863 in which an old fortune-teller, after being accused of witchcraft, was forced to undergo the swimming test at Sible Hedingham in Essex as the result of which he died. For this crime the two principals, a man and a woman, both shopkeepers, were sentenced to terms of hard labour. It transpired from the evidence given in court that the unhappy victim had been submitted to the cruel 17th century ordeal known as the walking torture, in an effort to persuade him to remove a spell he was supposed to have placed upon the woman. It was not far from here, at Dunmow, that one of the last known attempts to impose the swimming test upon a witch was made by two country labourers in 1880. The offenders were brought before the courts and punished.

As a macabre postscript to the East Anglian witch-hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries a St Osyth resident discovered, when digging his garden some 40 years ago, the skeletons of two women buried in a north-south orientation and riveted limb to limb. Whether these were survivals of witch persecution it is not possible to say with absolute certainty, but it is reasonable to assume that the bodies had been so restricted after death to prevent them rising from the grave to haunt the community.

(See EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS.)

ERIC MAPLE

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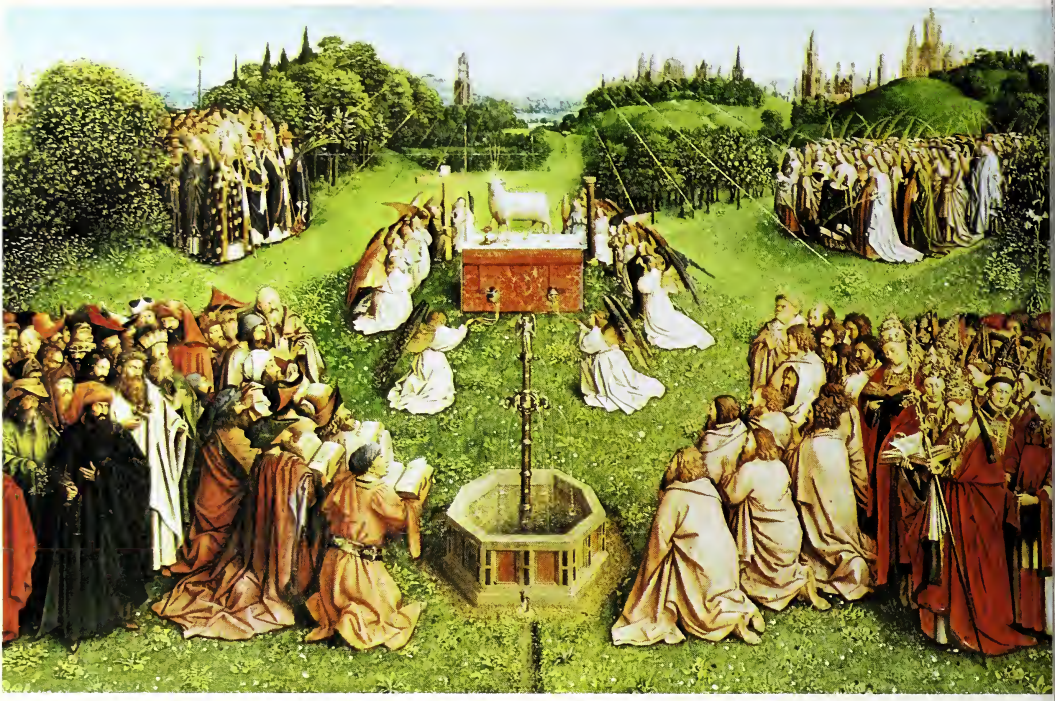
Trigon Films



EASTER &

No celebration in the Christian calendar is richer in symbolic ritual than Easter. In dramatic contrast with Holy Week, a time of sadness and mourning, Easter Sunday dawns with universal rejoicing, the rays of the rising sun announcing to all mankind that Christ, too, is risen

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST is commemorated at Easter, the most important festival in the Christian calendar. The impact of this feast day on the common people in time past was so great that it was even supposed that the sun itself danced for joy each Easter Day. It was popularly believed that this sight could be seen by anyone getting up early and standing at some suitable vantage point, always provided that the Devil had not blocked the view. Of course it was not everyone who believed this. John Brand, a stern 18th century antiquary observed that: 'It is a common custom among the vulgar and uneducated.'

It may have been this belief that lay behind an ancient custom recorded at Chester, which R. Chambers describes (*The Book of Days*, 1864). The Dean of the cathedral produced a ball during the Easter service, held it and danced, before passing it to choristers and others present, including the Archbishop. Afterwards they all had a meal of bacon and tansy pudding.

At one time the herb tansy was customarily used for flavouring Easter cakes and puddings. It is seldom used nowadays, on account of its bitter flavour, but most probably it was originally intended to symbolize the bitter herbs served at the Jewish Passover table, a festival from which the Christian Easter partially derives. Lambs were sacrificed at the Hebrew feast to commemorate Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt, and Christian tradition represents Christ as the Paschal Lamb, clasping the banner of victory over death. (The word 'paschal' comes from the Greek form of the Hebrew 'Pesach', passover.) In Devonshire and Somerset, on Easter morning, people watched for this lamb and flag motif to appear in the centre of the sun's disc. Sometimes the rising sun, symbol of Christ risen from the dead, is welcomed with Easter music. Bands and choirs sing hymns, and in America the Moravians – an old German

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HOLY WEEK

religious community living in Pennsylvania – play trombones at three o'clock in the morning to wake sleeping people.

The great climax of Easter in the Eastern or Orthodox Church comes earlier still: at midnight, when the priest announces to the assembled people: 'Christ is Risen', to which the congregation reply: 'He is risen indeed.' Everyone has brought candles and these are now lit, so that the whole church becomes a blaze of light. Before the Revolution Russians would greet one another with a ceremonial kiss – three times repeated in honour of the Trinity. The Lenten fast, which is still strictly observed by Orthodox believers, ends at this moment. Hungry peasants have been known to slip a few coloured eggs in their pockets and to begin eating them the moment the ritual greeting has been given, even though the service is still in progress.

The harsh Lenten diet was most unpopular and in some countries people gave it a very elaborate send-off. In England a red herring, prepared to look like a man riding away on horseback and arranged on a bed of corn, was eaten on Easter Day. In Poland there was a similar custom. Country boys took a pot of *zur* – gruel made from water mixed with fermented rye meal – and a herring, and drummed them out of the village before burying them. People lived on little else during the fast period, and the boys enjoyed giving the food its funeral.

The severity of Lent and its restrictions explains why the Easter festival is a great

Facing page **In Easter celebrations Christ is often represented by a lamb, traditionally the symbol of the Redeemer in Christian thought and art: *Adoration of the Lamb*, altarpiece in the Cathedral of St Bavon at Ghent, by the 15th century Flemish painter Jan van Eyck. Christians all over the world commemorate Christ's Passion and his sufferings on the way to the Cross, with solemn ceremonies *Above left* An image of Christ bearing the Cross is carried through the streets of Panjim in the Indian province of Goa *Above right* In Jerusalem men dressed as Roman soldiers accompany a cross to which symbols of the Crucifixion such as a hammer, nails and rope are attached, in a procession along the Via Dolorosa, Christ's path to the hill of Golgotha**

Work was forbidden in Poland during Easter Week and it is said that a farmer who insisted on ploughing his fields was swallowed up with his oxen

occasion for feasting, and in many Christian countries families used to hold open house – sometimes with rather curious food by modern standards. In England radishes were a seasonal speciality, and a Radish Feast was held in Oxford.

The Paschal Lamb

Easter foods in central and eastern Europe are prepared in advance, and blessed by the priest before anyone will consider tasting them. As magnificent a spread as the family can afford is provided, with the best linen cloth in use. The tradition of the Paschal Lamb ensures pride of place for this meat at the Easter table, but in some countries a substitute of pastry or sugar may serve as a centrepiece instead. In Poland the lamb is made of butter and surrounded with numerous dishes containing ham, roast veal, sausage and other delicacies. As a rule the whole ensemble is prettily decorated with flowers and garlands.

Easter pastries are another important part of traditional Easter fare. Russians prepare *paska*, a tall, stiff bread, made with cottage cheese and raisins and iced on top. Italian mothers give their children *ciambella*, a cake made with olive oil; boys are given one in the shape of a horse, while for girls the cake is shaped like a dove, arrayed in real feathers. Austrian children receive a nest-shaped cake filled with eggs. Some scholars see in such ceremonial pastries the remnants of an old magic rite, where ritual offerings of bread assured prosperity to the community and to the tribe.

Sometimes pastries were part of a dole or charitable distribution. At Biddenden in Kent the famous Biddenden cakes are still distributed on Easter Monday, according to the terms of an ancient benefaction. Tradition says that this is in fulfilment of the wishes of Siamese twins, Elizabeth and Mary Chulkhurst, who left 20 acres known as the Bread and Cheese Lands, to provide these cakes and a supply of bread and cheese. The cakes are embossed with the figures of the two women.

The custom of doing public penance for human sinfulness on Good Friday is common in many parts of the world: penitents dressed in sombre black robes follow an effigy of Christ on the Cross as it is borne through the streets of Seville

This food, and other similar forms of charity, of course fulfilled a genuine need in times when poverty meant starvation. Slightly different were Church Ales, held in some parts of Britain at Easter. Churchwardens had to provide malt for brewing ale, which was then sold with bread, meat and other foodstuffs donated to raise funds for the church and for charity. The feast which followed was originally held in the church itself, but resulted in unseemly rowdiness, and so church halls or houses came to be built. The custom aroused the displeasure of the Puritans after the Reformation and was gradually suppressed. In time some of them were closed and others turned into licensed inns.

Easter was also an occasion for paying rent, which could be rendered in kind as well as cash. There are records of various spices – pepper, cumin, cinnamon – and even pairs of gloves being offered. Indeed presenting new gloves to the landlord at Easter was an old method of ensuring land tenure, and young men would give a pair to their sweethearts.

A complete set of new gloves for Easter is nowadays customary in some countries, a relic from the early Christian times, when the festival was a popular occasion for baptizing newcomers to the Church. The candidates wore fresh white robes to signify the new life given to them by the Resurrection. Popular tradition says that anyone who can afford new clothes for Easter, and neglects to buy them, will be unlucky, and in America the annual Easter parade is when the new spring outfits are displayed.

Renewal and rejuvenation, closely linked with the central meaning of Easter, are symbolized in many ways. According to a common and widespread belief, running water becomes blessed on Easter Day because Christ sanctified it. In France women wash their faces in the flowing streams, and in other countries farmers sprinkle their animals. Bottles of Easter water are often carefully preserved as a source of healing. In Ireland they say it provides protection from evil spirits.

Water is important in assisting the crops to grow, and primitive peoples supposed that it possessed a more general fertilizing influence. In some European countries it is customary to sprinkle the girls, and the boys who do it are rewarded with a small gift. In Hungary this took place on Easter Monday – hence its name, *Vizbeveto* or Water Plunge Monday. Today a few drops of eau de cologne replace the old fashioned dousing. The same custom existed in Poland, where it was known as the *Dingus*. In the Middle Ages it was a two-day festival, and after the splashing girls and boys pelted each other with eggs.

Traditionally work was forbidden in Poland during Easter Week, especially on the Thursday, which is dedicated to the memory of the dead. They say that a farmer who insisted on ploughing his fields was swallowed up, together with his team of oxen. Anyone putting an ear to the ground will hear him calling for help. Some people avoided work with linen or yarn, the tradition being that dust from these materials would get into the eyes of dead souls. Probably there is some connection with funeral shrouds.

A popular fertility rite consists of touching a young man or girl with the branch of a tree. This bestowed health and fruitfulness. In Czechoslovakia the Easter Switch is plaited from pussy willow branches and decorated with ribbons. A boy would strike a girl on the legs with this until she paid him a fine of Easter eggs. In eastern Pomerania, more surprisingly, children chased their parents out of bed, a birch twig being used.

Some Easter customs seem to show direct links with crop growth rituals. In Greek Macedonia the girls would get up early on Easter morning, find a cherry tree and rig up a swing. Later, other swings were erected on the village green and the *hora*, an ancient circular dance, was performed while the swinging took place. A similar game was popular in Latvia, the original intention presumably being to encourage the crops to grow as high as the girls were swinging.

A Lift for the King

In England Lifting or Heaving must have served the same purpose, though Christian tradition converted it into a commemoration of the Resurrection. This popular custom was discontinued towards the end of the last century. As a rule Easter Monday was the day when women were 'lifted' by the men, the roles being reversed the following day, but this varied according to local custom. King Edward I was lifted on Easter Monday by the ladies of the court, for which he paid them £14 – a lot of money in those days. A special chair was prepared, with

The Resurrection of Christ

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the the tomb. So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her. "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rab-boni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father, to my God and your God." Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord" . . .

John, chapter 20

decorations such as coloured ribbons, and the person to be lifted was invited to take a seat. It was then hoisted in the air three times, those who did the work receiving a reward of money and perhaps a kiss.

The idea of taking flight has obvious echoes of the Resurrection. In parts of Germany models of a bird were usual Easter presents. With gracefully spread wings of paper, they were hung from the living-room rafters. A similar bird flew above a baby's cradle in parts of eastern Europe, generally being left there throughout the year.

In England and other European countries, Easter Day was once celebrated by lighting great bonfires. This marked the renewal of life with the return of spring. Sometimes a doll, symbolizing winter, was burnt or thrown in the water. This was also known as Burning the Judas. Among the Germans, Dutch and Swedes these fires can still be seen. German settlers in Texas also still make Easter bonfires and tell their children that the Easter rabbit is burning flowers: he is making dye for the Easter eggs.

The rabbit is a comparative newcomer to the Easter celebrations, having taken the place of the traditional hare. But at Hallaton in Leicestershire there is still an annual Hare Pie Scramble on Easter Monday. The parish rectors were given the right to a piece of land on condition that they provided plenty of ale, two dozen loaves and two hare pies for the occasion. As it happens, hares are out of season at this time of year, so the pies are made with some other meat instead.

VENETIA NEWALL

The Ceremonies of Holy Week

The week preceding Easter, Holy Week, has been observed by Catholic Christians since the 4th century AD, by the performance of special ceremonies. The dramatic Gospel accounts of Christ's last week in Jerusalem provided a series of events that could be ritually commemorated. These Holy Week ceremonies mostly originated in Jerusalem. They were soon adopted in varying forms throughout the Church, because the official establishment of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine (288–337 AD) encouraged pilgrims to visit Jerusalem in increasing numbers. In Jerusalem, and elsewhere in Palestine, the interest and patronage of the Emperor and his mother, St Helena, caused many churches to be built marking sacred sites of the Gospels. They included, most notably, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. St Helena is credited with the discovery of the True Cross on which Christ was crucified.

A contemporary account of the Holy Week ceremonies as they took place in the latter part of the 4th century is extant. Known as the *Peregrinatio Etheriae* or 'Pilgrimage of Etheria', it was so called because it was written by an abbess or nun of that name, who was probably of Spanish origin and who made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land at that time. Her record will be used here as the basis of a description of the Holy Week ceremonies. It will be supplemented where necessary with accounts of rites that were later added to the original scheme.

Entry into Jerusalem

Holy Week began on the Sunday before Easter; it is known today as Palm Sunday. According to Etheria, the faithful gathered at the seventh hour that day on the Mount of Olives, on the eastern side of Jerusalem. After an appropriate service, the people, led by the Bishop, followed the traditional route taken by Christ from the Mount of Olives on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. They were accompanied by children, all bearing branches of palm or olive and crying: 'Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.' The procession slowly made its way through Jerusalem to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The ceremony ended with prayers before the reliquary of the True Cross. In the Middle Ages, elsewhere, the Palm Sunday procession was usually made from one church to another, where palms were blessed and distributed. Christ was represented in the procession by a Gospel book, or a crucifix, or the Blessed Sacrament. Sometimes a carved figure, seated on a wooden ass, was used. In Byzantine churches icons were carried. The blessing and distribution of palms, together with a procession singing 'All Glory, Laud and Honour', remain the chief features of the modern Palm Sunday rites.

Etheria describes special ceremonies, but of subsidiary importance, on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week. They were associated with sacred sites in and about Jerusalem. They were not adopted into the later scheme of Holy Week.

The Washing of Feet

The Thursday of Holy Week was a day of great significance because it recalled the Last Supper of Christ with his disciples, and his Agony and Arrest in Gethsemane. At the time of Etheria's pilgrimage, the chief ceremony was a night vigil on the Mount of Olives. First, the people, led by the Bishop, assembled in a church containing a cave, which Christ had traditionally visited that day with his disciples. From there they proceeded to the place of his Ascension. At first cock-crow, they descended to the Garden of Gethsemane, where 200 candles were lighted. The account of Christ's arrest was read, and evoked great lamentation. The procession then returned to Jerusalem, just as darkness was lifting. The Bishop dismissed the people to rest, before returning for the rites of Good Friday.

Elsewhere the Thursday ceremonies inevitably took a different form from those enacted in Jerusalem. In the Western Church emphasis was laid upon the Last Supper. At the Mass that day there was a solemn ringing of all the bells at the 'Gloria in excelsis', after which they were silent until Easter Even. Because no Host was consecrated on Good Friday, an extra Host was consecrated on Thursday; this was used on Good Friday for the Mass of the Presanctified, a shortened form of Mass. It was carried in solemn procession to an Altar of Repose, before which the faithful kept vigil. In cathedrals the Holy Oils were blessed. It was customary also for the Holy Water stoups to be emptied; and the altars were ceremonially washed, although this was sometimes done on Good Friday. The Kiss of

Above **Gifts of cakes and pastries are part of the Easter tradition in many parts of the world; during a ceremony at St Bartholomew's Church in London, widows received Hot Cross Buns, and sixpence each: Victorian photograph *Right* In some countries the purely Christian tradition is combined with a symbolism peculiar to the part of the world in which the festival is celebrated: in Mexico, Indian children daub themselves with white paint, symbolic of Christ's blood *Far right* Easter customs often reflect the concept of springtime renewal and rejuvenation: village boys in Hungary sprinkle the girls with water, believed to have a fertilizing influence**

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Camera Press London

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Michael Holford/Hamman Museum

In pre-Revolution Russia, Easter Day was a time of conviviality and celebration, starting at midnight when candles were lit in churches and three ceremonial kisses exchanged in honour of the Trinity: lithograph of 1862, illustrating Russian Easter customs. Coloured eggs and *paska*, the tall stiff bread that was traditionally baked for Easter, are shown below the central picture

Sign of Peace, the ritual embrace after the Agnus Dei, was omitted at Mass in commemoration of the kiss of Judas. The ceremonies concluded with the *Pedilavium* (washing of feet). It was performed by bishops or abbots on people of inferior rank, in memory of Christ's washing of his disciples' feet at the Last Supper. It was also performed by certain sovereigns. The English royal Maundy service recalls the practice of earlier English kings. The name 'Maundy Thursday' is derived from *mandatus novum* ('a new commandment', John 13.34), the first words of the response of the ceremony of the washing of feet.

Good Friday, the anniversary of the Crucifixion, started in 4th century Jerusalem with prayers before sunrise in the ancient church on Mount Sion, where the alleged Column of Flagellation was preserved: the scourging of Christ by Pilate's soldiers was thus mourned. According to Etheria, the chief ceremony that day took place in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The relic of the True Cross was exposed and adored by the faithful. In turn, they bowed and kissed the sacred wood, which was then held by the bishop. They were carefully watched by deacons, since, as Etheria reports, a pilgrim once bit off and stole a portion of the precious relic. This ceremony was followed by a three-hour service at the site of Golgotha, the place where Christ was crucified.

In the Western Church a ceremonial Veneration of the Cross (sometimes called 'Creeping to the Cross') is the characteristic Good Friday rite. Clergy and people kneel and kiss a crucifix placed on the sanctuary steps. After this ceremony, the Host, consecrated on Maundy Thursday, is brought from the Altar of Repose for the Mass of the Presanctified. The liturgical colour is black; and the organ is silent. A Three Hours Service, from noon to three o'clock, originally introduced by the Jesuits, is now customary in many churches.

Holy Saturday, known also as Easter Even, commemorates the resting of Christ's body in the tomb. The Easter vigil is notable for an elaborate ritual, of which the theme is the rekindling of fire as a symbol of Christ's Resurrection. In Jerusalem this Paschal fire is kindled by the Patriarch of Jerusalem within the Shrine of the Holy Sepulchre.

In the modern form of the rite, the fire is kindled in the porch of the darkened church. The procession moves into the church, lighted by a single taper or candle; a second is lighted in the nave; a third at the sanctuary. The focus of attention then becomes the Paschal Candle, a large candle set on the north side of the sanctuary. This candle, referred to as a sacred pillar of light, is duly consecrated. Five grains of incense in pyramidal form are inserted into it, supposedly in memory of the Five Wounds of Christ. The lighting of the Paschal Candle is followed by the lighting of all the lamps and candles of the church and the joyful ringing of its bells. The completion of the Easter Vigil was followed in ancient times by the first Mass of Easter at dawn.

The Paschal Candle is, by implication, a symbol of Christ. It is, significantly, extinguished at the Feast of the Ascension of Christ, which marks his physical withdrawal from the world. The Holy Week ceremonies, as a whole, are basically commemorative of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ; but like the ritual of the ancient mystery-religions, they are calculated to promote in the faithful a sense of identity with Christ in his sufferings and triumph over death.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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This Jewish Christian sect, which broke away from the early Gentile Church of the Apostles, is characterized by its recognition of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, who would one day return to reign on earth

EBIONITES

THE NAME 'EBIONITES' was first used in the 2nd century by the Christian writer Irenaeus to describe a Christian heretical sect. This strange name may go back to the very beginnings of Christianity.

Many scholars cite, in this connection, the Apostle Paul's statement in his Epistle to the Romans (chapter 15) about a financial contribution that had been organized in Greece 'for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem'. The reference here is clearly to members of the original Christian community at Jerusalem who were in need. It has, however, been suggested that the expression 'the poor' may not just denote a state of poverty, but rather be an honorific title assumed by the Jerusalem Christians, who are reported to have 'had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, as any had need' (Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2). Moreover, it is recalled that Jesus had said 'Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God' (Luke, chapter 6). Consequently, if the Jerusalem Christians were thus known as the 'poor', which in Hebrew speech would be the 'Ebionim', the Greek word 'Ebionites' could be reasonably considered as a translation of Ebionim. This conclusion means that, by the 2nd century, a sect of Christian heretics bore the same name as the original Jewish Christian community at Jerusalem.

The theory that the Jerusalem Christians were called Ebionim has been further strengthened, but at the same time made more complicated, by the fact that the evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls seems to indicate that the Qumran community may also have called themselves Ebionim (see DEAD SEA SCROLLS). This Qumranic use would, accordingly, suggest that 'Ebionim' was truly an honorific Jewish title current at the time of Christ, and that common usage of it may indicate some connection between the Qumran Covenanters and the original Christian community at Jerusalem. But, however that particular issue may be assessed, what is important here is the fact that, if the Jerusalem Christians were indeed known as Ebionim, the evidence of Irenaeus reveals a surprising situation: namely, that by the 2nd century these original Christians, or their immediate descendants, were regarded as heretics by an orthodox Church Father such as Irenaeus.

That the members of the original Christian community at Jerusalem were known as the Ebionim is indeed probable, but it cannot be regarded as certain from the extant evidence; for there exists no actual statement that they were ever referred to simply as the 'Poor' (Ebionim). However, whether or not the Ebionites did derive from the first Jewish Christians, the latter certainly merit our attention; for they have a basic importance in the study of Christian origins.

Christianity originated in Galilee and Judaea, and the first disciples of Jesus of Nazareth (see JESUS) were Jews. After the Crucifixion, the disciples' faith in Jesus as the Messiah of Israel was re-established by a series of visions, which convinced them that God had raised him from the dead and that he had ascended into heaven. They believed that he would shortly return to earth, with supernatural power, to complete his messianic career, which meant in terms of current Jewish thought, the restoration of political sovereignty to Israel and the consequent overthrow of the Roman government there. The Acts of the Apostles, written towards the end of the 1st century AD, gives a later idealized account of the fortunes of these original Jewish disciples, and the writings of St Paul provide information that is of the greatest importance.

According to these sources, we learn that the disciples of Jesus, including his mother and his brothers, established themselves as a community at Jerusalem, thus forming what was to be the Mother Church of Christianity (Acts, chapter 1). They began to proclaim to their fellow-Jews that God had confirmed the Messiahship of Jesus by raising him from the dead, and they urged them to repent of their sins and prepare themselves for the imminent return of Jesus as the Messiah. In this presentation of Jesus, they clearly conceived of him as exclusively the Messiah of Israel, concerned only with the salvation of the Jews as the Chosen People of Yahweh (see YAHWEH). Their own conduct confirms this view, because they continued to live as zealous orthodox Jews, worshipping regularly in the great temple at Jerusalem and observing the ritual Law. In other words, these original Jewish Christians did not conceive of their faith in Jesus as constituting a new religion; indeed, it made them more devout and zealous members of their ancestral religion of Judaism. Although they encountered the repressive opposition of the Jewish sacerdotal aristocracy who co-operated with the Roman government in Judaea, these Jerusalem Christians won many converts, including Pharisees and members of the lower orders of the temple priesthood, thus attesting that they were regarded by their compatriots as orthodox Jews.

St Stephen, the first Christian martyr: he was charged with blasphemy because, in contrast to the Ebionites who believed that Christianity was a perfected Judaism, he was hostile to the orthodox cult of the Jewish Temple. He was condemned to death and stoned

The Three Pillars

The leadership of this Jerusalem Church raises an interesting and important problem, which can only be indicated here. According to the contemporary evidence of Paul, at Jerusalem there was a triumvirate or party of three, consisting of James, the 'Lord's brother', Cephas (Peter), and John. Of these three 'pillars' as they are called, James was obviously the leader (Galatians, chapters 1 and 2). The testimony of Acts is more problematic. In the earlier chapters Peter appears as the recognized leader. Nothing is said of James until chapter 3, and the statement there seems to imply that Peter then handed over the leadership to James. James thereafter is clearly the leader, although the author of Acts curiously avoids identifying him as the brother of Jesus. That James did become the head of the Mother Church of Jerusalem is confirmed by later Christian writers and implied by the Jewish historian Josephus (1st century AD). James doubtless owed his position to his blood-relationship to Jesus; on his death in 62 AD, he was succeeded by another relative, Symeon, thus indicating that at this early stage leadership was dynastic.

This original Jewish Christianity, with its headquarters at Jerusalem and communities in other parts of the country, was essentially a Jewish Messianic sect within the body of Judaism; its distinction lay in its recognition of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel. It clearly did not contemplate its doctrine and purpose as being applicable to Gentiles, peoples other than Jews. It reluctantly accepted the conversion of a few individual Gentiles, who seem already to have had some connection with Judaism.

There seems, however, to have been a 'splinter' group, led by Stephen, who were hostile to the orthodox cult of the Jerusalem temple and possibly had some connection with the Qumran Covenanters who had a similar attitude. Some members of this group, which was dispersed on the death of Stephen, travelled to Antioch in Syria, where they preached the new faith to Gentiles and made many converts. The leaders of the Mother Church of Jerusalem were,

thereupon, faced with a problem: could these Gentiles be admitted to membership of the Church without becoming Jews, which meant, for male converts, being circumcised? The evidence of the Acts and Paul's Epistles is conflicting on what policy was actually adopted. On the whole, it would seem that the Jerusalem leaders accepted Gentile converts into something like proselyte status, without definitively requiring circumcision but strongly commending it. They doubtless viewed such converts as second-class Christians, and not expecting their numbers to be large before Christ's second coming.

The conversion of Paul, a Hellenistic Jew, was destined to effect a fundamental transformation of this situation (see ST PAUL). He was inspired to see Jesus not only as the Messiah of Israel but, more importantly, as the divine Saviour of all mankind; consequently he presented Christianity as a universal salvation-religion. Paul and his doctrine were repudiated by the leaders of the Jerusalem Church, and his arrest by the Romans in 59 AD removed him from further part in the movement. So far as the history of the Mother Church of Jerusalem can be reconstructed from the sparse and fragmentary evidence, it would seem that it strictly controlled the Christian movement outside Palestine, especially in combating the influence of Paul. A strong Jewish Christian church was probably established also in the great city of Alexandria in Egypt, with close ties with the Mother Church. In Palestine itself Jewish Christianity appears to have been sympathetically associated with the Zealot resistance movement against Rome, which was religiously inspired (see ZEALOTS). There is reason for thinking that the execution of James at the instigation of Ananus, the high priest, in 62 AD was due to this association.

St James, the brother of Jesus, was the first leader of the Ebionites: he was executed in 62 AD, probably because of the sect's association with the Zealot resistance movement against Rome: detail from a painting in the Church of St Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome

Scala

In the war against Rome, which started in 66 AD and ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the Mother Church of Christianity disappeared. A later legend, demonstrably unsound, told of the flight of its members to Pella, a city in Transjordan. What is certain and beyond dispute is that the Mother Church of Jerusalem, which had been the recognized source of faith and authority in the infant Christian movement, ceased to exist after 70 AD. The obliteration of the Jerusalem Church led to a rehabilitation of Paul's interpretation of the faith, which came to form the basis of Catholic Christianity as a universal salvation-religion. Remnants of Jewish Christianity survived in various places in Palestine, Syria and Egypt until the 5th century. Its members clung to the original tenets of their faith, being characterized by their observance of the Mosaic Law, their belief that Jesus was of human origin, and their hostility to Paul. They are known only through the garbled and prejudiced accounts of orthodox Christian writers, who regarded them as heretics. They are named either as Ebionites or Nazarenes, and various strange beliefs and customs are ascribed to them; it is likely that some groups did adopt Gnostic ideas (see GNOSTICISM) or held beliefs that stemmed from the Qumran Covenanters. Certain of their writings have survived, in forms of varying authenticity. The most important are the so-called Pseudo-Clementines, comprising the Homilies, the Recognitions and an Epitome. Others, including an Ebionite Gospel, and Ebionite Acts of the Apostles, a Gospel of Peter, and a Book of Elkesai are known by surviving fragments or from references by orthodox writers.

Echo

Repetition of sound which can often be heard in high mountains; in Greek mythology the name of a mountain nymph, vainly loved by the God Pan, who in his wrath had her torn to pieces by mad shepherds, only her voice remaining; in another story Echo was doomed by Hera to repeat only what others say because she had distracted Hera's attention from Zeus's amorous affairs with her idle chatter; she was, therefore, unable to declare her love for Narcissus and sadly pined away until only her voice was left.

ECKANKAR

ECKANKAR WAS FOUNDED by Paul Twitchell in 1965 in Las Vegas, Nevada. His aim was to gather together previously scattered esoteric or secret teachings and publish them through books, lectures and courses disseminated under the banner of Eckankar, a synthesis of practices like astral projection, allied to a theory of successively reincarnating 'Eck masters'. Thus systematised, these teachings were designed to lead to self-, and eventually God-, realisation.

Twitchell claimed that the teachings of Eckankar emanated from a school of Eck masters, some of whom were known historical personages and some disembodied. At any one time there would be a 'living Eck master', and Twitchell claimed to be the 971st in a long line of incarnations. On his death in 1971, Darwin Gross, followed by Harold Klemp, took on the mantle of the living Eck master.

Twitchell wrote over 20 books on the teachings of the Eck masters. In one, *Anitya*, he describes Eckankar as 'the science of soul travel or the ability to lift one's consciousness to higher dimensions or planes where one may realise the divine consciousness of his soul'. Eckankar states that man has five bodies, the physical, astral, causal, mental and soul bodies. The practice of soul travel is similar to astral projection and the rising on the planes of traditional Western magical practice, but undertaken with a more 'subtle' body. The Eckankar spiritual exercises help to train the individual in soul travel, leading eventually to meetings with disembodied Eck masters. The concept of spiritual liberation or 'total awareness' within this lifetime is central to the system and reminiscent of Buddhist teachings.

'Eck' is defined as 'the God force' or holy spirit, and 'Eckankar' means, according to its originator, 'co-worker with God'. Eckankar at its peak claimed members in over 100 countries, provided study programmes, produced cassette tapes, and organised seminars, conferences and workshops. The movement also published the monthly magazine *The Mystic Word* and an annual called the *Eck Mata Journal*.

Giraudon

ECKHART

THE TRIAL OF Eckhart von Hochheim on charges of heresy opened at Cologne in September 1326. In the following year he travelled to Avignon, to be examined by a papal commission. In March 1329 a papal bull condemned as either heretical or dangerous 28 'articles', drawn from his works. It also says that Eckhart had revoked them and 'at the end of his life professed the Catholic faith'. He must therefore have died late in 1328 or early in 1329.

This great German mystic, generally known as Meister (Master) Eckhart, was born c1260. He entered the Dominican friary at Erfurt and before 1298 had been elected Prior. He was sent to the University of Paris where he received his master's degree in 1302. After holding various ecclesiastical offices in Germany, and a second stay in Paris, he taught at the friary of Strasbourg and then at the Dominican university in Cologne.

Despite the heresy trial, Eckhart's personal orthodoxy was never in question, and as the papal commission's task had been merely to examine the wording of the condemned articles, without reference to the context or to the author's intention, his immediate followers (notably Johann Tauler and Heinrich Suso in the 14th century, and Nicholas of Cusa in the 15th) could defend and continue his teaching. All the same, it was very often regarded as suspect, the manuscripts of Eckhart's works in German were scattered and the manuscript collections of his Latin works were largely forgotten after the 15th century. Though Eckhart's influence was far-reaching, from the 14th century mystics until the revival of mysticism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, our knowledge of his works is still incomplete. Many historical problems and difficulties in interpretation remain, and any general survey of his thought must be treated cautiously.

Meister Eckhart studied for his master's degree in Paris, leading the kind of life depicted in these illustrations from a 14th century MS: student priests at their devotions *(left)* and *(right)* caring for the poor

Eckhart was steeped in the Vulgate version of the Bible (the Latin translation made in about 385–405 by St Jerome), in the Church Fathers and, as a Dominican, in Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, and in Aristotle and Aristotelian tradition. He frequently refers to Pseudo-Dionysius and other mystics but his supreme authority was St Augustine. He used his philosophical and theological training, not to build a system of thought but to understand the reality of the Logos (the divine Word) which he felt claimed his and every human life, and to teach the deeply felt need to be *deiformis*, 'God-patterned'.

This comes out in his commentary on Exodus 20.21 – 'Moses went up to the darkness inside which there was God' (Vulgate). The word 'darkness', he says, can be interpreted in four ways: the troubled condition which compels a man to seek God's aid; secondly, the troubled condition of a man when God is with him, citing the prayer of St Bernard of Clairvaux that 'if thou art with us, grant that I may always be in a troubled condition, so that I may always be worthy of having thee with me'; thirdly, the troubled condition that separates the 'imperfect', who only follow God as long as he calls them to honours and wealth, from the 'perfect' who will accept hardships and misfortunes and follow the Lord unconditionally; and finally 'the immensity and the supreme excellence of the divine light'.

It was not that there is any darkness in or around God: on the contrary, it is his very light that dazzles the mind, so that knowledge of God who is above all that can be known is, humanly speaking, perfect ignorance. The same theme appears in Pseudo-Dionysius and in the 14th century English *Cloud of Unknowing*. (See DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE; CLOUD OF UNKNOWING.)

Eckhart stresses the necessity of being completely 'removed and pulled away from . . . all that is subject to change'. To be with God involves overcoming *imperfection* (mundane values like wealth and honour, or mundane knowledge which confines itself to phenomena that change) and reaching *perfection* (poverty, suffering and ignorance regarding self-sufficient mundane knowledge). His mysticism is a way of living and a way of thinking, not speculation or contemplation as ends in themselves, and it stems from the personal need to be with God.

The Light in Man

In one of his sermons Eckhart describes a saint as one who 'has left all things behind him and (now) takes them up at the point where they are eternal'. To refuse to be submerged in mundane life, then to see it as God-given and hence to refuse to manipulate it, but to *let it be* as God shapes it, and then to *let oneself be* God-shaped: this *letting be*, this *surrender*, frequently occurs in Eckhart, and in Boehme and his followers (see BOEHME). Eckhart quotes St Augustine who speaks of the dire poverty of the soul that desires to embrace many different things; as in a circle, where many radii meet in one centre. If you leave this centre, then 'by being scattered in many different directions, everything is lost'. The same fate befalls the spirit who 'pours himself out into the vastness of everything . . . when his own nature forces him to look everywhere for the One and does not allow him to find the many'.

Eckhart saw harmony within God and each creature, and between God and the creatures. This harmony is due to an affinity between the nature of the spirit and that of the One, of God in the fullness of his excellence. But Eckhart goes much further: man actually has within his nature something of the divine light, the divine spark; and he goes on to say, with St Augustine, that this light is inextinguishable. He emphasizes that this applies to the light in so far as it is divine, and that the soul is a mere receptacle of the divine light or wisdom. To say less would have been to put man on an equal footing with God, which Eckhart denied.

But was Eckhart being consistent? Did his search for a rational theory for his experience of God's presence in the soul push him further along a line of argument than he really intended, so that he had to reassert, somewhat artificially, the God who transcends his creatures? For he also used the concept of the *ground* of a being, whether God or creature, by which he means the oneness of a being in its hidden depths as contrasted with the diversity of aspects at the surface. It is from this inmost core of his personality, unmoved by outside agencies, that the Father gives birth to the Son. Man, too, should derive his life from his core, not from outside agencies. And it is here that God imparts himself to man through the *inner* birth of his Son. 'Hence God's ground is my ground and my ground is God's ground. Here I live my life out of my very own nature, as God lives out of his very own nature.'

Eckhart goes even further, when he maintains in his commentary on Exodus 3.14 – 'I am that I am' – that the very inclusiveness and absoluteness of God's being makes all other beings entirely dependent on him, indeed *part* of him. Then how is it possible for any being to have autonomy? Are we all simply extensions of God?

This is excluded by Eckhart's analysis of the traditional terms 'being' and 'essence' (contrasting Latin *esse*, the fact that there is a certain being, with *essentia*, the quality of its existence, what properties or attributes it possesses). In man and in other creatures, being and essence are distinct: in God they coincide. The difference between Creator and creature is thus more than one of degree. Through the very kinship of the artist with his handiwork – a comparison Eckhart often uses – and that of God who *speaks* with man who *responds*, each creature has its own status. God's being does not simply engulf everything that is not himself.

In his *Commentary on St John's Gospel*, discussing John 1.1 – 'the Word was with God and God was the Word' (Vulgate) – Eckhart compares the relationship between the Father and the Son (the Word) with that between justice and one who is just. In so far as the just man *is* just, he is identical with, or subsists in, justice. Yet the two are distinct, in the sense that justice is the exemplar, the originator, and the just one receives his just existence from it. The Father, who is the origin and exemplar, gives birth to the Son: the two are inter dependent. And in the *Commentary o Ecclesiasticus* the Holy Spirit is seen as th bond of love between Father and Son. Th Trinity may thus be seen as three distinc persons who depend on each other for thei existence. But there is no distinctio between their being and their essence. Th one divine being *is*, and it is the Fathe giving birth to the Son in their mutual love the Holy Spirit.

Eckhart develops the use which Thoma Aquinas had made of Aristotle's concep of the 'active intellect', which perceive objects, not as separate items but as pat terns or meaningful wholes. Eckhart say that the active intellect considers object as totalities, with the roots from which they sprang. The uniting force is love, and th active intellect participates in the unio achieved by love.

In the Son, God lives in full awareness o his being. But the Son is also the 'reason (*ratio*) that brings about the Father's inten tion of coming out of himself and makin creatures who share with him the fact o being. They flow from God and because he makes them they share being with him, bu their essence is not his. The Son, as *ratio* engineers the coming about of orderly struc ture, and as active intellect he conceives the structure itself and envisages the way in which creatures will actually come about and develop within that structure. He is the Word that creates, because God speaks through him.

God is being-and-essence: his creatures have being *with* and *in* him, but essence *from* him. The Son participates fully in the divine essence, and in the essence of al creatures. The creatures also have essence though they participate less fully in the divine essence than the Son. Their essences constitute a hierarchy, from the lowest creatures, which have being but whose essence has a very low power of participation, up to man, who has reason and intellect and a capacity for love. Man can love the Word which is Truth, and Eckhart quotes Song of Solomon 5.16 – 'This is my beloved and this is my friend' – and follows it with a passage from the 12th century author Hugh of St Victor which describes an actual state of ecstatic illuminating love.

Eckhart is quoting here, not recounting his own experience. He does not look for heights of mystical experience: he is concerned with a God-oriented life, where love prepares the ground for seeing God's creative thought realized in the Logos, the Son. In such a life, unity of being, the loving aspiration of the will and the God-discerning intellect certainly experience ecstatic heights. But these are no more than intense moments in a life spent participating in God's life.

Commenting on John 1.14 – 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us' – Eckhart says that we cannot perceive an object unless its image is already impressed on our minds. Seeing the Word incarnate in Jesus is only possible when one is 'God-patterned', and this only happens because out of pure grace the Word was made flesh and dwelt *in* us. By grace the inner birth makes us the Word's adopted sons, so that

we participate in the life that he is. We are the image of the Word, and hence also of the Holy Trinity. And we see God's glory, not only as he dwells in and among us, but as the Word becomes flesh 'universally and in the course of nature, in every work of nature and of art'. For the man who is God-patterned has within himself 'all grace and all truth', as St Paul said (Romans 8.32, Vulgate): 'with himself he has given us everything'.

Eckhart's principal Latin work was probably begun during his second period in Paris, c 1311–1314, but was never finished, and only parts of it have survived. It was intended to consist of three sections: *Opus Propositionum*, basic theological propositions, of which we have only the *Prologue*; *Opus Quaestionum*, of which nothing but the title is known; and the *Opus Expositionum*, commentaries on the Bible, and a collection of sermons (*Opus Sermonum*). The whole work was to have constituted Eckhart's *Opus Tripartitum*.

In Latin, there are also a sermon preached in Paris on St Augustine's day, 1302 or 1303; a *Collatio*, or inaugural lecture, dating from between 1297 and 1300; and a number of *Quaestiones*, or disputations, from Eckhart's two periods in Paris.

In German, there are the *Talks of Instruction* given to religious communities. The *Liber Benedictus* consists of a treatise called *The Book of Divine Consolation*, written for the Queen of Hungary, and of a sermon preached before her, *The Noble Man*. Some 60 other sermons are now regarded as authentic, as well as the treatise *On Detachment*.

H. POPPER

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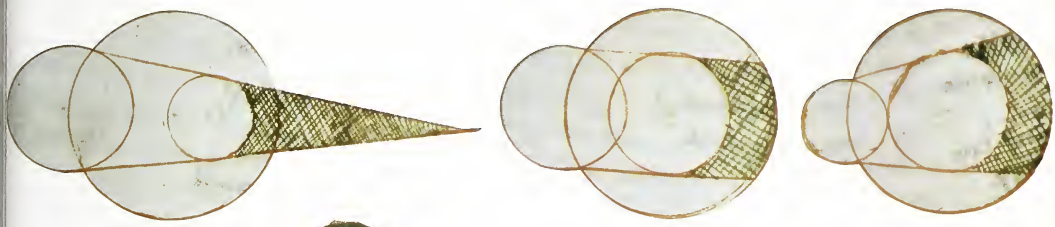

British Museum

ECLIPSE

MAN HAS ALWAYS REGARDED the sun with awe and reverence, not only because it is seen to be the energy source of all life, but also because of its constancy and the inflexible reliability of the cycle of day and night. This diurnal cycle has been built into the evolutionary pattern of all living things so that they respond to sunset and sunrise as if remotely controlled by the sun itself. Sunset and dawn have become the natural regulators of our activities and rest periods. It is not surprising, therefore, that the sun should be treated with respect and even worshipped, because of the security that it inspires. It is because of the unfaltering cycle of the movement of the sun across the sky that we are peculiarly sensitive to any interruption that occurs.

In the days when solar eclipses were not understood, these phenomena were the cause of great alarm and were generally ascribed to supernatural agency. Among the Romans at one time it was even considered blasphemous and held to be a legal offence to speak openly of their being due to natural causes. A total solar eclipse is indeed awe-inspiring even to experienced astronomers. The scene is set by the gradual weakening of the sunlight as the moon moves across the disc of the sun, even though the sky remains clear and blue. Just before the eclipse is total

For thousands of years astrologers have been able to predict eclipses, and usually interpreted them as omens of disaster: illustrations from a 13th century manuscript showing (*left*) an astrologer plotting an eclipse and (*above*) diagrams of the shadows cast by bodies of various sizes

British Museum

Superstitious fear has almost always been man's reaction to an eclipse of the sun or moon; in this illustration from a 15th century French manuscript, the fears of the men in Alexander the Great's army are stilled by the soothsayers, who interpret the lunar eclipse as a good omen, foretelling victory for the Macedonians in their coming battle with the Persians

the shadow can be seen bearing down at a speed of about 2000 miles an hour and the air has become unusually still. As the darkness sweeps down there is an involuntary temptation to crouch and let the shadow pass; a glance at the sun reveals the crimson prominences, like huge angry flames embedded in the pearly light of the corona. One's attention is riveted on the magnificent spectacle until suddenly the sun reappears. Dawn is repeated in the space of a few seconds and the whole world seems to come to life again.

The earliest recorded eclipse seems to have been the one that took place on 22 October 2136 BC, which is referred to in the ancient Chinese classic the *Chou King* or Book of History. Eclipses must have been observed earlier than this for the story has it that the two official astronomers of the time were taken by surprise by this one, with the result that there was insufficient time to prepare the customary rites. The normal procedure was to beat drums and gongs, shoot arrows in the air, and make a general din with the intention of frightening away the monster that threatened to devour the sun. In spite of the fact that the sun recovered from this attack the two astronomers were executed for their negligence. There are many other cases of the use of various rites to ward off the threat to the sun.

One particularly interesting case in modern times is the one recorded in a letter to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* concerning the eclipse of 29 July 1878: 'It was the grandest sight I ever beheld but it frightened the Indians badly. Some of them threw themselves upon their knees and invoked the Divine blessing; others flung themselves flat on the ground, face downwards; others cried and yelled in frantic excitement and terror. Finally one old fellow stepped from the door of his lodge, pistol in hand, and fixing his eyes on the darkened sun, mumbled a few unintelligible words and raising his arm took direct aim at the luminary, fired off his pistol, and after throwing his arms about his head in a series of extraordinary gesticulations, retreated to his own quarters. As it happened, that very instant was the conclusion of totality.'

Solar eclipses are usually very short and the total phase cannot last longer than eight minutes. It is this transient nature of the event that seems to promote the use of some sort of ritual. No sooner have the demonstrations begun than the monster moves away and the eclipse is over. Such highly 'effective' deterrents will obviously be remembered and used again if the occasion should arise. Nowadays we expect eclipse predictions to be accurate to a fraction of a second because we understand the underlying physical principles and have studied the motions of the earth, the moon and the sun in great detail. In the story of the Chinese eclipse there is an inference that the astronomers should have known about it in advance and there is good reason for believing that crude predictions were possible in those days because of the repetitive cycle of eclipses known as the Saros.

The Babylonians discovered that there was a Saros or cycle of 223 intervals between new moons, after which eclipses of the sun and moon recur. If an eclipse is seen on a particular day, then it is certain that another will happen 18 years, 10 days and $7\frac{3}{4}$ hours later which may be visible from the same place but which will not have the same appearance. On average there are 41 eclipses in the Saros cycle, and each one of these will be followed by another just over 18 years later. The Saros was almost certainly known to the Chinese and they would have used it in predetermining the dates of eclipses. The first well documented example of the use of the Saros was the prediction of the eclipse of 28 May 585 BC by Thales of Miletus, the Greek scientist and statesman, but there can be no doubt that the method was used earlier than this.

Columbus Exploited Eclipse

Obviously the ability to predict was a powerful tool in the hands of the astrologers and their readings of the sky were variously correlated with natural disasters, deaths, wars and the displeasure of the gods.

In more recent times, others have used their knowledge of eclipses to great effect. Sir Arthur Helps, in his *Life of Columbus* (1910) relates the story of how the explorer used the lunar eclipse of 2 April 1493 to obtain provisions from the inhabitants of Jamaica. At first they were reluctant to help him and he threatened them with divine vengeance, 'for that very night the light of the Moon would fail'. The natives were frightened and during the eclipse they approached Columbus and implored his intercession – with the inevitable result that the moon was restored to them and provisioning ceased to be a problem.

The only difference between lunar and solar eclipses as far as prediction and observation are concerned is that a total solar eclipse can be seen only from a narrow strip on the earth's surface across which the moon's shadow sweeps during the time of the eclipse, and which may be only about 150 miles wide. Lunar eclipses can be seen from the entire moonward hemisphere of the earth.

One would expect that some detailed knowledge of the processes causing eclipses would dispel some of the fears accompanying them, but the evidence of modern anthropologists seems to refute this. It seems that the basic reaction to a major natural disturbance like an eclipse still contains a certain amount of fear.

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William Sargent

The Christian mystic in solitary communion with the divine and the Sufi in his frenzied dance both claim a common experience

A man believing himself to be possessed by a god is restrained during a Voodoo ceremony in Haiti. In such a state the ecstatic may appear to assume another personality, in which case the onlookers are likely to regard his speech and behaviour as being divinely inspired

ECSTASY

MYSTICS, THEOLOGIANS, PSYCHOLOGISTS and poets all have their very different interpretations of what is meant by ecstasy. The term is sometimes used as if it described all kinds of mystical experience in which ordinary perception of the world is surpassed. As a religious experience, ecstasy is often, although not invariably, induced by devotional acts such as meditation, fasting or the repetition of sounds or movements.

The most restricted use of the concept is found within the Roman Catholic faith, most particularly in the exposition of mystical experience elaborated by St Teresa of Avila (1515-82), for whom it denoted a specific stage of the mystic's development (see TERESA OF AVILA). She distinguished ecstasy as the stage following the mystic's sense of initial union with God. It was signalized by complete surrender: God occupied the interior of the soul and the believer became dead to the world. This stage was followed by the betrothal of the mystic to the deity.

Not all Roman Catholic mystics and theologians have followed this restricted usage. Others have described as ecstasy almost any experience of a transcendent reality in which the individual has the impression of being united with the deity, or in which the spirit is uplifted in contemplation of a religious subject. For these writers ecstasy lies in the union of two separate and different entities – man and God – in which God is transcendent but, in rare and special instances and in personified form, is briefly united with the worshipper.

There is a broader conception of ecstasy which is not specifically Christian. Here ecstasy is any mystical experience in which the individual attains a heightened awareness of deity and gains knowledge that he does not normally possess, and in which he has a sense of elevation above his physical being and surroundings to a point where he becomes unresponsive to normal sensory stimuli – insensitive to pain, for instance.

Associated with this last usage is the experience of those who are involved in collective behaviour of a frenzied and uncontrollable kind. Epidemics of pathological behaviour have been common in Christian history, beginning perhaps with the talking in tongues in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts chapter 2) and in Caesarea (Acts chapter 10). Among many dramatic incidents in medieval times, the dancing epidemics of inspired crowds in Italy in the 14th century (see DANCING MANIA), the convulsions widely experienced in parts of France in the 18th century (see CONVULSIONARIES), and the 'preaching sickness' which affected many people in Scandinavia in the 19th century have all been regarded as manifestations of religious ecstasy. So have the phenomena that attended early revivalist meetings. John Wesley, although himself unsure of the cause, recorded over one hundred cases of people dramatically affected at his Methodist meetings in the 1740s; some died or went mad.

Poets and others have often described as 'ecstasy' intense moments of heightened vision and a mysterious sense of elevation. William Wordsworth, Alfred Tennyson and Jean Rimbaud are frequently cited in this respect, although none of them attributed his vividly recounted experiences to the agencies invoked by Christian mystics. Others, particularly Aldous Huxley, have suggested that the experience to be gained by the use of drugs (in his case, mescalin) is similar to that undergone by mystics.

It is clear that the word ecstasy may relate to a range of mystical experiences or dramatic social behaviour. This divergence arises in part from the difficulty of comparing essentially personal experiences. Similar subjective experience may be interpreted in highly different ways according to personal temperament, to the religious and mystical traditions of the society of the person involved, and to his acquaintance with those traditions. In this area where religious ideas, subjective experience and social behaviour converge there is little precise terminology and little possibility of accurate measurement.

Herbert List

Rapture and Ravishment

The difficulty of categorizing experience of this kind is illustrated by the extent to which Christian mysticism – and also that of the Cabala in Judaism – is heavily dependent on terms drawn from sexual experience and sexual union. 'Lover', 'ravishment', 'rapture', 'marriage' are all terms commonly used to describe what is involved in ecstatic experience. It may be noted that these terms give grounds for theories that relate the experience to the sexual frustrations of the fervently religious celibates who, as a class, have been most disposed to ecstasy. The idea of the lovers' union as the prototype of ecstasy itself goes back long before the Christian era.

There is no agreement as to the essentials of ecstatic experience; however, a number of elements recur. It is usually said to involve a sense of extraordinary elation, mystical knowledge, glory, purification, a sense of union with a higher being and a loss of worldly awareness. Sometimes there is also a sense of peace and release. There are, however, accounts of Christian mystical experience that are sometimes classed as ecstasy in which feelings of darkness prevail – for example in the accounts of the 4th century bishop Gregory of Nyssa and of St John of the Cross (1542-91). Ecstasy is of short duration, usually lasting for no more than half an hour. If, however, we take into account ecstasy as the public expression of frenzied religious experience and trance state and spirit possession, there are cases of ecstasy that have lasted several hours.

Left **Member of the Jamaican obeah cult during a pocomania session: a state of trance is induced by dancing to the sound of chanting and drumming, which sometimes lasts for days at a time *Right* A young girl in a huge pop concert audience screams uncontrollably, encouraged by the presence of many other girls in a similar state of intense excitement**

There is no reason to suppose that particular psychic states are confined to any one culture, although the explanations given for such states will vary according to cultural concepts. A range of experience, trance states and asociated behaviour is found in many societies. Among Plains Indians a young man seeks a vision as a personal experience to provide him with direction in his life. The vision quest requires fasting, purification and the physical tortures of the Sun Dance (see GREAT PLAINS INDIANS).

Claims of personal access to religious truth are always potentially disruptive for any established orthodoxy. Although in an unorganized religion like Hinduism, in which widely divergent traditions co-exist, they cannot be regarded as heretical, even in that tradition mysticism has given rise to disputing schools. In more organized religious systems, such as Islam and more especially Christianity, ecstatics have usually been treated with suspicion. Their experience of ecstasy had to be interpreted in terms acceptable to the Church in medieval Catholicism. The tendency of the ecstatic – found in Sufic teachings in Islam as well as in Christianity – was to claim not only temporary union with God, but essential identity with him. For statements to this effect, Meister Eckhart stood condemned in the 14th century (see ECKHART).

Perhaps because mystical experience was rationalized by those already committed to the dogmas of the Church, in Christianity ecstasy has become an intellectualized concept, experienced typically by the believer in isolated contemplation and not so readily seen in expressive behaviour. Because the Church was so closely identified with the civic agencies of social control, religious behaviour of a frenzied type was always suspect and usually interdicted. The private mystic, whose writings might edify others, could be tolerated within the framework of Church order, but the demonstrative ecstatic who might claim authority higher than that of priests and of officials was an obvious threat to public and religious authority.

In the last three centuries mystical ecstasy has been a less common phenomenon in Christian history. For long virtually confined to the enclosed life of convent or monastery, handled intellectually and recounted principally in literary form, ecstasy and mysticism generally have suffered the impress of rational patterns of thought and of social organization.

Right **One of the penitents who parade through Singapore at the Festival of Thaipusan: his mouth is pierced and limes hang from hooks driven into his chest. Religious fervour can frequently make the believer insensitive to pain**

Above **Crowds at a Hitler rally. These rallies were calculated to whip up frenzy by the use of music, ceremonial and the leader's remarkable powers of oratory** *Below* **Some Christian sects deliberately arouse states of ecstasy as part of their worship. Believing themselves protected by their faith, members of the Dolly Pond Church in Tennessee handle poisonous snakes**

Release from the World

Roman Catholic writers, who have had most to say about ecstasy in the Western world, have sometimes denied that the phenomenon can properly occur in Hinduism, which is indisputably the most mystically disposed of all the great religions. Ecstasy, they argue, occurs only in the union of a believer with a transcendent personified deity, whereas Hinduism tends to pantheism and to monism (crudely described as a belief in a single reality), rather than to monotheism.

The Catholic view ignores the extraordinary diversity in Hindu thought. The dominant emphasis of Hindu mysticism has been on the attainment of a state of consciousness in which the believer merges with the one universal spirit, Brahman, and realizes that the sensory world is illusory. Despite divergent traditions, the dominant goal of Hindu mysticism is release from the human condition, the attainment of spiritual illumination in an ineffable experience. Intense joy, detachment from the world and self-surrender are common themes throughout Hindu mysticism, and these may legitimately be called ecstasy.

Ecstasy in the narrow sense of the term is also less likely to be found in Judaism and Islam, with their severely monotheistic and transcendental conceptions of God. Mystical experience is, however, recounted in the Old Testament, and the vision of the divine charioteer with the four mysterious living creatures recorded in Ezekiel (1.4-28) became a prototype for ecstatic contact with the unseen world. The traditional lore of Judaism and the books of the Cabala contained a demonology, angelology and cosmology which were guides to the wise in their search for mystical and ecstatic access to God (see CABALA). The Cabalists rejected the rationalistic trend of Judaic thought in medieval Europe and used sexual sym-

bolism to describe the soul's relation to God.

Compared with the Christian view, the Islamic conception of God is much more as a being 'wholly other'. However, in the tradition of Sufism (a mystical doctrine within Islam) both the ideals of temporary union with God, as in Christian ecstasy, and the more pantheistic theory of continuing union of God and man, are to be found (see SUFIS). When Abu Yazid could affirm, 'I am He,' in the 9th century, he gave expression to an extreme sense of ecstasy, contrary as such ideas were to Islamic orthodoxy.

Dancing and Whirling

Visions were an integral part of this type of mysticism, and although Sufic teachings contained many discrepant ideas and some contradictions, there is a frequent return to the idea of union with God. Although not part of the original Sufic teachings, ecstasy was induced by singing and dancing in some Sufic orders, and at the popular level whirling and dancing became identified with the ecstatic state. The dance corresponds to the concentration on the cross or on relics by which ecstasy was sometimes induced in Christianity, or with the repetition of chosen mantras, or prayers, in Indian religious practice.

Allowing for cultural differences in behaviour, some states of spirit-possession and trance might also appropriately be regarded as conditions of ecstasy. Outside the orthodox expression of Christianity there is to be found a wide incidence of such phenomena, but it is also found in movements that have been considerably affected by Christianity, of which some would be recognized as distinctly Christian. The experience of the 'baptism of the Holy Ghost' among Pentecostalists (see PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENTS) might be held to be an experience of ecstasy, in which the believer speaks in unknown tongues by the power of the Holy Spirit which momentarily overwhelms him. Pentecostalists speak of the 'infilling of the Spirit', which is a near-sexual symbol of the union achieved. In conformity to general Protestant tradition, however, those who have undergone this experience do not claim to have had visions.

In the independent Christian churches in West Africa, of which the Church of the Cherubim and Seraphim and the Church of the Lord, Aladura, are among the largest, there are institutionalized occasions at services when revelations are pronounced and, more spectacularly, dramatic and ecstatic outbursts occur in which the individual may speak with the voice of God and give commandments to the congregation.

Even more compelling are the ecstasies that are to be witnessed in the Afro-Brazilian cults of the coastal cities of Brazil. In their temples there are usually a group of priestesses who are regularly 'possessed' by one of the various African deities who have been worshipped by the Negro population since their arrival as slaves in Brazil (see BRAZIL). Frequently these deities are also identified with particular saints of the Roman Catholic Church, and most temples possess a Catholic altar as well as idols for the various deities. The priestesses, during their trances, act out the role of the deity and are thought to be entirely impervious to normal sense perceptions. Drumming, singing and dancing are the usual procedures by which the ecstatic state is induced. In ecstasy the priestesses may administer advice, attempt cures and sometimes behave wilfully and outrageously, particularly so when a group of peasant gods, known as *caboclos*, possess their votaries. This type of ecstatic performance is, of course, of much greater immediate social impact and significance than the solitary ecstasy that is the prototype of orthodox Christian mysticism.

(See also DERVISHES; ENTHUSIASM; FAKIR; HOLY ROLLERS; MYSTICISM.)

BRYAN WILSON

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Ecstatic behaviour sometimes carries an element of exhibitionism, as in the case of this Indian fakir, who is suspended by hooks while his assistant daubs the admiring crowd with ashes. Fakirs practise an extreme asceticism, often involving self-mutilation, in an attempt to acquire spiritual and magical powers

Camera Press London

Fortean Picture Library

ECTOPLASM

IT IS IRONIC that a word coined to describe the outer membrane of a single-celled animal such as an amoeba (as distinct from the inner cellular material, the endoplasm) should within a few years have been seized upon by observers of material phenomena at spiritualist seances, to such an extent that its original meaning should be almost forgotten. 'Ectoplasm' (also known as 'teleplastic materialisations' and 'ideoplastic pseudopods') is the term used to describe a viscous-seeming substance which appeared to emanate from certain 'physical' mediums in the earlier years of the 20th century, and which sometimes took on facial features, or even the form of a human body.

In the adoption of the word, there may have been some perceived connection with the 'ectenic force', a postulated 'mesmeric' physical force emanating from a medium, and responsible for such phenomena as table-turning and the movement of objects without visible contact. The possible existence of such a force was first proposed by the psychic researcher Count Agenor de Gasparin, and the term was coined by his colleague Thury.

It was, no doubt, the desire for more dramatic manifestations than table-rapping and the movement of mundane objects such as tambourines and trumpets, coupled with the need to provide a more readily recognizable form than the mere voices of departed spirits in seances, that led to the appear-

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Photographs taken in the course of Professor Schrenck-Notzing's investigations reveal the material nature of ectoplasm produced by two of his principal subjects: 'Stanislava P' *(top)* and 'Eva C' *(above)*

ance of ectoplasm. The use of photography (admittedly under somewhat restricted conditions) was permitted in certain seances by the 1920s, and photographs revealed ectoplasm as a white doughy stream which issued from the mouth, nose and even the genitals of female mediums. The French investigator Professor Charles Richet described it as 'a kind of liquid or pasty jelly...which organises itself by degrees, acquiring the shape of a face or a limb. Under very good conditions of visibility, I have seen this paste spread on my knees...'

Richet was describing ectoplasm produced by the medium Marthe Béraud, usu-ally known as 'Eva C', who was extensively investigated by Professor von Schrenck-Notzing. She 'materialised' ectoplasm from many different parts of her body, including her breast, thumbs and ears, and photographs show this to be of an almost solid consistency, in which facial features are sometimes deeply sculpted. Schrenck-Notzing wrote:

> We have no occasion to doubt that even paper-like substances can be materialised (by the medium), as can substances of the nature of gauze veiling and cotton, including the morphological structure of the weft, fold sewn in, etc. Just as traces have been left of the pure, organic-teleplastic substance, so may similar fragments of the materialised products, textile or cellular, have been left behind.

Despite Schrenck-Notzing's standing as a scientifically trained observer, there seems little doubt that he here reveals the true nature of ectoplasm. Whatever specimens of this 'organic-teleplastic substance' could be obtained – usually by violent seizure, to the evident distress of the medium – were found to be of white cheesecloth or a similar gauzy material, sometimes impregnated with grease, on which traces of bodily secretions could be detected. Another medium, known as Laslo, eventually admitted that he had drawn faces on gauze rolled in goose fat, which he had squeezed into a small ball and secreted in Schrenck-Notzing's pocket before being searched, subsequently retrieving it for production during the seance.

The brothers Willi and Rudi Schneider, who were investigated in the 1930s and shown to be regular tricksters (see SCHNEIDER BROTHERS), also produced 'ectoplasm' of a similar nature, which was shown to be fraudulent by Professor Przibram of the University of Vienna.

But despite these widely-reported cases, belief in the existence of ectoplasm survived well into the 20th century. A series of articles in the New York *World Telegram* of 1937 included a description of an 'ectoplasm box...by means of which a smoky shape, roughly resembling a hooded man, floats upwards'; manufactured by a small company in Chicago, it cost 15 dollars.

Edda

The title given to two separate books, the *Elder* or *Poetic Edda*, and the *Younger* or *Prose Edda* of Snorri, which together provide a major source of information about the religious beliefs and culture of the Scandinavians before the advent of Christianity. Probably composed in Iceland in the early 13th century, they contain myths and legends that are associated with the principal northern gods and heroes.

Det Kongelige Bibliotek

Scandals and law suits marked the spectacular career of the woman known to her many thousands of followers as 'Mother'

MARY BAKER EDDY

THE DISCOVERER AND FOUNDER of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, was born Mary Baker at Bow, New Hampshire in 1821, the youngest of six children. The facts of her early life are, despite her own autobiographical recollections and many official biographies produced by the Christian Science movement, very much disputed. Her education appears to have been slight, despite her claim to have been taught Hebrew, Greek, Latin, natural philosophy and moral science by an elder brother who graduated at Dartmouth College.

In her later years Mrs Eddy, perhaps excusing her somewhat faulty use of language, declared that what she had learned from schoolbooks 'vanished like a dream' when she discovered Christian Science, and that 'learning was so illumined that grammar was eclipsed'.

Despite the limitations of her education, Mrs Eddy became one of the really remarkable women of the latter part of the 19th century, producing several books, of which one sold many more than a million copies, founding a Church and an international daily newspaper and influencing, through her teachings, the lives of millions of people.

Three Times Married

During the course of her life she was married three times, first at the age of 22 to George Washington Glover, variously described as a building contractor and as a bricklayer, by whom she had her only son; she was widowed within the year. In 1853 she married a dentist, Dr Daniel S. Patterson, whom she divorced in 1873 after he had deserted her. Her third husband, Asa G. Eddy, was a student of the then Mrs Patterson when she began to teach her healing system; they married in 1877.

In the years of her first widowhood and as the wife of Dr Patterson, the founder of Christian Science lived the life of a semi-invalid; the precise nature of her complaint has remained obscure. Before her remarriage to Dr Patterson she became preoccupied with various methods of healing, and the authorized biographers suggest that her 'experiments' in these years, particularly with homoeopathy, were steps by which she became increasingly aware of the powerlessness of drugs and the power of the mind in the process of healing.

In 1862, four years before the date given by the authorities of the Christian Science movement for the discovery of Christian Science, Mrs Patterson (as she then was) went as a patient to Phineas P. Quimby in Portland, Maine. Until his death in 1866 she was a regular patient, once staying for some months under his care. Quimby's system of healing was without doubt the most important influence on Christian Science as Mrs Eddy later developed it.

Quimby got his ideas from Charles Poyen, a French mesmerist who had travelled in New England. The doctor had originally practised with the aid of a medium, but subsequently came to believe that what cured his patients was the process of changing their thought. Quimby began a practice of mental healing, manipulating the heads of his patients but trusting to the mental rather than the manipulative elements in his system. The notes he wrote on his practice were published many years later by one of his students. Quimby wrote of a Christ Science of healing; he believed his methods to be those employed by Jesus; and he held that good thoughts would drive out bad. From this Mary Patterson acquired her first ideas about Christian Science, although she was subsequently equivocal about her relationship with P. P. Quimby and her indebtedness to him.

Despite the many similarities between the ideas expressed in *Science and Health*, the Christian Science textbook which she first published in 1875, and the ideas of P. P. Quimby, there are also distinct differences. In particular, Christian Science embraces a much more distinct and consistent philosophical ideal. The source of Mrs Eddy's idealism has been disputed, but it seems likely that she was introduced to popularized versions of the work of Berkeley, Kant and Hegel by one of her students. She was not above plagiarism, as is apparent from her borrowings from Carlyle, Ruskin and other authors. But whatever notions she acquired from the idealists, Mrs Eddy appears to have feared the identification of her healing system with that of Quimby more than anything else. She tried to disown the association, then reinterpreted it. She always made the strongest attacks on spiritualism and animal magnetism (associated with mesmerism: see CHRISTIAN SCIENCE), which had given rise to Quimby's original ideas. If the diaries of Calvin Frye, her secretary for the last years of her life, may be relied upon, Mrs Eddy was in those years 'haunted by the suggestion that she must confess that she "got it" from Quimby or she would be damned'. Certainly Mrs Eddy was almost obsessed with fears of plagiarism: she copyrighted her works; brought those who plagiarized her writings to court; and forbade her students to take notes during instruction.

Claiming Divine Revelation

The official Christian Science version of the discovery of her system, as given in the various biographies of Mrs Eddy authorized by the Directors of the Mother Church, is that in early 1866, after a fall on ice which she later claimed had been thought to be fatal, she prayed and after three days was able to walk once more. Mrs Eddy subsequently claimed this as the occasion of her discovery of Christian Science, but at the time she was much less certain, and within two weeks of the accident she wrote to another of P. P. Quimby's students pleading for his mental help in her affliction. In retrospect this incident, so nearly coincident with the death of Quimby in the previous month, which marked the beginnings of her work as an independent healer, became interpreted as the occasion of her revelation. It was, however, some years before this version of the facts was published and her relationship with Quimby relegated in importance. Her subsequent success was undoubtedly related to her own growing claims to be the sole discoverer of her system and, indeed, the recipient of a divine revelation: she regarded God as the author of the textbook of Christian Science and her teachings as 'uncontaminated and unfettered by human hypotheses'.

The early students of Mrs Eddy were largely recruited from people with a predisposition towards the occult. She lodged with spiritualists and advertised her method of healing as a new and rewarding profession. However, few of her early pupils remained loyal to her, and the stormy relationships

Pray For Good Weather

Mrs Eddy set no limits to prayer. She prayed as Jesus bade us pray, assured, as Jesus was, that with God all things are possible. She even sought through prayer, intelligently offered, to bring about more harmonious weather conditions. Hers was a deep confidence in the efficacy of prayer, God willing, to control the weather...

The faithful Mrs Laura Sargent specially 'attended to the weather'. But Mrs Eddy would have her entire household understand what 'attending to the weather' involved. No nonsense would she tolerate with regard to praying. One day she called several of them into her sitting room, made them stand up before her like schoolchildren, and, going down the line she asked, pointing her finger at each in turn: 'Can a Christian Scientist control the weather?'

Each answered, 'Yes, Mother.' Sharply, even scornfully, she said to each and all, 'They can't and they don't. They can't, but God can and does... A Christian Scientist has no business attempting to control or govern the weather any more than he has a right to attempt to control or govern sickness, but he does know, and must know, that God governs the weather and no other influence can be brought to bear upon it.' Every Christian Scientist must pray in faith, and leave the rest to God.

Years never staled her sense of humor. Even her sharpest admonition was likely to be softened by a loving smile...Never was Mrs Eddy more human than in the ordinary give and take of social contact. She affected nothing. She abhorred all pretentiousness in bearing. She put everyone at ease and knew how to bring out the best in those around her. With her lovely voice often, in those later years, she joined her household in singing such old favourite songs as 'Auld Lang Syne', 'Comin' Through the Rye', 'Annie Laurie' and 'The Old Oaken Bucket'...

Lyman P. Powell
Mary Baker Eddy (1930)

described in the various biographies suggest that Mrs Eddy either had a tendency to attract unstable people to herself and her system, or that she was herself a woman of difficult temperament. Students left her, charging her with love of money and bad temper, and sometimes these episodes prompted her to litigation or, more often, accusing the apostate of 'mental malpractice' – the deliberate misuse for evil ends of the mental suggestion to which Christian Science attributes so much power.

Only when she moved to Boston, and to some extent ceased to have day-to-day relations with her followers, did Christian Science begin to thrive and acquire respectability. Scandals still persisted, some of them of a kind which might have been thought to bring irredeemable discredit on the movement. Mrs Josephine Woodbury, for instance, taking to heart Mrs Eddy's spiritual teaching and emphasis on chastity, gave birth to a son whom she declared to be immaculately conceived, and whom she christened the Prince of Peace. This was too direct a challenge to Mrs Eddy's authority. She, despite her idealist teaching, remained throughout her life a practical woman with a strong sense of reality. She disbelieved Mrs Woodbury's claim, said so, and had to fight a libel action about the language which she used to describe the episode. Another follower, Mary Plunkett, induced her husband to join her in announcing the dissolution of their marriage in one of the Christian Science periodicals. Her subsequent, and highly dramatic, proclamation of spiritual marriage to another Christian Scientist brought her expulsion from the movement. Mrs Eddy's austere views on sex received less emphasis in later years, although some who claimed to be loyal followers continued, although married, to lead nun-like lives for years after Mrs Eddy's death.

The Movement Grows

Neither these unconventional ideas, nor a remarkable sequence of disorders in the ranks of Christian Scientists, prevented the movement from growing and thriving in the last two decades of the 19th century. In the late 1880s Mrs Eddy gradually inaugurated a complete change in its government, withdrawing from active participation in it but retaining the right to intervene on any point in its affairs when she felt guided to do so. She wrote, and frequently revised, a *Manual* for the government of the Church which, in addition to preserving certain prerogatives of hers (which 60 years after her death still technically remain in force), established a Board of Directors to control the Mother Church, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts, and established all other churches as branches of it. She took steps to control the church pastors and independent teachers of Christian Science who had become active, and subjected all to the Board of Directors.

Her own removal from the scene of operations undoubtedly encouraged the growth of innumerable stories about Mrs Eddy which circulated among her adherents. To be called to attend her became a very rare and

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

The personality of Mary Baker Eddy, a woman of limited education but strong character, still dominates the Christian Science movement. A legend in her lifetime, she claimed miraculous powers of healing and direct revelation from God

distinguished privilege in the movement, and to serve in her household, even in a menial capacity, the equivalent of an education in Christian Science by the more formal method of courses which she had instituted.

She took an active part in the complicated legal decisions which arose in connection with the building of her church in Boston, where the room in which she stayed for one night has been kept as a type of shrine for Christian Scientists, known as 'Mother's Room'. Only a few years after this church was built, and perhaps to eclipse the immense success of one of her students, Mrs Augusta Stetson, the moving genius in building a large new church on New York's fashionable Riverside Drive, Mrs Eddy authorized a two million dollar extension of the Mother Church. Most impressively of all, only two years before she died, she ordered the Christian Science Publishing Society to produce an international daily paper, *The Christian Science Monitor*, which has perhaps done more to establish and sustain the prestige of the movement than any other of Mrs Eddy's amazing accomplishments.

By the turn of the century, Mrs Eddy and her movement had become a modern wonder, even in the United States with its capacity for novelty in a vigorously expansionist age. Wildly exaggerated claims in the daily press about the size of the movement sustained public interest. (Mrs Eddy was commonly said to have probably a million adherents in 1906, when, in fact, the Mother Church had only 40,000 members, and when the United States census counted only 65,000 Christian Scientists in the whole country.) Publicity was not, however, always favourable.

Mrs Eddy found criticism as difficult to bear as the rivalry to her own leadership that she discerned in the considerable achievements of her own students, such as Mrs Woodbury and Mrs Stetson. Hostile critics were not to be tolerated, and Mrs Eddy forbade her followers to patronize bookshops or publishers who sold 'obnoxious books', by which she meant books critical of herself and Christian Science. The rule has remained in the Church *Manual*.

Accounts of Mrs Eddy as an individual have varied widely. The evidence of her own uncorrected prose suggests untutored vigour, ambition and half-digested ideas. She did not espouse a particularly austere code in her private life, though she eschewed coffee, tea, alcohol and tobacco. She was very much a patriot, and saw no objection to dealing in stocks and shares, which she did extensively with the fortune she accumulated. She had no particular interest in the theatre or in culture, which is perhaps understandable given the circumstances in which she lived all her early life, but she did not forbid cultural interests to her followers.

Despite the emphasis of her teachings, and the absolute denial of the efficacy of drugs or medical practice, Mrs Eddy wore glasses in later life, visited the dentist and certainly used drugs. Her own reputation as a mental healer is largely based on a number of dramatic, and mainly self-recounted, occasions of healing. The healings are largely unauthenticated by medical testimony – a circumstance which Christian Scientists attribute to the hostility of medical practitioners to mental healing. Certainly there were widely reported healings on the dramatic occasion of Mrs Eddy's speech in Chicago in 1888.

Personality Still Dominant

Speculation about Mrs Eddy's successor inevitably arose towards the end of her life. She herself had said that she would be succeeded by a man, and had subsequently said that she referred to no man then living. Some of her followers looked for her resurrection after her death, but this prospect was not encouraged by the Board of Directors of the Mother Church who, in fact, inherited Mrs Eddy's authority. The movement withstood her death in 1910 without immediate disruption, despite the difficulty of adjusting to the fact of its leader's death by a Church officially believing that man should demonstrate that death had no claims on him. The bitter divisions and protracted litigation which followed in the next decade arose largely from the very inadequate instruments of government which Mrs Eddy bequeathed to her movement. Despite these troubles, which may have much affected the growth of Christian Science and which certainly made clear its authoritarian character, there is no doubt that the personality of Mrs Eddy is still dominant within the Christian Science movement.

(See CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.)

BRYAN WILSON

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Michael Holford/Horniman Museum

According to one tradition from Central Europe, the Virgin Mary dyed eggs in various pretty shades to amuse the infant Jesus; since then eggs have been decorated at Easter with elaborate and colourful designs

Few people who follow the ancient custom of giving eggs at Easter remember that the egg is a symbol of new life and fertility, appropriate to a spring festival celebrating the Resurrection of Christ

EGG

THE SIGHT of a young bird suddenly breaking out from what seemed a lifeless object encouraged ancient peoples to speculate about the nature of creation. The egg became a symbol of life. Early man was unable to grasp an abstract idea like the creation of the world but he could watch a parallel process in the hatching of an egg. The idea of a 'world egg' which produced the first creator followed from this, and it appears in many early creation myths (see BIRDS). Ancient Egyptian writings describe how the sun god Re was born from an egg. In Hindu mythology the golden world egg is called *hiranyagarbha*; it hatches Brahma, the sun, and he forms the universe from its component parts. The Chinese have a legend that the first being, P'an Ku, appeared from the cosmic egg, and in Oceania various legends ascribe the origin of man to birds' eggs.

The emblem of life became a popular fertility symbol. In some countries peasants carry eggs into the fields as a magic charm to increase the crop and double the yield of grain. The Scots used to put a nail and an egg in the bottom of the sowing basket and pile seed corn on top. The egg represented the corn 'as full of substance as an egg is full of meat'. Slavs and Germans smeared the plough with egg on Green (Maundy) Thursday, a festival of spring and renewal, hoping to ensure a good crop.

Eggs are seen as such powerful fertility charms that they are used to correct various types of impotence and sterility. In Péc, a town in Serbia, pain in the testicles is relieved by an application of fried eggs

sprinkled with sal ammoniac. The same treatment is said to restore lost virility. In Morocco, a man wishing to increase his sexual capacity eats an egg yolk every morning for 40 days. A childless Hungarian woman mixes a little of her husband's blood with the white of an egg and the white speck from the yolk. This mixture is stuffed inside a dead man's bone and buried in a spot where the husband will urinate; then the woman will conceive. According to a traditional Hungarian saying, a man with a big family has 'mixed his blood with eggs'.

Because they contain new life, the seeds of the future, eggs are often used in divination. A popular method of discovering one's future husband was to pierce the shell at Hallowe'en, New Year, or some other significant occasion, and catch the white in a glass of water. The shapes which formed were studied carefully and interpreted; in France the egg was broken on someone's head. Girls in Scotland and Ireland removed the yolk from a hardboiled egg and filled the cavity with salt. If the charm was to work effectively it all had to be eaten, including the shell. This was done at midnight and no water might be drunk before the morning. If the girl dreamed that her lover was bringing some, it meant she was going to be jilted.

To Sea in an Egg-Shell

Many people in the United States invert the shell of a boiled egg after they have eaten it, and smash the other end. This is a relic of the idea that witches used unbroken shells as a means of transport – to fly through the air or sail over the sea. Reginald Scot in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) says: 'They (witches) can go in and out at auger-holes, and sail in an egg-shell . . . through and under the tempestuous seas.'

Ceremonial burial of an egg is quite common in the Middle East. Moroccans who wish to drive someone insane empty an egg and write the name of a jinn, or spirit, around the shell with a mixture of saffron, fig juice and egg white. The contents of the egg are then mixed with gunpowder and put back. If the egg is buried where the victim habitually walks, the charm will drive him out of his mind. Should the parents of a newborn Moroccan baby omit the customary gift of money to

Newcastle Museum of Antiquities

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Left **According to a famous Greek myth, Leda, having been seduced by Zeus in the guise of a swan, produced two eggs: out of the first came the twins, Castor and Pollux, and the second contained Helen and Clytemnestra: detail from a painting by a follower of Leonardo da Vinci** ***Above right*** **The world egg which produced the creator is a common motif. This 3rd century representation of the birth of Mithras shows the god within an egg-shaped cavity, emerging from a broken shell** ***Below right*** **A symbolic drawing of the 'philosophers' egg', from a treatise by the 17th century alchemist Michael Maier. The 'philosophers' egg', represented by the circle and the stem, was a sealed egg-shaped vessel in which alchemical reactions took place, and from which the Philosophers' Stone was thought to emerge**

the local schoolmaster so that his pupils can have a holiday, the boys take their revenge. They secretly dig a hole outside the parents' door and steal an egg from their chickens. The egg is interred and a chapter of the Koran recited over it, as is the custom at a funeral. When the mother walks over this her child is doomed to die and she herself will be permanently afflicted with an issue of blood.

In parts of the United States, folk medicine gives a way to erase a birthmark: rub it with a fresh egg each morning for seven days, burying the eggs under the doorstep.

Eggs are also used in protective magic as a guard against the Evil Eye. In north Albania, when a child is born the neighbouring women call and bring eggs to the mother as a gift. If the new arrival is a boy they take an even number: two, four, six or eight. If it is a girl the number will be odd: one, three, five or seven. One of the eggs is smashed and thrown across the infant's face to guard it from the Evil Eye. In southern Macedonia (Greece), 40 days after a birth the mother takes her baby to be 'churched'. On her way back she calls at the homes of the sponsor and closest relations. If the child is a boy the woman of the house takes an egg and, passing it over the infant's face, blesses it, saying, 'Mayest thou live, my little one. Mayest thou grow old, with hoary hair and eyebrows, with a hoary beard and moustache.' The ancient Mayans used eggs to cure, or counteract, the Evil Eye in a simple ritual where the priest would break the egg and the victim would gaze at it as if it were an eye, burying the egg afterwards.

The Easter Egg

A great number of traditions have grown up around the custom of giving Easter eggs, but we do not know precisely when or where this custom originated. A grave excavated at Worms, Germany, and dated about 320 AD, contained two goose eggs painted with stripes and dots, but local archaeologists were unable to say whether the burial was Christian. As early as the time of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604 AD) eggs were forbidden during Lent: hence they became a special treat when the long fasting period was over. Decoration of eggs for Easter existed in Poland before the 11th century and, in England, the household accounts of King Edward I contain an entry for 18 pence spent on the purchase of 450 eggs, to be coloured or covered with gold leaf and given to members of the royal household.

In England before the Reformation eggs were used in church ceremonies, the appearance of the new bird from its shell being compared to Christ arising from his tomb at the Resurrection. In Old Russia we find similar ideas. The tradition of giving Easter eggs was immensely important and one legend traces the custom to St Mary Magdalene who, it is said, was arrested by a centurion in Alexandria; she gave him an egg and he let her pass. Another version describes how she presented one to the Roman emperor as a token of Christ's Resurrection.

In France and certain other Catholic countries, during the silence of the church bells from Maundy Thursday until Easter, children are told that the bells have gone to the Pope in Rome to fetch the Easter eggs. Paschalia, the Easter spirit, is supposed to bring them in Greek Macedonian homes. In fact the parents slip red eggs under the younger children's pillows after attending midnight Easter Mass. In Westphalia, Germany, an Easter fox brings the eggs. Often, and more logically, it is a bird: Swiss children watch for the arrival of the Easter cuckoo. Elsewhere in Europe the Easter hare lays eggs in one's house or garden; in America it has become the Easter rabbit. Said to be sacred to Eastre, an obscure Germanic spring goddess, the hare – a prolific breeder – was a symbol of fertility.

Sometimes the Easter eggs would be kept throughout the year to bring good luck, and in the Balkans people supposed that Easter eggs had power to repel evil spirits. They were buried in the fields to protect the crops. The Poles hung the shells in their fruit trees to increase the yield or scattered them in corners of their rooms to keep out insects and toads. Even the water in which they were boiled was carefully saved and poured across the entrance to the cowshed. This would prevent a witch from coming in and stealing the milk.

Decorating the Eggs

In Central and Eastern Europe colouring Easter eggs is especially important and there are many legends seeking to explain how the custom arose. Ukrainians often use blue dots in their designs, which they call the tears of the Virgin Mary. They say that she took a basket of coloured eggs as a gift for Pontius Pilate, in the hope of persuading him to show mercy towards Jesus. But in her grief as she prepared them she wept, and her tears fell upon the shells, forming brilliant dots of colour. Poles tell their children that she dyed eggs in various pretty shades, red, green and yellow, to amuse the infant Jesus; since then Polish women have dyed them, but at Easter, not Christmas, for the Resurrection theme is the underlying reason for the custom.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall from which he never recovered. It was natural that a character unable to survive a fall should be given the form of a fragile egg

Mary Evans Picture Library

In countries of the Orthodox faith, the most popular colour for dying eggs is plain red. The Rumanians explain this with a story of the Virgin Mary leaving a basket of plain eggs at the foot of the cross on the original Good Friday. They were a gift for the soldiers there, so that they might be a little kinder to her son. But the basket was ignored and after a time the blood of Christ flowed down and stained the eggs red. Even today Balkan peasants say that the red colour represents the blood of Christ.

Apart from these plain eggs, peasants of Central and Eastern Europe produce very elaborate patterns with the wax-resist technique. The artist uses a crude wooden pen filled with melted wax to trace patterns on the shell. Areas covered by the wax remain undyed when the egg is dipped in colouring. Designs utilizing as many as seven colours can be created by this method. Other types of decoration involve appliqué work.

The Poles glue paper shapes to the surface of the shell, and in Serbia they use little circles of coiled metal or tufts of brightly coloured wool. These elaborate eggs were sometimes presented as tokens of love by a young girl to her sweetheart. As many as a hundred might be given and, if a girl felt that the work was beyond her, she employed a local woman to do it. Factory-made chocolate eggs are a comparatively recent innovation, first popular in the time of our grandparents.

A traditional English technique for colouring eggs was to tint them with dyes made from plants or to press flowers against the shell. The Wordsworth Museum in Grasmere contains a few eggs decorated for the poet's grandchildren in the 1860s by the family gardener. It is unusual to see such historic specimens, since they generally became casualties of the Easter games. Egg rolling is the best-known game, still practised in America and in scattered parts of northern England and Scotland.

Many superstitions concerning eggs prevail in the United States. Farmers advise against setting a hen in May, or placing an even number of eggs under a hen. Eggs set by a woman will be pullets, but those taken to the nest in a man's hat will be cocks. An egg marked with a black cross will keep weasels away. Eggs laid on Friday are said to cure stomach-ache. It is said to be unlucky to take hen's eggs in or out of a house after sunset, or to bring birds' eggs inside at any time. Dreaming of eggs foretells good luck, or a wedding; a dream of broken eggs portends a lovers' quarrel; a dream of a lapful of eggs, not surprisingly, is an omen of riches to come. An old belief from the South says that placing eggs under your parents' bed will make them quarrel.

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FURTHER READING: Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (Sheed & Ward, London, 1958); S. G. F. Brandon, *Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East* (Verry, Lawrence, 1963); Alan W. Watts, *Easter, Its Story and Meaning* (Schuman, 1950); Christina Hole, *Easter and its Customs* (Barrows & Co., 1961).