



Wicca

THE
OLD RELIGION
IN THE
NEW AGE

Vivianne Crowley

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'A really thorough and authoritative exposition of present day coven witchcraft which may well become the standard work for a good few years.'

— *Quest*

'An important new book on the craft — interesting, well written and very informative . . . this is one of the best books on Wicca that I have read in a long time . . . it is well worth reading, and is likely to become a classic in Craft literature.'

— *The Wiccan*

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To my beloved husband Chris
who wrote the chapter on the God.

To Maxine, Alex, Madge and Arthur — my initiators.

To Debby, David, Clare, Wayne, Maureen, Bob, Jim, Paul,
Rob, Jan, Prudence, Sue, Dave, Wendy, Chris, David,
Derek, Julia, Rufus and to all those with whom I have
danced the Spiral Dance.

BLESSED BE

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INTRODUCTION

Wicca is the religion at the forefront of the neo-Pagan revival. It is called the Old Religion because it is based on the religious practices of our Pagan ancestors — the worship of the divine personified in the form of a Goddess and a God, both of whom have many names and forms.

As a religion, Wicca offers a variant of what all religions offer — a philosophy of life, a sense of the place of humanity in the cosmos, and a form of worship through which people can participate in the mysteries of the life force and fulfil their needs for shared human activity by doing this with others. Where Wicca differs is that sympathetic and natural magic is an integral part of the religion.

Wicca believes that men and women have within them those powers which people call *psychic*. These powers can be used passively in order to find out what will happen in the future, which is termed *clairvoyance*. They can also be used actively to make things happen, which is termed *magic*.

The attitudes of religions to these practices has varied widely in different cultures and times. In the West under the domination of the Christian Church, practices such as divination and clairvoyance were discouraged and suppressed. It was considered presumptuous to seek to know the 'will of God'. Mysticism, that passive activity whereby human beings received vision and insight into the true nature of reality, was permitted, provided the mystics couched the content of their visions

in terms acceptable to the Christian Church. Unfortunately, when people apprehended the true nature of the cosmos, it was not always in accordance with Christian dogma!

Active psychic activities were also permitted to a certain extent through prayer. Christians could seek to influence their lives and those of others by praying to the Godhead, and in Catholicism and the Orthodox sects to saints, men and women now dead who were considered to have led very exemplary lives and to have special influence with God. Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians could also pray to another figure, that of the Virgin Mary, that not quite divine but not wholly human replacement for the Goddess. What was not permitted was for individuals to take it upon themselves to influence events by using the latent powers of their own minds. Whilst mystics sometimes manifested powers such as levitation, to seek such powers as ends in themselves was sinful and wicked.

Wicca also differs from other religions in the status which it accords its adherents. Initiates into Wicca are initiated into a priesthood. All who enter are priests and priestesses with the authority to perform for themselves the rituals and spiritual exercises necessary for their spiritual development. Whilst there are initiations beyond the first which confer higher status in Wicca, the difference is one of 'degree', a quantitative difference which recognizes greater competence, rather than a qualitative one.

Wicca offers not entry into a congregation of followers, but initiation into the priesthood of the mysteries. Whilst Wicca provides signposts for those who wish to find it, it is not a religion which goes out and seeks to make converts. It does not offer a form of exoteric religion which is suitable for the many, but a spiritual discipline and path which is the way of a few, albeit an increasingly large few. In offering entry to the priesthood, Wicca offers a form of spiritual training which develops our self-knowledge and understanding so that we can in turn facilitate the spiritual growth of others. In this, its aims are not dissimilar to those of the more spiritually-oriented psychotherapies.

Those who enter Wicca are also initiated as witches as well as priests and priestesses. Witches are those who are considered to have special powers and in order to practise Wicca, entrants must have some passive and/or active psychic poten-

tial. Most people who enter Wicca have no more ability in clairvoyance and magic than the average person; nor is this necessary. The average person's capacity is more than ample once he or she learns to use it. Most of us do not use one tenth of the capacity of our minds and much of Wiccan training is about developing these capacities and training the mind until it is able to do magic, which Aleister Crowley, that flawed magical genius, described as: '...the Science and Art of causing change to occur in consciousness in conformity with will.'¹

Wicca is a form of worship, a spiritual system and also a system for developing and using psychic and magical power. It draws on three main traditions, that of the original fertility cult, that of the occult traditions in general, and that of the pagan mysteries of which the occult tradition is in some part a reflection. Wicca opens up an awareness of one's own spiritual needs and those of others and it has its own unique beauty and strikes a deep chord in human consciousness.

Wicca is only one of the many religions and spiritual paths which are open to the spiritual seeker of today. We do not see ourselves as having any unique monopoly on truth and indeed for a group of human beings to say that they do is deemed ludicrous. Wicca sees the human race as evolving and as our understanding grows so too will be the picture we are able to produce of the ultimate truths in which religion deals. In Wicca there can be no once and for all revelation of the right way to approach the divine and the right way to live. In *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*², the Indian mystic expressed this most beautifully:

God has made different religions to suit different aspirants, times and countries. All doctrines are only so many paths; but a path is by no means God Himself. Indeed, one can reach God if one follows any of the paths with whole hearted devotion. One may eat a cake with icing either straight or sidewise. It will taste sweet either way.

To witches, deities manifest in different ways and can be worshipped and contacted through any form suitable to local conditions and personal needs. Wicca does not believe, as do the patriarchal monotheisms, that there is only one correct version of God and that all other God forms are false: the Gods of Wicca are not jealous Gods. We therefore worship the personification of the male and female principle, the God and the Goddess,

recognizing that all Gods are different aspects of the one God and all Goddesses are different aspects of the one Goddess, and that ultimately these two are reconciled in the one divine essence. There are many flowers in the garden of the divine and therein lies its beauty.

While the forms of the Gods have varied, there are certain concepts which have arisen in widely differing times and cultures and the psychologist Carl Jung called these *archetypes*. In Wicca, we contact the divine archetypes through the ritual and through the enactment of the ancient Pagan myths which express eternal truths about humanity and the universe it inhabits. George Boas put in his introduction to the nineteenth century mythographer J J Bachofen's *Myth Religion and Mother Right*:

...we do not merely worship in silence: we express our adoration of the superhuman powers in ritual and we elaborate myths to be narrated by each generation to its successor, myths that sound like explanations of natural events — such as the round of the seasons or the sudden occurrence of an earthquake or flood — or myths that are simply pictorial, allegorical, or gestures of veneration.

In our modern age we are unaccustomed to ritual. Originally ritual functioned to mark the transitions between different life stages. Birth, sexual maturation, marriage, giving birth, kingship, war and death were all marked by rites which stimulated the appropriate archetypes in the psyche and gave us a pattern of behaviour with which to meet their demands. Vestiges still remain and most people will at some point cement permanent relationships by marriage, the births of their children by a ceremony at the local church and the deaths of their loved ones by some kind of funeral service. For many people, however, these rituals are hollow and meaningless.

To the ancients, these rites of transition marked the stages of life and death which were seen not as dichotomies, but as stages in a single process which was more real than either. A famous fragment written in about 500 BC by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus who originated in the Goddess' sacred city of Ephesus said: 'The way up and the way down is one and the same.'

All rituals, sacrifices, invocations, prayers, hymns and chants have the common aim of turning our minds towards 'the way up and the way down', birth and death, and showing us their

meaning in our lives to give us knowledge and understanding of how we fit into the greater whole. By neglecting our myths and rituals we have lost the sense of the endless cyclical process of the life force which endures in the face of the changing seasons and the brief shooting star of our individual lives. We have lost touch with that part of ourselves which lives on when the body fails us and reincarnates to form another stream of human existence, or simply returns to the great ocean of being from which we all spring forth.

Myth and ritual speak to the intuition and the imagination, faculties which often act to compensate for the deficiencies of reality. As teenagers we fantasize that we have a loving husband when we are fat and spotty and no one asks us out. We fantasize that we are noble war lords when we are rather over-civil civil servants. We fantasize that we are rich and successful as we labour in boring offices. Fantasies are what produce all creative work, but alone they are worthless. Something must be done with them.

Myth and ritual address the world of the imagination and channel it, giving it form and place. Ritual acts not as a substitute for reality, but as a pattern for it. By enacting the ritual dramas of the Gods we activate these archetypes so as to make them manifest in our psyches. In enacting ritual, we are enacting a prescribed form of journey to human growth which overcomes the deviations of individual maladjustment. The ritual dramas of the Gods activate the archetypes so as to make them manifest in our own lives. Ritual grounds the journey of the spirit into the world of the actual and brings it out of the realm of personal fantasy to the world of the group; our inner world must be confronted by others.

Like other religions, Wicca accepts that there is a non-material as well as a material reality, but it does not believe the non-material is superior to the material and it does not seek to deny the material world or the stages of existence between the physical and the divine. Matter is not regarded with horror and the emphasis is on the joy of the flesh rather than the ascetic's view of flesh as sin. This is not to say that Wicca is hedonistic, but rather that we are followers of a middle way. Our time in physical incarnation is a gift from the Gods which is to be enjoyed and we should appreciate the joys of sensory experience of the world around us. However, we must also seek the spiritual

growth which expands our consciousness and allows us to live on levels beyond the physical.

Wicca is a religion of love and joy which looks to the good in human beings rather than to the evil and seeks to bring out that good rather than dwelling on people's faults. It does not seek unrealistic sainthood, but rather makes the best of what is there. It does not divide people into the 'chosen' and the 'damned' but rather sees people as being in different stages of struggling towards the same end — that of unity with the divine and thus becoming divine.

Wicca does not lay down a set of rules by which to live. Since life decisions are rarely black or white, the onus is on us to make decisions between various shades of grey. This moral sense is developed by seeking to adhere to certain basic ideals of love, joy, truth and trust, and making decisions which are most in accordance with them. There is no book of rules, but there is one 'meta-rule' by which we live our lives.

An it harm none, do what you will.

Wicca has little dogma. It is a living religion which belongs to the present, and in Pagan philosophy that present is 'ever-becoming', 'ever-moving'. Since the present is not static, neither is Wicca. Unlike Christianity, Islam and other 'religions of the book', Wiccan beliefs are not fixed, enshrined for ever by a once and for all revelation made to one individual. In religions which are based on revelations made to a particular person at a particular point in time, the dogma and ritual tend to become fixed. Once some authority figure has made a pronouncement on the correct dogmatic interpretation or ritual performance, it becomes very difficult for the religion to evolve to meet new circumstances and new needs which present themselves as the human race and the society it creates evolve.

The new initiate into Wicca does not receive a bible, a printed book which can be bought in a shop. The witches' equivalent, *The Book of Shadows*, must be copied by hand from one's initiator. It does not then become a strait-jacket of belief and practice. The seasonal rituals, for instance, are in skeletal form. This allows each group to incorporate the basic material into its own rituals and from this to develop rituals which meet the needs of its members.

The rituals are constantly reinterpreted as people evolve, but

on the basis of a shared core of information which preserves a common thread which is recognizably Wicca. Whilst there will be common features which are celebrated at the festival of Lammás, whether the emphasis is on the sacrifice of the Corn King, the beneficence of the Goddess who has supplied the harvest, the mourning of the Goddess who has voluntarily sacrificed her beloved to supply the needs of her people, or some of each, will vary according to the group's needs. These will grow and change over time as the needs of individuals grow and change and new parts will be added to the ritual and other parts taken away.

Each witch keeps the core material which is handed down through initiation, but new witches are encouraged to write a second volume, which is their personal *Book of Shadows*, which consists of rituals, invocations and spells, many of which they will have devised themselves and which will grow and develop as they progress through their spiritual journey.

Since Wicca has little dogma, those who join are not burdened with convincing themselves of vast doctrinal details against which their intellect rebels. The intellect is one of humanity's greatest assets and also one of its greatest handicaps. Its development has allowed us to master the environment around us (not always with very desirable results) at the expense of losing touch with our inner worlds. Often when people become interested in Wicca, their thinking side protests that it cannot believe in elementals and magic and that mighty Gods and Goddesses stalk the Earth. This does not matter and blind willingness to see everything as literal is as foolish as people who persist long after all evidence to the contrary in believing that the Earth is flat.

Wicca operates in two realms of truth — metaphysical truth and psychological truth. Our ancestors operated in the realm of metaphysical truth and it was quite acceptable to them to believe that if they did not perform the correct rites at the Winter Solstice, then the Sun would die. Empirical observation shows that this is not case, but if together with literal interpretation we reject the concept, we miss the point entirely and the Sun really will not rise. It is not however the Sun of our physical world which is lost, but the inner Sun of our spiritual world which dies.

What is required in Wicca is a very simple belief that the cons-

ciousness of man is not dependent on the body but can extend beyond the limits of the sensory world and that the life force should be revered. Other than a very simple belief in the life force and the powers of the human psyche, all that is required is that we accept the framework of ritual and symbolism in which Wicca operates as containing age-old truths which are not literal but which are hidden and whose truth will unfold over the years as we integrate them into our own lives. Bachofen⁴ believed that:

There are two roads to knowledge — the longer, slower, more arduous road of rational combination and the shorter path of the imagination, traversed with the force and swiftness of electricity. . . the imagination grasps the truth at one stroke, without intermediary links. The knowledge acquired in this second way is infinitely more living and colourful than the products of the understanding.

The ancient myths and rituals of our ancestors are fortified castles of this second road which guard psychological truths about the inner developmental processes of the human race. Many would go further and say that they represent metaphysical realities and are dramatic representations of the interplay of the divine forces of the universe which are personified by the Gods, but the truth of that is something which each initiate must decide for him or herself on the basis of his or her spiritual experiences. The spiritual experiences of even the most developed human beings are only useful signposts and in the end we must decide for ourselves what is true and what is false; we are our own gurus.

Why is Paganism reviving and why does Christianity, the established religion of the West, no longer satisfy us? No religion can endure for ever and many occultists and astrologers would say that Christianity with its worship of the sacrifice of the self was the religion of the Piscean Age. We have now entered the Age of Aquarius, the age of humanism, in which the divine as God and Goddess will be found in all men and women, not just in one perfect man now long dead.

Paganism is reviving because religion must evolve to meet the needs of the developing human psyche. Religion must also contain an element of the mysteries, the unknown. In describing the fate of Classical Paganism, Jung⁵ wrote:

The gods of Greece and Rome perished from the same disease as

did our Christian symbols: people discovered then, as today, that they had no thoughts whatever on the subject. On the other hand, the gods of the strangers still had unexhaustable mana. Their names were weird and incomprehensible. . . . At least one couldn't understand the Asiatic symbols and for this reason they were not banal like the conventional gods.

As the consciousness and needs of humanity evolve, religion must be renewed by going back to its source, the collective unconscious of humankind, and finding there new life and vigour. Symbols and myths, whilst containing an essence and force which is eternally true for humanity, also contain forms which can become outmoded and outworn, as can the temple building and its ritual implements. When this occurs the temple must be restored or rebuilt, the implements must be melted down and reforged. It is this which has occurred in Wicca; taking the myths and archetypes of religion, and in particular those feminine elements which had been neglected by 2,000 years of Christianity. The cauldron of inspiration of the older faith has given birth to a new child, the religion of Wicca, the worship of the Goddess and the God.

My own approach to Wicca and to this book is coloured by my background as a psychologist and in my own framework of explanation the psychology of Carl Jung plays an important part. Wicca can be discussed in many ways and one of our most successful speakers at a Wiccan Workshop was someone with an engineering background who explained the whole of Wicca in terms of the combustion engine. Wicca operates however in the realm of the psyche and if we are to understand Wicca we need to know something about how the human psyche works and the effect which a system such as Wicca has on the psyche of those who practise it. Here Jung's theories are very useful in that they are strongly influenced by his study of occult, mystical and alchemical texts and are therefore compatible with the occult view of man, and are indeed partly derived from it.

One of the reasons people join Wicca, the occult and other spiritual systems is to gain a deeper understanding of themselves which will give them power over their own lives. You who have read about the Eleusinian Mysteries will know that carved above the door through which the initiates entered the temple were the words, 'Know Thyself' and this is also one of the aims of Wicca. Wicca like other spiritual systems causes inner change

and it is important for us to have sufficient knowledge of the psyche to understand the psychological changes we undergo. If we understand the inner processes, it will also teach us to be more tolerant of others in our covens who are undergoing these changes and assist those of us who are in the position of running groups to help them through the process.

There are difficulties in writing about Wicca. The words of the oath of the first initiation bind us to 'ever keep secret and never reveal the secrets of the Art except it be to a proper person, properly prepared, within a circle such as I am now in'. Wicca is a mystery religion and if the mysteries are to effect inner change, they must always contain elements which we cannot understand, elements which confound but also tantalize the conscious mind and force it to work on them until realization comes. The power of the mysteries lies in maintaining their ability to mystify. If too much is explained about a mystery, it is rationalized and becomes a product of the finite conscious mind, not a product of the infinite unconscious.

This means the writer on Wicca must balance the desire to reveal where the mysteries can be found and so to allow greater access by a greater number, whilst maintaining the essence of the mystery. The decision about what should or should not be written must be a decision for each individual, but in some ways the decision is made easier by the fact that the true essence of Wicca cannot be expressed in words. The world of Wicca is the world of what Bachhofen and later Nietzsche called 'Dionysiac truth'; truth which is intuitive and non-verbal; truth which is communicated through symbols and myth:

Human language is too feeble to convey all the thoughts aroused by the alternation of life and death and the sublime hopes of the initiate. Only the symbol awakens intimations; speech can only explain. The symbol plucks all the strings of the human spirit at once; speech is compelled to take up a single thought at a time. The symbol strikes its roots in the most secret depths of the soul; language skims over the surface of the understanding like a soft breeze. The symbol aims inward; language outward. Only the symbol can combine the most disparate elements into a unitary impression. Language deals in successive particulars; it expresses bit by bit what must be brought home to the soul at a single glance if it is to affect us profoundly. Words make the infinite finite, symbols carry the spirit beyond the finite world of becoming into the realm of infinite being.⁶

Whatever we write cannot therefore convey what we can only experience by being in Wicca and working the ritual and participating in the myths. There are however other difficulties. One of the beauties of Wicca is its lack of dogma. This allows Wicca to evolve. The danger of writing about Wicca is that people will accept too readily what we write and not seek themselves to find the answers and more importantly the right questions. Another danger is the egotistical one of writing about Wicca because we believe that our view of Wicca is the 'right' one. Any book about Wicca can only be the personal view of the individual priestess or priest who writes the book and it will contain truth and error, good bits, excellent bits and bad bits. It will please some of the people some of the time and none of the people all of the time. Other and sometimes opposing views will be equally valid and right for those who hold them.

So why write at all? I write because I believe the time has come to say something new about Wicca. To put Wicca in the context of what we now know about humanity's spiritual aspirations and to let it take its place amongst its Pagan ancestors so that we can see the shape of the child which has been brought forth; the reincarnation of the past reborn for the future, the Old Religion in the New Age.

1

THE ROOTS OF MODERN WICCA

The origin of Wicca lies in the distant past but its modern history really begins in 1951 when, with the repeal of the Witchcraft Act, people were free to talk openly about the 'Old Religion'. The impetus to publicize the Craft came not from those who were long-standing members of the tradition, but from one of its more recent recruits, Gerald Brosseau Gardner. Gerald Gardner was initiated into Wicca in 1939 by Dorothy Clutterbuck, a wealthy lady who lived near Bournemouth and whom he met through the Rosicrucian Theatre. Dorothy was not keen to publicize the Craft, which was then illegal, but Gerald managed to give out some information under the guise of fiction in a novel, *High Magic's Aid*, published in 1949 under his witch name Scire ('To Know'). After 'Old Dorothy's' death in 1951, Gerald felt free to publish a non-fiction work and in 1954 *Witchcraft Today* appeared, the first account of modern day Wicca.

Gardnerian witches initiated by Gerald and his initiates are one of the major branches of Wicca. The other is the Alexandrian tradition whose members derive their initiation from Alex and Maxine Sanders. The two traditions use more or less the same ritual material and Alexandrian Wicca can be seen as a Gardnerian offshoot. The differences are more in the ritual style and outlook than anything else. Loosely speaking, the Gardnerians could be described as more 'Low Church' and the Alexandrians more 'High Church' and Alexandrian witches tend

to be more interested in ritual magic than in folk Paganism. The coven which my husband and I run is a unification of the Gardnerian and Alexandrian traditions in that I have been initiated into both and it is of Wicca as practised in these traditions that I write.

There are other branches of Wicca. Some hereditary covens do exist where the Pagan tradition has been passed down through the generations of particular families for longer than they can remember and some of those families have in more recent years initiated outsiders into their tradition. Another important branch of the Craft springs from the witch known as 'Robert Cochrane'. Robert Cochrane claimed to have been initiated into a hereditary coven at the age of five and to have become a Magister at the age of 28. He traced his witchblood back to 1734 and claimed descent from a traditional coven in the Warwickshire area. In the 1960s he came to know a number of Gardnerian witches and in the early 1960s he formed a coven in which a number of leading occultists of today were initiated. While Cochrane died in June 1966, reputedly from an accidental overdose of the amanita mushroom, others in the UK have continued working in the tradition which he founded and some US covens thrive. A newer development is the branch of Wicca known as Dianic which has crossed the Atlantic from the United States. This is very feminist oriented and some covens exclude men entirely.

Wicca worships the divine in the way of our ancient ancestors which is as the Triple Goddess and a Dual God. These are seen as ultimately two aspects of one divine force which is beyond male and female. The earliest ideas about the God and Goddess are those which were expressed in the art of the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age which occurred in Europe and the Near East between about 12,000 and 7,000 BC. These were the Mother Goddess who was the controller of human fertility and the horned hunting God who controlled the movements and fertility of the animals.

With the Neolithic or New Stone Age, which in Europe and the Near East began about 7,000 to 5,500 BC, there were changes in ideas about the God and Goddess. The development of agriculture led to a realization of the effect of the Moon on women's menstrual cycles, the gestation of seeds and plant growth. The Moon, agriculture, the Earth in which the crops

were planted, womanhood and motherhood became associated with the female aspect of the deity who was depicted as the Moon.

Since the Moon has three major aspects — waxing, full and waning — and woman's life could be seen as having three major aspects — pre-fertile, fertile, and post-fertile or menopausal — so the Goddess was perceived as having three stages — virgin, mother and crone — representing the three major stages in the human life cycle — birth, marriage and death. Since, like woman, the Earth was the nourisher of the seed, this too was associated with the Goddess. The God became associated with the vegetation and the crops themselves, and as the male role in procreation was recognized the older horned hunting God became a phallic God.

There was a further change between about 5,500 and 3,000 BC with the invasion of fair-haired Indo-European horse and cattle herders from Asia Minor. The invaders brought with them their concept of a dual God who as well as being the fertile phallic God who brought life to the tribe was also the taker away of life, the Lord of Death and War. In addition he was associated with the power of the Sun and so the God became a God of light and darkness.

In time in most areas the religious ideas of the Neolithic and Bronze Age peoples fused. However, in the remoter Northern Europe where the people of the New Stone Age were less sophisticated than the highly civilized peoples of the Mediterranean, the Neolithic people seem to have been largely swept away. In Britain and its isles the small dark Neolithic peoples retreated to remote areas where they could continue their agriculture and small-scale hunter/gatherer way of life from their round earth homes using their flint-tipped arrows and flint knives and spears and they took their Goddess worship with them. These peoples became known as the 'little people', the fairies, and their reaction to the metal sword-wielding invaders is reflected in their mythical fear of metal. This fear of metal and its association with Goddess worship still exists in some of the older branches of the Craft in which there are covens where nothing made of iron may be brought into the circle.

In the west of Europe, the Iron Age saw the merging of many of the Bronze Age peoples into one race, the Celts. Many of the ideas of modern Wicca are derived from the Celts, who by

500 BC had become one of the dominant races of Europe. Although the Celtic priesthood, the Druids, had an alphabet called Ogham, they favoured an oral tradition and, unfortunately, much of what we know about the Celts is derived from the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar who, as their enemy, is obviously not an unbiased source.

Caesar tells us that the Druids believed in reincarnation and the Celts therefore had little fear of death. There were few monsters and demons in their mythology and they were not preoccupied with the idea of evil. They had no concept of sin and punishment and believed that when they died they went to the Summerland for renewal until rebirth. Their pantheon shows a mixture of older and newer Gods. The concept of the Horned God and the Triple Goddess was common, as was the concept of a solar God. The names of the Celtic Goddesses and Gods varied locally, but Bel and Lugh were popular, with Bel being associated with the Sun and Lugh with the light and these names have survived in the names of Wiccan festivals.

The four major festivals of Wicca are derived from the Celtic calendar. The Celts, being originally a pastoral people, commenced their year at Samhain (Hallowe'en) with the slaughtering of animals for winter. Later emphasis was on the earlier agricultural calendar with its beginning in the spring sowing. Samhain because of the animal killing was a time of death and also a time when many older members of the tribe would begin to succumb to death as the cold set in. The barriers between the worlds seen and unseen, the world of men and the Summerland, were down and the dead could be communicated with. Imbolc (Candlemas) was a fertility ritual for the surviving animals (particularly the ewes) to mate and create new flocks for summer. At Beltane (May Eve), the festival of Bel, the Sun, a fire was lit to symbolize the waxing power of the Sun. Again there was a fertility emphasis with the animals being driven through the fire and the people dancing deosil round the fire. At Lughnasath, the festival of Lugh, God of Light, there seems to have been a thanksgiving for the fertility of the animals and a plentiful supply for the winter.

The Celts had two other religious concepts which Wicca retains, that of outdoor worship (modified for reasons of climate and privacy) and that of Goddess worship. Although the Druids were the priesthood of the Celts, their origins are older

and they were probably the priesthood of the Beaker people, one of the Celts' early ancestors, who had gone to Britain in 2,000 BC when the building of Avebury commenced and later Stonehenge. The tradition of outdoor worship continued and in the Celtic period the Druids worshipped in sacred groves and in circular clearings. Later cross-fertilization with Roman thought, however, brought about the development of temples similar to those of the Romans.

The Celts may have had their origins in the patriarchal Indo-Europeans, but Goddesses and women were very important in Celtic society as Irish legends and the story of Queen Boudicca will show. It seems likely that the Celts absorbed much of their Goddess theology from the indigenous people they over-ran and the Celts had a great love of music and poetry of which the Goddess was seen as patron. Women were warriors and queens and Caesar says that disputes of law were settled by the Celtic women.

MEDITERRANEAN PAGANISM AND THE MYSTERY CULTS

Other strands of Paganism which have been absorbed by Wicca were developed not in Northern Europe, but around the Mediterranean and Near East. A key feature of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Paganism around the time of Christ and the few hundred years before and after was a desire to unify the multifarious God and Goddess forms. An early and unsuccessful attempt was around 1,400 BC, when the Pharaoh Akhenaton tried to abolish the many Goddesses and Gods of the Egyptian pantheon and replace them with the worship of the Sun disc Aton.

More than a thousand years later Egypt saw another religious reform when Macedonian followers of Alexander the Great, who had conquered Egypt, in 305 BC on his death, obtained the Egyptian throne. Keen to establish his hold on the people, the new Pharaoh, Ptolemy I, commissioned two priests to produce a synthesis of the Egyptian and Greek faiths and Gods and Goddesses which would be acceptable to the Egyptians and to the Greek newcomers. This resulted in the establishing as the chief Goddess and Gods, Isis, her consort under the name

of Sarapis and their child Horus, with Anubis as Guardian of the Dead. Isis' original husband, the more well-known Osiris, proved too complicated in his attributions to align to any one Olympian God and in theory Sarapis was elevated to the superior role, but Osiris retained his hold on the indigenous population and also his place within the initiation rites of the Mysteries of Isis.

This reformed Egyptian religion, with its Greek gloss, spread rapidly across the Mediterranean and devotion to the Goddess Isis in particular was widespread throughout the Roman Empire. Evidence of Isis worship has been found as far away from Egypt as Britain, with London and York being principal centres. It contained many features which Wicca has today. The religion of Isis was a mystery religion which promised the initiate inner transformation and expansion of consciousness and the rites and initiatory system combined religion, magic, the processes of spiritual growth and healing.

Another major thrust in Paganism at this time came from philosophers around the Mediterranean, Greek and Greek influenced Neoplatonists whose ideas have influenced magical and Wiccan thinking to the present day. They too were seeking to move away from the concept of the Gods and Goddesses as being separate entities into a more unified concept, but they sought this not in one supreme personification, Isis the Great Mother, but in a more abstract concept of the divine which was beyond male and female, the One.

Plotinus also made explicit the correspondence between metaphysical realities and psychological states of consciousness. Like modern occultists and many psychologists, Plotinus believed that only part of thought was conscious and that we had many levels of awareness. He considered that our psychological make-up corresponded to the world around us. Like the Earth, we have a physical body; we have a soul which is the level of everyday consciousness; and we also have higher intuitive faculties which correspond to the intellect. The higher intuitive faculties were seen to be dormant in most human beings but were gradually awakened by a series of incarnations.

The aim of Neoplatonists was spiritual development either through the study of philosophy, or through theurgy, a system of ritual purification based on the magical ideas of the universe. Great care was taken to reconcile their more sophisticated reli-

gious thinking with traditional practices and whilst many Neoplatonists favoured vegetarianism, they were willing to participate in eating the sacrificial victim on festivals where animal sacrifice was practised.

Another strand of Greek philosophical thought which has influenced modern Paganism is the world view of the Stoics. While the Neoplatonists saw the divine as being outside the created world or transcendent, the Stoics believed that the universe was itself divine and that human beings were part of this divinity. In other words the universe and humanity were permeated by divinity or the divine was immanent. The divergence of view between whether the divine is beyond or within nature is present within Wicca today.

CLASSICAL WITCHCRAFT

All this seems rather removed from the traditional image of witchcraft — the witch with her cauldron and broomstick. What is the connection between the Goddess worshippers of the New Stone Age, the priesthood of Isis in their beautiful temples by the banks of the Nile and the wizened crone of a witch stirring her cauldron in the rural villages of medieval England?

Long before Christianity, there was a dichotomy between the Paganism of the temples and the witchcraft of the woods and groves. Pre-Christian Paganism had two major strands within it, that of what could be called the Apollonian thread of the intellectual and philosophical approach to religion, which could be said to look towards the light, the conscious mind and the rites of the Sun; of this Neoplatonism was a part. The other strand was the Dionysian, the way of ecstatic vision and trance, the loss of individual consciousness and its merging into nature; these were the rites of darkness (but not evil), the rites of the Moon.

In later Apollonian Paganism, many of the practices of the earlier Dionysian stages were thrust out of the mainstream of Paganism. These include much of the ecstatic worship which was associated with the worship of Pan, who had his origins in the Paleolithic horned hunting God, and with the Great Mother and her son/lover — Ishtar and Tammuz, Cybele and Attis whose body was torn apart and eaten by his priestess fol-

lowers. The vegetarianism of the priesthood of Isis and the Neoplatonists had no place here.

However, the Horned God did not die and the continued existence of the Horned God in a form similar to that worshipped 7,000 years before by the Paleolithic peoples of Europe is a tribute to the strength of this archetype in the human psyche.

By the time of Christ, around the Mediterranean such Dionysian religious practices had already been thrust out of the mainstream of official state religion and had become associated with witchcraft. In Greece the conflict between the older religious practices, now deemed sorcery or witchcraft, and the newer rationalistic patriarchal religion is epitomized by Odysseus's encounter with Circe, the sorceress with the age-old power ascribed to witches of shape-changing. The fate of Odysseus's men was to be turned into swine, a remnant of the Paleolithic totem dance where the worshippers identified with the totem animal and in psychological, if not in physical reality, became deer, bears etc and entered into psychic communion with their totem animal which was to supply their food.

In Roman times, witches were greatly feared, particularly the witches of Thessaly. The practices of the witches were described as 'drawing down the Moon' or in other words Moon worship. Witches were described as going out to collect herbs with bronze sickles in the darkness with bare feet, loose hair, and their robes pulled up around their waists. On the dates of the larger festivals they went out on the hills to dance and chant and to tear apart the sacrificial victim, a black lamb. On the feast of Lupercalia on February 15, young men also took part, covering their bodies with goat skins and their faces with masks. Goats were sacrificed and people whipped with straps made from the hides. The gathering of herbs was to enable poisons to be made and sympathetic magic of a malefic kind was carried out against enemies.

The Roman historian Livy in his history of Rome¹ describes the 'affair of the Bacchanalia' which occurred in 186 BC. The rites of Bacchus had been imported into the Italian peninsula by the Romans' predecessors, the Etruscans. This Dionysian feast involved:

... initiatory rites... To the religious element in them were added the delights of wine and feasts, that the mind of a larger number might be attracted. When wine had inflamed their minds, and night

and the mingling of males and females, youth with age, had destroyed every sentiment of modesty, all varieties of corruption first began to be practised, since each one had at hand the pleasure answering to that to which his nature was more inclined...

The orgiastic aspect of these rites were severely frowned upon by the Apollonian oriented Roman society and the adherents of the cults of Bacchus were accused of plotting against the state in much the same way as medieval witches were later seen as plotting the downfall of James I. In Rome decrees against the Bacchanalia were published and the God's adherents were imprisoned or executed.

THE MYSTERIES

The patriarchal Gods of Greece and the cult of reason were a necessary stage in the development of the intellect, but this type of religion, while it appeals to the conscious mind, does not satisfy the larger part of the human psyche which is not intellectual. Greek rationality had little time for the ecstatic part of religion. Similarly, the religion of Egypt had become highly formalized, a matter of precise rites and observances, the secret of which was held by an extremely powerful priesthood.

For some the gap between the solar and lunar oriented aspects of religion was bridged by the mysteries of Isis and of Eleusis. These rites, like those of Dionysus, took place by night, but their aim was not to return the initiate to an earlier pre-conscious level of human consciousness, but to awaken higher consciousness. They were a middle way which combined the best of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, but also a higher way, for humanity must have both Sun and Moon, night and dark, conscious and unconscious if it is to find its spiritual destiny.

The best description of the Isis Mysteries which we have today comes from a novel called *The Golden Ass*, written by Lucius Apuleius around AD 150. The novel is partly autobiographical and could be described as the Isis mysteries' equivalent of Gerald Gardner's *High Magic's Aid* by which an enthusiastic initiate conveys something of the mysteries he has entered. Apuleius' book is about the spiritual transformation which he underwent from being an animal, an ass, that is, a man out of contact with his inner divinity, to being an initiate of Isis.

However, although the mysteries were very beneficial, they were not available to the majority of people, only to those rich enough to pay the fees and buy the necessary ritual clothing and well-educated enough to understand the complex rites. For those who were either socially or geographically removed from the centres of developing religious thought, the peasants of the Mediterranean and for those in the less civilized north of Europe, where the less accommodating climate meant that hunting remained a primary means of obtaining food, the older ways retained their hold. In Britain and the less civilized northern Europe the older forms of religious and ecstatic shamanistic practices derived from the Paleolithic era remained much more part of the mainstream religion. Here the dichotomy between magical practices and the mainstream of religion was not a major issue, although there has always been a recognition of the practice of malefic magic which thwarted the aims of society and was condemned.

THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

The more sophisticated interpretations of Paganism continued throughout Europe and the Near East, alongside the more traditional forms of worship of the Triple Mother Goddess and the Dual God of light and darkness, under their many different names until the imposition of Christianity on the Roman Empire by the Emperor Constantine in about AD 324. Christianity, true to its Judaic parent, was an intolerant masculine monotheism and there could be no question of co-existence alongside the older religions.

Most other new religious movements had come to relatively satisfactory accommodations with older religious forms. Christianity, however, took the view that it was right and all other interpretations of the divine were wrong. The attitude was uncompromising and Christians such as Saint Augustine² preached definite views about the Pagan religions: the worship of Pagan Gods was the worship of devils. Only the Christian tri-form God was truly God and all other personifications of the divine, both Goddesses and Gods, were evil.

The fate of some God and Goddess forms was kinder than that of others. In the Mediterranean, the local deities tended

to become absorbed as saints. The peasants could no longer make offerings to Apollo, but they could pay honour instead to St Apollinarius. However, many Gods and the Horned God in particular were relegated to the status of demons and Christianity succeeded — for a time — in making the 'Gods of the Old Religion the Devil of the New'. In Britain and northern Europe where the older God forms had a strong hold, this was a particular problem.

Christianity took a different attitude to its older religious cousins than most previous new religions, it also had a different attitude to magic. In the Mediterranean where Christianity achieved its maturity as a religion, the climate of opinion already condemned a number of religious and magical practices which were still part of the main tribal religions in northern Europe, but the difference between this Pagan outlook on religion, and indeed on life in general, and the Christian outlook was that for the latter all magical practices were proscribed rather than only those of the ecstatic kind.

Christianity condemned all magic — spells, incantations, herbalism, divination, weather lore — the whole gamut of activities by which human beings had sought to control their environment. The Christian attitude was that these activities were not the prerogative of ordinary men and women who believed they had the power to do them, but the prerogative of the Church with its monopoly on the line to God. The Church recognized well the association between these activities and Paganism. Augustine was very opposed to the magical arts which he saw as seducing people into the worship of Pagan Gods. In fact, it was difficult to practise magic as a Christian because the Church forbade it. Assistance with the weather could be obtained by praying to a saint but carrying out a bit of free enterprise sympathetic magic was frowned upon.

Christianity was a missionary religion which spread to the furthest corners of the Empire and by AD 240 Roman writers wrote about Christianity having penetrated as far as some parts of Britain. However, there is little evidence of Christian Churches in Britain during this period and the Christian artifacts which have been found occur in villas in the form of mosaics. Christianity was a minority religion among the Romanized community. With the invasion of the Saxons between AD 500 and 600, Christianity was suppressed in southern and eastern England,

but the Celtic Christian Church in the north and west of the country continued to develop its own practices. In AD 597 Augustine came to Britain to convert the Saxons and to reconcile the Celtic and Roman churches, and Christianity had a strong foothold in Britain from AD 600 in that the Saxon kings became nominally Christian.

Christianity eventually became the predominant religion of Britain and Europe, having lost its hold over its own Near Eastern birthplace in the birth throes of a newer monotheism, Islam. However, the enforcement of Christianity was difficult and frequently followed the pattern of its younger brother in masculine monotheism — conversion by the sword. St Olaf made his subjects choose between conversion through baptism or death and not unnaturally this forced allegiance can only have been nominal. Charlemagne in Europe conducted mass baptisms of Saxons by driving them at sword point through rivers previously hallowed further upstream by his bishops. Others such as Redwald, King of the East Saxons, while adhering to Christianity, had not quite grasped the principles of monotheism and kept two altars, one for the new God and one for the Gods of his fathers.

In Britain, the Paganism had been less influenced by the sophisticated magical and religious beliefs of the Mediterranean and Egypt. The Paganism which the Christian missionaries found still had its roots in Paleolithic Pagan practices and centred on the priest-shaman in his animal skins and sympathetic magic. These old ways died hard and bishops produced a steady flow of books of penances over the next few hundred years which condemned the continuing Paganism.

In the latter half of the seventh century Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury³, condemned celebrating the New Year by the Pagan practice of dressing in the guise of the stag or bull God; sacrificing to 'devils', (i.e. the Old Gods); and feasting in Pagan temples. The penances given to those who disobeyed were not very severe and do not seem to have discouraged the errant Pagans. In the middle of the eighth century, it was the turn of Egbert, Archbishop of York⁴, who condemned making offerings to 'devils' (i.e. the Old Gods); witchcraft; divination; swearing vows at wells, trees and stones; and gathering herbs with non-Christian incantations.

In other parts of Europe it was the Goddess who proved hard

to suppress. To satisfy those who leaned towards the female aspect of the deity, in the fifth century the Christian Church had authorized the veneration of the Virgin Mary, not as Goddess but not as entirely human, something in between, the 'Panagia Theotokus' or 'Mother of God', but this did not satisfy those of more Pagan outlook. The Goddess continued to be worshipped under the names of Diana and Herodias and the various bishops complained of this through to the tenth century when the Bishop of Verona, a Frank named Ratherius⁵, complained that many people were claiming Herodias as their queen or Goddess and declaring that a third of the world worshipped her.

In Britain, edicts against Pagan practices continued to be promulgated. In AD 959 the Ecclesiastical Canon of King Edgar⁶ forbade well worship, man worship, spells and consorting with trees and stones. Similarly King Cnut later forbade worshipping Pagan Gods; Pagan practices with wells, stones and trees; and the love of witchcraft. These pronouncements are useful in that they tell us something about the religious practices of Paganism at the time.

What the Church later lumped together as 'witchcraft' had two elements to it — Pagan worship and magic. The worship of the old Pagan Gods involved 'man-worshipping' (i.e. the age-old practice of revering the Godhead incarnated for the purposes of the rite in a particular human being who would act as priest or priestess), and the worship of the divine as immanent in nature, especially in evocative objects such as wells, trees and standing stones (the antipathy to which, of Puritans in particular, has unfortunately destroyed a number of our ancient monuments). Magic involved attempts to use, for socially beneficial purposes or otherwise, the powers of the human mind harnessed by spells and the powers of herbs and other natural objects, and divination.

The concept of two strands of religion, the more intellectual 'solar oriented' Apollonian side which appeals to the conscious mind, and the more lunar, intuitive, ecstatic Dionysian side which looks for a release of the sense of individuality, is important for understanding why Paganism continued to appeal. While Christianity could accommodate the former, a religion which emphasizes the control of the unconscious by the conscious mind and the suppression of sexuality could not accom-

moderate the joy to be gained through the Dionysian-type rites.

The Church was not itself immune to the lure of Paganism. In 1282 a priest in Inverkeithing in Scotland⁷ was brought before the local bishop for leading his flock in a fertility dance around a phallic figure of the God. The bishop's reaction seems to have been rather mild and the priest kept his parish. There was also Paganism at more senior levels. In 1301, 1,000 years after Constantine had declared Christianity to be the official religion of the Roman Empire, including Britain, the Bishop of Coventry was accused before the Pope of doing homage to the devil (i.e. paying reverence to an animal-skinned God) and with sorcery⁸. The case dragged on for two years with the Bishop receiving the support of his King, Edward I, and he was acquitted.

Paganism seemed prevalent among the English kings. The year 1100 marked the death of King Rufus. Rufus was the grandson of 'Robert the Devil', Duke of Normandy, whose mother was said to have conceived him after making love to the devil who appeared to her in a wood in the guise of her husband. If the story is true it is certain that what the Duke and Duchess of Normandy were doing was enacting the sacred marriage between the Horned God and the Goddess rather than devil worship. Rufus was no lover of the Church and it is interesting that his effigy among the kings in York Cathedral is one of the few which looks out to the north door of the Cathedral which in churches is traditionally called the witches' door; King John, who also did not see eye to eye with the Church being another.

Margaret Murray⁹ has claimed that King Rufus's death was a ritual king-slaying and there are a number of suspicious circumstances. Rufus's death took place on Lammas, which is the festival when the Corn King was traditionally slain and his body strewn on the fields to ensure their fertility in the coming year. The remnants of this tradition are found in the folk song 'John Barleycorn'. He was supposedly killed by an unfortunate accident involving a stray arrow shot by one of his own huntsmen, William Tyrell. Rufus however seems to have anticipated this accident and had put his affairs in order before he set off on the hunting expedition which killed him.

Rufus's death was also anticipated by others and was talked of in mainland Europe and in England before the event. Before he left, he was sent a warning by a monk who had had a precog-

nitive dream that it was dangerous for him to go. This he ignored but he sent the monk a large reward to thank him for his advice. Rufus had given William Tyrell new arrows for the occasion and during the hunt called to Tyrell: 'Draw, draw your bow for the Devil's sake'. Tyrell drew and the fatal arrow hit the King who then broke it off and fell upon it, thus hastening his death.

Paganism is also associated with later English kings. Edward III in 1349 founded the Order of the Garter after the garter of the Countess of Salisbury, who was known as 'The Fair Maid of Kent', fell from her while the King was dancing with her. Margaret Murray suggests that the embarrassment with which the 'Fair Maid' viewed the incident was because the wearing of garters was associated with witchcraft. The motto the King gave the new order, 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' (roughly 'Evil to him who evil thinks') was thought by Murray to be deliberately ambiguous and to be a declaration by the King of his own support for the Old Faith.

The Pagan associations continued with Edward IV who was married secretly on Beltane 1464 to Elizabeth Woodville whom he had met in Whittleby Forest under a tree known as the Queen's Oak and it must be wondered if they were engaged in the same activity as the Duke and Duchess of Normandy a few hundred years earlier. Elizabeth Woodville's mother, the Duchess of Bedford, was later accused of having used witchcraft to secure the marriage and their children Edward V and the Duke of York became the princes in the tower who were reputedly murdered by Richard III.

THE CHURCH AND THE DEVIL

For the first thousand years of Christianity's existence, the penalties for witchcraft had usually been relatively mild. The picture began to change, however, when in the thirteenth century the Church formally recognized witchcraft to be a heresy and a sect. As all good Christians knew, those who did not agree with the Catholic Church, the heretics, were worshippers of the Devil. All the religious and magical practices on which the Catholic Church did not bestow its blessings, other Christian sects, Paganism and magic, were now lumped together and, whatever their aims and virtues, were declared to be evil and

aspects of Devil worship. The Christian Church was Devil-obsessed.

This was a new psychological departure. The Jewish Old Testament had shown little interest in the concept of the Devil, or Satan, 'the adversary'. The God Yahweh was thought of as a purely tribal God superior to those of other tribes: 'our God is bigger than your God'. Later when Yahweh's followers increased his claims, he came to be regarded as an omnipotent God. Since he was omnipotent he was responsible for everything that happened in the world, whether good or ill. In the sixth century BC, Yahweh was credited with saying:

I form the light, and create darkness
I make peace and create evil
I the Lord do all these things.

(Isaiah 45:7)

By the second century BC, however, this concept had evolved and the Jews saw other metaphysical entities as producing evil. An apocryphal body of literature had been produced which was full of references to evil spirits and fallen angels who were engaged in thwarting Yahweh's plan for the world. Some of the references are to Belial, a name probably related to the Sun God, Bel. The Testament of Levy, an apocryphal part of the Old Testament, asks: 'Do you choose darkness or light, the law of the Lord or the works of Belial?'¹⁰ Given the order of the words and origin of Bel as a God of light, it seems either a trick question or a Freudian slip!

In the New Testament the concept of the forces of evil being at war with the forces of good developed further and one arch-demon, Satan or the Devil, is portrayed as tempting Jesus in the desert and seeking to turn Him from His true path. For Jesus's follower St Paul, Satan was the ruler of all those who had not espoused the Christian religion, and the Gods of Rome are not Gods, but demons and servants of the arch-demon, Satan. The identification between Pagan Gods and demons became a fundamental part of the Christian theology.

Why should the Church suddenly take concerted actions against those who it considered to be its enemies? Professor Norman Cohn in *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* sees instigation of the persecution of heretics and witches as the result of a crisis of confidence in

the Christian Church. Its first thousand years of history had mainly been a story of success and increasing power. With the rise of Islam in the East and growing intellectual scepticism in the West, the Christian Church was losing its grip. If the Church's power was being challenged, there could only be one challenger, for the Church was the Church of God. Anyone or any group which challenged it must be in league with the Devil and performers of *maleficium*, evil-doing.

Heresies had existed throughout the history of Christianity, but it was not until the eleventh century that the Christian Church in western Europe felt sufficiently threatened to take concerted action against heretics. The Church could not conceive that any of its rivals could be practising a genuine religion and in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, heretics such as the Waldensians, who threatened the power of the Christian Church by such vicious practices as espousing poverty, were accused of worshipping the Hebrew fallen archangel Lucifer. The first 'Sabbat exposé' story was written by a monk called Paul, not about witches, but about a French heretical sect based in Orleans who¹¹:

...came together on certain nights at an appointed hour, each carrying a light. And they recited the names of demons as in a litany; until suddenly they saw the Devil descend among them in the guise of some animal or other.

It is not surprising that the Church should feel threatened by free enterprise excursions into what it saw as its exclusive territory, the regulating of man's relations with the worlds invisible. The Church's behaviour was similar to that of other dictatorships when certain groups oppose their power and question their legitimacy. It was not only witches who were persecuted. The Church had successively persecuted Jews, heretics and then (lastly) witches. The fact that it did not, like Nazi Germany, persecute all minorities simultaneously can be attributed to poorer organization, poorer communication systems, a less hurried age and a slower pace of life — the Church could afford to wait.

In rural communities, all villages had their *wise women* and *cunning men* who would act as doctors and midwives, who would cure a sick cow, solve the love problems of young men

and women, advise those in distress and perform weather magic. Until officialdom espoused the cause of witch-hunting and persecutions became systematic, any actions against witches tended to be local activities of the spontaneous, lynch-mob sort which occurred when times were hard or when things went wrong in people's lives and they wanted someone to blame.

Psychologists talk about 'locus of control'. 'Locus' is Latin for place and if people have an external locus of control, they tend to attribute the causes of their good and bad fortunes to people or things outside themselves — to good or bad luck. Those with an internal locus of control tend to think that they make their own destiny; if things go wrong it is their own fault and if things go well it is because they have talent or have worked hard.

Simple peoples tend to have an external locus of control and ascribe the good and bad things which happen to them, not to their own actions, but to the actions of outside forces — spirits, angels, saints, Gods, demons, ghosts, etc. Medieval and earlier Christians tended to ascribe the events in their lives to outside forces. If they were good events they were the work of God and if they were bad events they were the work of the Devil. Since the Devil was seen as requiring human servants to effect his unscrupulous desires, when something went wrong in people's lives, they blamed the Devil and looked for someone who could be acting as the Devil's agent — a practitioner of maleficium, a witch.

The accusations made against witches are those which express the fears of a largely agricultural society — blighting crops; causing animals to die or miscarry; causing illness, miscarriage and death in human beings; and raising storms. These are the negative uses of the powers of the witch which on the other hand could be used beneficially to produce good harvests, cure sick animals and people, increase fertility of animals and humans, and produce rain in drought.

Throughout Europe, in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the illegal harassment of witches was translated into a concerted campaign by the Christian Church against those whom it saw as its enemies. In mounting its campaign the beneficial side of witchcraft was one which the Church ignored. The Church had the monopoly on good magic which could be accessed by, for instance, paying for masses, by the priest's

blessing of the crops and praying to the saints. Anyone else seeking to provide these services was evil.

In 1484 Pope Innocent III issued a Papal Bull¹² which denounced witchcraft and declared that witches were blighting fertility by associating with demons. This was followed in 1486 by the publication of what became the bible of the inquisitors, the infamous *Malleus Maleficarum* or *Hammer of the Witches*, published by Kramer and Sprengler. These were the opening moves which led to the terrors of the witch trials and the insanity of the persecutions which swept Europe and America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The success of the Inquisition was aided by the fact that denouncing one's neighbours as witches became a more popular pastime. The Church's approval made witch denouncement and witch persecutions a socially acceptable and worthy activity and the fact that the property of condemned witches was confiscated and distributed to the accusers and persecutors was another incentive. However, there were other reasons. Witchcraft accusations did not increase because people were suffering from mass paranoia or they were suddenly more frightened of witches, but as Keith Thomas points out in *Religion and the Decline of Magic*¹³, due to changes in legal procedure.

Until the fifteenth century, in many parts of Europe, legal proceedings were fought not between society, or the Crown and the accused, but between accuser and accused in the same way that civil cases are conducted today. Accusers had to conduct their cases without legal assistance and if they failed to convince the judges, they were liable to suffer the 'talion', that is, the same penalty as would have been imposed on the accused had the case been proved. The barriers which the talion provided to malicious accusations were deplored by the *Malleus Maleficarum* which complained that in the town of Koblenz where the accusatory form of criminal procedure still existed, the populace were regrettably unenthusiastic about denouncing witches.

THE MAGICAL REVIVAL

The move to attack witches was a move on the part of the Church to attack any rival group which threatened its power.

It coincided with the Renaissance where developments in intellectual thinking had made people question the dogmas of the Church, a process hastened by the corruption into which the Church had fallen. For some of the disaffected, the solution was to adopt one of the burgeoning new brands of Christianity. For others who were looking for something which orthodox Christianity could not offer, there were other avenues to explore and from the beginning of the fourteenth century, a number of books on ritual magic began to appear.

Treatises such as that of Michael Scot, the astrologer and tutor of the Emperor Frederic II, gave lists of demons and methods of invoking them and imprisoning them in rings and bottles. Scot's book¹⁴ described demons as fallen angels. The aim of ritual magic was to subjugate them to the practitioner's will and press them into his service. The demons could then be compelled to procure for the magician various gifts and powers which varied in moral 'whiteness' from finding buried treasure and curing disease to inflicting madness on one's enemies. The magician operated within a magic circle drawn with his consecrated sword which formed a force field which no demon could cross and fundamental to the rituals was the use of certain verbal formulae, the names of God and other words of power, which demons were compelled to obey.

Ritual magic took place in a devout religious framework. The grimoires stressed that the magician must be spiritually pure and believe in God, both for the success of his operations and for his personal safety during these hazardous enterprises. Scrupulous personal cleanliness was required before the rituals (which made ritual magic a rather socially worthwhile activity in a generally unhygienic age) and the practitioner's magic weapons had similarly to be clean and pure.

Developments in ritual magic were further stimulated by the translation of a number of Greek and Latin texts which reopened western Europe to the influence of Pagan thought. The Paganism which stimulated the magical revival was not the Paganism of the witch-cult, with its emphasis on the Horned God and the ecstatic, Dionysian side of Paganism, but the Apollonian Paganism of the Neoplatonists with their emphasis on the practice of magic as a system of spiritual development. The most important body of magical writings to appear in the fifteenth century was the *Corpus Hermeticum*. This was mis-

takenly believed to be of very ancient origin, the work of a mythical mage called Hermes Trismegistus. However, in reality the writings dated from the first to third centuries after Christ and were primarily Neoplatonist in outlook.

The work of translating the *Corpus Hermeticum* was begun in 1450 by a priest, Masilio Ficino, who started to experiment with some of the *Corpus Hermeticum's* magical practices. However, he was careful to try to keep on the right side of the Church by emphasizing that his magic was natural magic dealing with the powers of the planetary spheres upon earthly things, rather than more dubious dealings with angels and demons.

Ficino's ideas were taken up by others, many of whom were less cautious in their approach. A notable successor was Pico della Mirandola, a young man who had the advantage of knowing Hebrew, and who was able to introduce concepts from the Jewish mystical and magical system known as the qabalah into the framework of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Where Ficino had stopped at the stage of trying to use the natural (i.e. non-divine and non-angelic forces), Pico della Mirandola favoured the use of magical ceremonies to contact particular aspects of the deity or particular angelic forces.

This was the beginning of the qabalah's great influence on western European magical thought and in many branches of modern Wicca, witches have incorporated qabalistic concepts into their beliefs and practices. In the qabalah, the divine is seen as manifesting in 10 different aspects or emanations, each of which is associated with a particular archangel and angelic choir. These are also in turn related to particular planetary bodies. The *Corpus Hermeticum* listed vast numbers of symbols which were associated with particular planets. Each planet was associated with particular flowers, perfumes, precious stones etc. The incorporation of qabalistic concepts allowed a whole system of correspondences to be put together which dealt with all aspects of creation and divinity.

The use of the qabalah by the occult fraternity is akin to the use of Latin by medieval scholars. It is a universal language through which people from different disciplines can communicate and a map onto which any mystical and magical system can be grafted. Whether one is Pagan, Christian, Jew, Muslim or whatever, the concepts of one's particular version of the divine

and of the nature of the universe can be explained in qabalistic terms.

Magical ideas continued to evolve throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1531 Cornelius Agrippa, a native of Florence, published his *De Occulta Philosophia* which contained lists of magical correspondences between the planets and earthly activities and objects such as precious stones. Late in the century, the Englishman Reginald Scot published *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* which was an unusual study made from the point of view of a sceptic which made explicit the connection between ritual magic and witchcraft and included both witchcraft practices and magical rites. It also includes some rather amusing accounts of conjuring tricks.

Although they were unorthodox in their activities, the writers of these ritual magic texts had stayed with the framework of Christian and Jewish belief. However, more radical religious ideas were abroad such as those of two monks, Thomasso Campanella and Giordano Bruno. Campanella's life showed the pattern of vicissitudes which could be expected of anyone who attempted to follow their personal convictions in those times. His career included nearly 30 years in prison, but seems also to have included such bizarre high spots as in 1628 performing magic with Pope Urban VIII in order to ward off the possible malefic effects of eclipses of the Sun and Moon.

Giordano Bruno was the more adventurous, or foolhardy, depending on one's perspective. He was not content to pay lip-service to Christianity and believed that a new religion should be formed which would overthrow the corruption into which Christianity had fallen. His excursions into magic led him to develop a religious and magical system based on ancient Egyptian concepts and with a naivety verging on lunacy, he attempted to convince the Pope of the merits of his new ideas.

The Church had never shared the magicians' view of the high-minded religiosity of their practices. The Church's view was that by practising ritual magic, the magicians were giving to demons the homage which was due only to God and in the early 1320s Pope John XXII took action. A Papal Bull¹⁵ was published which gave magicians eight days in which to abandon the practice of ritual magic or be branded as heretics; a fate which would make them subject to the unpleasant attentions of the Inquisition.

Despite this official opposition to ritual magic, compared to witches, trials against magicians were few. An inhibiting factor may have been the different social strata from which the witches and the magicians were drawn. While witches were often, though not always, peasants, the magicians were drawn from the powerful and literate classes of society. A number were themselves priests of the Church and some of the Popes were themselves implicated in magical practices. Giordano Bruno's religious ideas however went too far for the Church and on 16 February 1600 he paid the price for his impetuosity and was burned at the stake.

THE RISE OF THE MAGICAL ORDERS

The Church was fighting a losing battle in trying to hold back those developments in human thought which led, on the one hand, to that empirical study of the world around us which is modern science and on the other to the empirical study of the human mind and spirit which gave rise to the study of magic, and later to the development of the science of psychology. In the more open climate of post-Reformation Europe, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw sole practitioners banding together in magical societies, such as the Martinists, the Illuminati, the Rosicrucians and the Freemasons.

The magical societies were interested primarily in the spiritual development aspects of magic, rather than the material and other rewards of demon subjugation. The Freemasons had their origins in the medieval guilds and, while the magical element remains, modern Freemasons are better-known for their charitable works, their official dinners and their more or less reputable self-help activities. However, in the seventeenth century Freemasonry was operating as a magical initiatory system which, like the mysteries of Isis and witchcraft, offered three levels of initiation which were known as Entered Apprentices, Fellow Craftsmen and Master Masons.

The formation of the magical societies marked a new openness for, while the practices of the societies were secret, their existence was not and for the first time in many centuries the magical arts were being taught in an organized fashion. An important magical publication which appeared at the turn of

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was *The Magus* by Francis Barrett. This very influential book consisted of a magical compendium of correspondences, talismans, various aspects of 'natural magic', astrology, alchemy and the qabalah, but its most unusual aspect was its advertisement:

The Author of this work respectfully informs those who are curious . . . that, having been indefatigable in his researches into those sublime Sciences, of which he has treated at large in this Book, that he gives private instructions and lectures upon any of the above-mentioned Sciencies. . . Those who become Students will be initiated into the choicest operations of Natural Philosophy, Natural Magic, the Cabala, Chemistry, the Talismanic Art, Hermetic operations of Natural Philosophy, Astrology, Physiognomy, & co. & co. Likewise they will acquire the knowledge of the Rites, Mysteries, Ceremonies, and Principles of the ancient Philosophers, Magi, Cabalists, Adepts, & co. — The purpose of this school (which will consist of no greater number than Twelve Students) [i.e. a coven of thirteen including Barrett] being to investigate the discovery of whatever may conduce to the perfection of Man; to bring the Mind to a contemplation of the Eternal Wisdom; to promote the discovery of both in respect of ourselves and others; the study of religion here, in order to secure to ourselves felicity hereafter; and finally, the promulgation of whatever may conduce to the general happiness and welfare of mankind.¹⁶

These were worthy aims indeed and although couched in language of an earlier age, they are not dissimilar to those of us who teach the mysteries in the Aquarian Age.

The interest in magic displayed by sections of the English upper classes in the late eighteenth century went hand in hand with another feature of the eighteenth century which was important for magic and witchcraft, which was the development of historical scholarship and the science of archaeology. These, together with the opportunities for foreign travel which a more settled political situation and material wealth brought to certain stratas of society, opened people's minds even more to the religious and magical practices of the pre-Christian era. While the aristocracy of earlier centuries had been trained in the arts of war and could barely read and write their own names, their heirs were taught Latin, Greek and the history of art. The Pagan pantheons became common knowledge among the educated and such study led inevitably to a reappraisal of Christianity's place in the scheme of things.

The country houses and gardens of eighteenth century

England and Europe were rapidly filled with statues of classical Gods and Goddesses of the Greek and Roman pantheons. These were followed in the nineteenth century by Egyptian antiquities and the opening of the great museums. Archaeology and developments in the historical dating process also led to the inevitable conclusions of the evolutionists and the realization that the Christian version of history was wrong. Thousands of years before Christ, civilizations and other Gods had flourished. There was a new romanticism about the history of Britain's Pagan past. Drawings depicting Stonehenge in its original glory were in circulation and there was a new interest in the activities of the Druids.

The latter half of the nineteenth century saw the founding of the Theosophical Society, which was not a ritual working group but a spiritual and philosophical teaching organization founded by Helena Blavatsky. Madame Blavatsky, as she was known, produced two very influential works *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. These combined Buddhist and Hindu ideas from the East with western Neoplatonism, producing an eclectic combination of spiritual doctrine which included the notions of reincarnation and karma.

The law of karma was held to be that the circumstances of one's incarnations were affected by the deeds of one's past lives and physical incarnation would continue until we had resolved the karma of our past mistakes. At the end of the necessary physical lives we would live on in spiritual spheres. Some of those in humanity who had already achieved this perfected state continued to influence human affairs and acted as guides or Masters. Some of the crude sin and punishment interpretations of karma and the superiority of non-material existence as opposed to future incarnation in the body are greeted with less favour in Wicca, but many of these nineteenth century theosophical ideas on reincarnation and karma have been absorbed into the thinking of Wiccan and magical groups.

Another important group was the Golden Dawn which was founded by S L MacGregor Mathers. This was a ritual working group based around initiatory rituals which led to an inner order, The Rose of Ruby and the Cross of Gold, which aimed to unite the aspirant's higher self with his or her lower nature. The Golden Dawn eventually collapsed through the clashes of ego of its members who seemed to be somewhat unsuccessful in

achieving the self-development to which they aspired. However, a number of other magical groups were spawned through the pioneering work of the Order.

WITCHCRAFT REAPPRAISED

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries marked a new interest in the witch persecutions of a few hundred years earlier. There were three major stances: the Christian: witches existed and they were in league with the Devil; the psychological: there were no witches and the whole thing was a crazed fantasy dreamed up by churchmen with psychopathological tendencies; and the sociological: it was a way of consolidating the Church's power and oppressing the masses. However, a number of academics challenged these views and a major contribution was made by Egyptologist, archaeologist and folklorist Margaret Murray. Her thesis was that the witch trials were a persecution not of Devil-worshippers, but of Pagans, the remnants of those who had retained their allegiance to the Old Religion.

In English speaking countries, we are accustomed to think of Margaret Murray as the first person to have insight into the true nature of the witch-cult. Indeed her contribution was great and much of what we know about the witch trials has come from the researches of this fascinating woman who lived to the grand age of 100 and through her books *The Witch Cult in Western Europe* and *The God of the Witches*. However, she was not the first to put forward these ideas.

The first modern scholar to put forward the theory that witches were Pagans was Karl Ernst Jarcke¹⁷, a professor of criminal law at the University of Berlin, who from his study of the records of a seventeenth century German witch trial argued that witchcraft was a nature religion which was a survival of pre-Christian Pagan beliefs.

Another slightly more complex theory was put forward a little later, in 1839, by a historian, Franz Josef Mone¹⁸. Mone, who was director of the archives of Baden, also believed that witchcraft was an underground Pagan religion. Mone's thesis was that Germanic tribes who had at one time populated the north coast of the Black Sea had there come into contact with

the cults of Hecate and Dionysus and had absorbed their ecstatic religious practices into a cult which worshipped the goat God through nocturnal orgies, practised magic and had a great knowledge of the use of poisons. The religion was practised only by the lower stratas of society and survived into medieval times where its adherents were persecuted as witches.

A more romantic view of the Pagan cult is portrayed by a French historian, Jules Michelet, in *La Sorciere*, published in 1862¹⁹. Michelet's speculations are based on earlier accounts of Goddess worship in France such as those of John of Salisbury²⁰ who, writing between 1156 and 1159, said:

... they assert that a certain woman who shines by night, or Herodias. ... summons gatherings and assemblies, which attend various banquets. The figure receives all kinds of homage from her servants. ...

Michelet believed that the oppressed peasants met together to celebrate the sabbat by dancing and holding a black mass presided over by a priestess 'with a face like Medea' who ritually mates with the Devil. Michelet does not condemn these practices. He sees them as unfortunate but justifiable given the circumstances of the peasants and of women at the time.

Initially these views, and Margaret Murray's in particular, were widely accepted by scholars who realized that at last something nearer the truth was being said about the witch-cult. More recently, however, some scholars such as Professor Norman Cohn²¹ of the University of Sussex have argued that the witch-cult did not exist.

One argument for this is the stereotyped nature of many of the confessions which were extracted by torture when people were forced to say to the inquisitors whatever the inquisitors wanted to hear. This is undoubtedly true and Margaret Murray's assumptions that all the witch trials were trials of genuine witches are naïve. However, on this basis one could argue that all the other groups such as the Cathars and the Waldensians which the Church persecuted were also figments of its fevered imagination, and they were not.

While Margaret Murray may have had an exaggerated belief as to the extent of the organization of the cult, Professor Cohn's view ignores the evidence obtained from those witches who like many other 'heretics' were happy to adhere to their faith to the

last and went to their deaths as martyrs. The evidence we have for this comes from their persecutors. It was certainly not in the interests of the inquisitors to admit that witches did not repent of their heinous crimes, for just as with political trials under more modern dictatorships, the aim of the proceedings was to produce a signed confession and repentance. The system must be shown as right and all-powerful. Accounts of witch interrogations and trials such as that published by the magistrate Pierre de Lancre in 1612 show however that many witches were quite happy to produce confessions of their Paganism, but they did not repent²²:

When they are seized by Justice they neither weep or shed a single tear, in truth their martyrdom, whether by torture or the gibbet, is so joyful to them that many of them long to be led to execution, and suffer very joyously when they are brought to trial, so much do they long to be with their Devil.

As Margaret Murray²³ comments, this spirit would have been seen as admirable if it were a Christian dying at the hands of Pagans, but by de Lancre it is seen as evidence that witches are 'besotted in his devilish service':

... neither torture nor anguish affright them ... they go to a true martyrdom and death for love of him as gaily as to a festival of pleasure and public rejoicing.

If the witch-cult did not exist, it is curious to find people so keen to be martyred in its name, but Cohn argues that such people were deluded and were not practitioners of the witch-cult, but drug abusers. However, in any Dionysian oriented religion the use of drugs obtained from sources such as 'magic mushrooms' was a legitimate part of the worship, and the knowledge of the uses of these drugs was a staple part of the wise woman's and cunning man's stock in trade. It was not always therefore seen as necessary or even safe and physically possible to attend a witch meeting in order to worship the Goddess and drugs were used to induce ecstatic trances in which the worshipper met with the Goddess in a similar way to the way Christian mystics experienced meetings with their God through fasting. A major aim of religious experience is to achieve changes in consciousness and the short-cut of taking drugs is a temporary method of achieving this. This seems to have been the practice of many adherents of the witch-cult in the same

way that it has been the religious practice of many cultures.

Evidence that the Church had not completely suppressed Paganism in Europe emerged at the end of the nineteenth century in a book by American folklorist Charles Leland called *Aradia or The Gospel of the Witches*. In 1886 Leland had met an Italian fortune-teller and witch from Florence called Maddalena. He seems to have been a charismatic individual who could gain people's trust and as the friendship between Maddalena and Charles Leland grew, she gradually imparted to him secrets which had remained hidden for centuries about the beliefs of the Italian witch tradition which the witches called the Old Religion.

Leland's encounter with Maddalena showed him that not only were the Italian witches practising magical arts and preserving interesting pieces of folklore, but they viewed themselves as practising a Pagan religion which had nothing to do with Christianity. The witches' beliefs owed much to the Gods of Classical Rome and the Etruscan civilization which preceded it. The chief deities were Diana and her daughter by her brother Apollo the Sun, Aradia or Herodias. These two deities were seen as being two aspects of the one Goddess and their names were used fairly interchangeably. Through all the centuries of persecution, the Goddess still lived.

In England, while large-scale organized Paganism had been fairly successfully suppressed by the Church, the craft of magic was preserved in the villages of England by particular families of 'witches', 'cunning men' and 'wise women' who possessed 'powers' and the 'sight'. In places such as East Anglia, which due to poor communications remained relatively isolated until recent times, the Pagan traditions of England endured.

East Anglia was the home of the most well-known of the cunning men, a colourful figure called George Pickingill who was reputed to be the head of nine witch covens. A witch who used the pseudonym of 'Lugh', and who was initiated into one of the covens founded by Pickingill, wrote in *The Cauldron*²⁴ of Beltane 1984 that the New Forest coven into which in 1939 Dorothy Clutterbuck initiated Gerald Gardner may have been one of George Pickingill's covens. In any event, Gerald was later initiated into other Pickingill covens in East Anglia where he gained the status of 'Magister' or High Priest. This was the Craft as popularized by Gerald in his novel, *High Magick's Aid*, and

his non-fiction book *Witchcraft Today*.

The modern religion of Wicca is a mixture of traditional witchcraft and magic. How did modern Wicca emerge in this new form? Lugh believes that much of the work was done by George Pickingill who as well as being an East Anglian cunning man had contacts with magical societies in the Cambridge area including the Masons. Wanting to revamp his witchcraft tradition into a form appropriate to the New Age, Pickingill incorporated rites from the magical societies which had been devised at the turn of the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries, using as their sources what is known of the Classical Mysteries.

Pickingill retained the traditional coven structure with its three degrees of entry. The degrees were marked by initiation rites which had been elaborated using concepts from the magical societies such as the Rosicrucians and Freemasons, who had themselves harked back to the rites of Isis and the Eleusinian Mysteries when devising the ceremonies. While dancing in a circle to raise power was a practice derived from the Paleolithic era, witches did not traditionally use a magic circle cast with a sword. This concept had however merged into the witchcraft tradition and circle dancing now took place in cast and consecrated circles with guardians at each of the four cardinal points.

The use of magic and spells was still part of the tradition, but now these were set into a religious framework which stood half way between the Apollonian and Dionysian forms of Paganism. The orgies which had appealed to our ancestors were not needed in an age which was moving towards greater sexual freedom in everyday life and where population control rather than fertility was the problem which faced society. The concept of the sacred marriage as used by the Classical Mysteries remained as a means of uniting the individual with his or her Godhead, but only as a sacred and private ceremony to be performed on special occasions.

This revamped version of Wicca was more likely to appeal to the educated spiritual seekers of the fast-approaching Aquarian Age. Wicca was steering a middle course between magic and religion, between Dionysian and Apollonian Paganism, and between formalized ritual and creative spontaneity. Another aspect which was likely to appeal to New Age men and women was the emphasis on equality between the sexes and a strong

emphasis on the worship of the Goddess — innovations rather more startling and forward thinking in Pickingill's nineteenth century heyday than they would appear today.

There are interesting connections between Aleister Crowley, one of the magical genuises of the twentieth century, George Pickingill and Wicca. Crowley's genius was flawed and his sexual and drug taking excesses are well recorded. However, while Crowley could not live up to the wisdom of his own tenets, some of these are very wise indeed.

Crowley's magical practices and teachings were based on the motto of Rabelais' Abbey of Thelema: 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law' and the work of the Golden Dawn, of which he was a short-term and disruptive member. Rabelais' motto was not a licence to give unbounded freedom to the ego but an exhortation to find the 'True Will', i.e. the Will of the Higher Self, and to subordinate the personality to this. The path to this unity of the lower and higher selves and their wills was through love and the tenet continues 'Love is the Law, Love under Will'.

Lugh claims that in 1899, while at Cambridge University, Aleister Crowley was initiated into one of George Pickingill's covens. Some Crowley material appears in Wiccan texts and this has led the occult writer Francis King to surmise that Crowley had written the Gardnerian *Book of Shadows*. Those familiar with the styles of Crowley and the *Book of Shadows* will realize that this is not the case, but some of the rituals do incorporate some of Crowley's material.

The initiatory origins of Alex Sanders, the founder of Alexandrian Wicca, are a little obscure. Alex always maintained that he was initiated in his boyhood by his grandmother who was a witch, but doubts have been cast on this by, among others, Janet and Stewart Farrar, two of his own initiates, who claim that Alex was self-initiated²⁵. Many Gardnerians however believe that Alex was initiated in the early 1960s by an initiate of Pat and Arnold Crowther, leaders of a Gardnerian coven in the north of England, and Alex's *Book of Shadows* appears to be basically Gardnerian. Alexandrian and Gardnerian Wicca can therefore be seen as part of the same tradition. Sadly Alex died on Beltane 1988 and his last few months of illness were not such that I felt I could press him for answers to the questions concerning his initiation. The full story may therefore

remain unknown, but there is no doubt that Alex was a very powerful witch and that his tradition is in the occult sense 'properly contacted' and able to bestow Wiccan initiation.

In Wicca we have therefore three major strands of belief and practice. Firstly, the practice of Paganism which, in its later flowerings as the mysteries of Eleusis and Isis and the Neoplatonists of the Mediterranean, was a very sophisticated cult with Apollonian leanings. Then there are the more Dionysian ecstatic and shamanistic practices of less sophisticated forms of Paganism, the Paganism of the woods and groves rather than the Paganism of the temples. Finally, there is magic. In the twentieth century the word witchcraft has come to mean not just a particular form of magic, using incantations and spells, but a whole system of Pagan philosophy and religious belief.

The word 'witch' is a difficult one, full of negative connotations. Recognizing the fear which the word conjures up in the minds of many ordinary people and reading the excesses of the 'popular' press who persist in equating witchcraft with Black Magic, it is a word which might be tempting to discard. I think this would however be a mistake and an affront to those of our ancestors who died for their beliefs. Our task as practitioners of Wicca, as priests and priestesses and witches, must be to rehabilitate the beliefs of our ancestors and to let the truth and beauty of Paganism shine forth through the murk of the misunderstandings of others. Wicca can then take its true and special place among the religions and philosophical systems of today, a link between the past, the present and the future: the Old Religion in the New Age.

2

THE FIRST INITIATION

In order to enter Wicca it is necessary to be initiated. The purpose of the rite of initiation is to effect a spiritual awakening of the initiate and to link him or her to the group mind of Wicca. In addition, it also initiates the individual into a particular coven. Each coven has its own group mind and the initiation ceremony is designed to link the new initiate with this. Many covens will therefore ask already-initiated witches who are joining their coven, perhaps because they have moved to a different area, to undergo a coven initiation ceremony.

In recent years Wiccan writers such as Doreen Valiente and Janet and Stewart Farrar have suggested that people who are unable to contact a Wiccan group could practice self-initiation. Self-initiation is possible, but it is a more difficult path with many stumbling blocks and pitfalls and one which we are reluctant to recommend. Practising Wicca causes spiritual and psychological changes in the practitioner and self-initiation is rather like removing one's own appendix, a last resort which may be necessary if stranded alone in the Australian wilderness hundreds of miles from the nearest doctor, but somewhat fraught with complications.

The analogy is very appropriate in that it is difficult to operate on ourselves because we cannot see properly what we are doing. Similarly it is difficult to guide ourselves through the initial stages of spiritual development without anyone to whom to turn for objective advice and encouragement. In exploring

any new territory it is better to have a guide or at least a map drawn by someone who has been there before.

Traditionally initiation has always been difficult to achieve and if there are barriers placed in the person's way it may be that part of the test is to work to overcome them and to persist patiently until such time as circumstances allow contact to be made with a coven. As a 'second-best' for those who cannot work regularly with a coven, there are covens who will initiate people who can attend group meetings only infrequently and will supervise their development through correspondence. (People who are interested in this can write to the address in the appendix.)

The abilities to perform magic and spiritual growth are gained through hard work and persistence. Spiritual and magical growth can be achieved by the sole practitioner without any kind of initiation ceremony and will be gained through life experience as well as mystical and magical practices. However, what these cannot do, and what self-initiation cannot do, is to open the individual up to a particular Wiccan tradition. This can only be done through initiation conferred by those already within the tradition.

Many people come to their first degree initiation having already opened themselves up to the divine and elemental forces and able to do magic and have spiritual contact with the Gods. These people are considered 'naturals' and are already initiates in the occult sense, although not yet initiates of Wicca. Some naturals have been initiated into witchcraft and the Pagan mysteries in former lives and the effect of these initiations carries over into this one. Others have succeeded in making the inner planes contacts themselves by virtue of their own understanding and experience. For these people the initiation ceremony serves the two latter purposes of initiating them into the Wiccan tradition and into a particular coven.

Those who wish to join covens who have already performed a self-initiation ceremony and have practised a form of witchcraft for a number of years may feel slightly resentful when they are asked to undergo another initiation. This is not however to denigrate what they have already achieved, but to open them to what they have been able to access on their own — the group mind of the coven they wish to join and the wider family of the particular Wiccan tradition they are entering.

Initiation opens us to an expansion of consciousness, but it does not automatically bestow 'powers' and great spiritual insights. It is rather a gateway to a path up a mountain which we must climb; a door into other levels of consciousness, the levels from which psychic and magical powers spring. Initiation is the means of opening the door. Witches often wear the symbol of the Egyptian ankh, the crux ansata, which to the Egyptians was a symbol of everlasting life. However, it is also the key of initiation which opens the gateway into everlasting life. In one of Dion Fortune's invocations she wrote:

Open the door, the door which has no key
The door of dreams whereby men come to thee

The first degree initiate can be considered a student both of Wicca and of him or herself. In the *Book of Shadows*, the candidate for initiation is referred to as a postulant in the same way that those who enter orders of monks and nuns are called postulants. The first Wiccan initiation is the equivalent of when the nun or monk takes preliminary vows and becomes a novice, and the second is the equivalent of the final vows which bind the person for a lifetime. The theosophists and Alice Bailey called the stages Probationer and Accepted Disciple.

The names of the three degrees or grades in Wicca vary slightly with different traditions. In Gardnerian and Alexandrian Craft the first degree initiate is known as a witch and priest or priestess, and the second and third degree initiates as High Priest and Magus or High Priestess and Witch Queen. The first initiation confers initiation into the Craft. The second, which confers the rank of High Priest or High Priestess, is given when someone is competent to conduct rituals and to instruct first degree witches. The third degree is usually given to couples and means that a High Priest and High Priestess are competent to run a coven and take the responsibility for initiating others into Wicca.

Many traditional and hereditary groups do not have the system of three degrees, but instead have two senior people who run the coven, the Master and the Lady, and a third, the Summoner, who is subordinate to them and does much of the administrative work of the coven. These three positions are gained by election either on the part of the coven or by the individuals themselves who decide they are ready to run a

coven. To these groups the concept of levels of initiation into Wicca is alien, but the system of different levels of entry is very old and was a feature of the ancient mystery rites. The mysteries of Isis had three levels of initiation and the mysteries of Mithras considerably more.

Reginald Scot in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, which appeared in 1584¹, describes three levels of admission into witch cult. The first admission ceremony was public, when the candidate was admitted as a novice. For a woman, the second and third ceremonies took place with the High Priest alone when the:

divel givith foorth his hand, and the novice joining hand in hand with him, promiseth to observe and keep all the divel's commandments.

This encounter with the Horned God is celebrated in the second degree initiation of Wicca. The third female initiation was when the High Priest:

requireth homage at hir hands: yea he also telleth hir, that she must grant him both hir bodie and hir soul.

This probably refers to a sexual union with the God incarnate in the High Priest and this is celebrated either symbolically or actually in the third degree initiation of Wicca. What happened to male initiates is not described. Scot records that after the earlier ceremonies, the initiate was responsible for performing magic, but after the third ceremony she had an additional responsibility of recruiting others to the cult. Margaret Murray in *The God of the Witches*² describes only those who have received the second and third stages of initiation as the priesthood.

Margaret Murray also quotes de Lancre, a seventeenth century magistrate involved in witch trials, who made a distinction between witches who practised the natural and sympathetic magic side of witchcraft, but were not necessarily Pagans, and those who were more powerful and were Pagans who adhered to the religion of the Horned God. In modern Wicca all witches fall into the latter category as priests and priestesses of the Old Religion as well as witches.

Wicca is an esoteric religion with an initiatory religious and magical system akin to the Mysteries of Eleusis and Isis. In this Wicca differs from other forms of Paganism which have open

rituals and meetings and can be termed exoteric rather than esoteric religion, and from witches who practise sympathetic magic as a magical art and may also practise a religion such as Christianity or no religion at all. Just as not all Egyptians were initiates of Isis, so all Wiccans are Pagans, but not all Pagans are Wiccans. Many wish to have the worship of the Pagan Gods without the more formal commitment to the priesthood which Wicca demands and both exoteric and esoteric Paganism have important roles.

One departure from the usual three degree system in Wicca has been introduced by Alexandrian covens in the West of England who, prior to the first degree, allow candidates for initiation to attend the rites as passive observers rather than active participants, after having been formally admitted as novices through a neophyte ritual. This is akin to the postulant who seeks entry to monastic orders and there is a similar expectation that neophytes will after a year and a day take the first degree initiation or decide that this is not their path. West Country Alexandrians believe this allows the individual to make a more informed choice about whether or not to proceed with full initiation. Most covens however believe that the willingness to take a step into the unknown is an essential feature of initiation and follow the practice of not allowing anyone into their circles until they undergo the first degree initiation.

There is no set time limit before a would-be witch is initiated. There is a tradition that the candidate should wait at least a year and a day and in that time can get to know the coven and undertake preliminary instruction, but if the candidate can be prepared more quickly the period may be reduced. Conversely, if the coven feels that the individual's motives are confused, they may require a long wait until things are clarified. Some people may be able to fit in with the other members immediately; for others a long period may be necessary in order to get to know the other members sufficiently well. If someone has a very orthodox religious background, a long period of time may be necessary in order to make the psychological adjustment. When both sides feel satisfied, the initiation can go ahead.

Initiation is a rebirth and a spiritual awakening. Jung³ describes five types of rebirth. Three of these reflect the major different belief systems about what happens to people after they die. The first is *metempsychosis* or the transmigration of souls.

Life force is undying and is prolonged in time by passing through different physical incarnations which may be in human or animal form, or even in trees. The personality may not continue so the individuals we are today cannot remember past lives, but the karma accumulated by each successive incarnation may affect our future incarnations. Julius Caesar tells us that the Druids believed in the transmigration of souls.

Reincarnation implies the continuity of the personality which is accessible to memory. The previous lives have the same ego-form as the present life and can be recalled. The Buddha believed we experienced a series of incarnations, but he did not make clear to his disciples whether this was metempsychosis or reincarnation. In Wicca there are those who believe in both interpretations and we keep an open mind on this issue.

Both the ancient Egyptian and Christian belief is in resurrection of the body whereby at the end of our earthly life our physical bodies and/or astral bodies live again. In the Christian religion it is the physical body and in the Egyptian it is the astral body, but the astral body can only function while the physical remains uncorrupted.

In addition to the rebirths which follow physical death, there are two kinds of rebirth which can take place within our lifetimes and both are important in Wicca. *Renovatio*, or renewal, is what happens at initiation. The first initiation can be considered a gateway to a partial rebirth whereby the essential nature of the personality is not changed, but it develops new directions and weak or damaged parts are healed, strengthened or improved. The last initiation is a gateway to a complete rebirth whereby the essential nature of the personality is changed through a process of transmutation. The transfiguration of Christ was such an initiatory transformation.

The second kind of rebirth in one's lifetime is the indirect rebirth experienced through participation in mystery rites of transformation other than initiations, such as the seasonal rituals of Wicca which celebrate the inner transformation process within humanity and nature.

All these forms of rebirth are relevant to Wicca and will be touched upon at some point, but it is with the rebirth, or *renovatio*, that the first degree initiation deals. The rebirth of the first degree is a rebirth into the community of Wicca. The initiation ceremony is similar to qabalistic and Masonic initiations

and, like them, owes its origins to the ancient mystery religions. A key difference with other forms of magical initiation, however, is that initiation is given to a man by a woman and to a woman by a man. The only exception is that a woman can initiate her daughter; she who gave the first birth can give the second.

The role played by the initiator of the opposite sex is essential for both women and men. In order to undergo initiation we have to be prepared to open ourselves to our unconscious, which Jung describes as being personified by two major figures. One is the *Shadow*, that part of ourselves which we dislike and reject and which is generally personified by a figure of the same sex; and an opposite sex figure which for a woman is the *Animus*, the male part of herself, and for a man is the *Anima*, the female part of himself.

How can part of a woman be male and part of a man be female? Neither our physical bodies or our psyches are wholly male or wholly female. We all have genes and hormones which pertain to the opposite sex, or as Jung⁴ put it:

Either sex is inhabited by the opposite sex up to a point for, biologically speaking, it is simply the greater number of masculine genes that tips the scales in favour of masculinity.

What is meant by the femininity and masculinity of the unconscious part of our psyche is not the feminine and the masculine as thought of in traditional sex roles. For both sexes there is a contra-sexual side which gives them their creativity. The type of creativity which is bestowed by the Animus and Anima is different. For a woman, contact with her Animus gives her the creativity which is associated with the element of Fire. It is the creativity which inspires us to do things, to be active in the world, to start crusades.

Joan of Arc is a woman who was inspired by her Animus to save France from the English. If she had allowed her conscious mind to examine this idea critically she would never as a simple female peasant in a masculine-dominated age have thought that she could succeed. Ignoring this, however, she obeyed her Animus, donned men's clothing and rode off to her destiny. Female medieval witches were often thought of as wearing men's clothing and evidence of this was seen as sure proof against them.

Masculinity is still more valued in society than femininity

and men may be more nervous of getting in touch with their contra-sexual side than are women. For the type of men who are attracted to a religion such as Wicca, this is fortunately not usually a major problem and, speaking as a female witch, one of the great bonuses of Wicca is the deep non-sexual friendships which women can form with men who have an understanding of and value the feminine psyche.

For a man the contra-sexual side is also the seat of his creativity. It is the creativity of Water; not the creativity of the doer but the creativity of the artist which inspires us to compose music, paint pictures, make poems, and use the visual imagery which lies at the heart of the ability to do magic. In contacting his feminine side, a man does not become effete but instead he accesses the creative force of his own Godhead; for was not Pan the Player of the Pipes?

In the Wiccan journey into the unconscious, we encounter the inner opposite sex figure, both in its negative aspect and at its most benign. The opposite sex initiator is a parental figure, who is both the 'bad' parent as wielder of the sword, and the 'good' as bestower of the kiss; the bad as wielder of the scourge and then the good as welcomer to a new home.

THE INITIATION CEREMONY

The initiate is prepared by removing his or her clothes for, weather permitting, in Gardnerian and Alexandrian traditions the rites of Wicca are performed naked. Ritual nudity has a very ancient tradition. By the Celts, nudity was considered to offer supernatural protection and although we have no record of how it was used in religious rites, we know that the Celts frequently went into battle naked, their bodies covered with warpaint and tattoos.

In the mystery rites of Isis and Osiris the initiate also commenced the rite naked, although by the end of the rite he had been re clothed in ritual garments. Other traditions prefer to use ritual robes, generally of a uniform design and colour and these serve the same purpose as ritual nudity which is the removal of the normal everyday persona of the individual.

In initiation the removal of clothes also has another symbolic meaning which is that naked we are extremely vulnerable. By

being willing to expose ourselves in a very literal sense, we have to make an act of love and trust, the two passwords which bring us into the circle, and we also have to be willing to cast aside our persona and enter the circle as we first entered the world, naked and vulnerable. It is as a child seeking entry into the world that we come to the edge of the circle for initiation.

Initiates are often very nervous before an initiation. This in itself is no bad thing, but once they enter the circle, we want initiates to be sufficiently relaxed to follow what is happening. Before the initiation begins, it is our coven practice to take initiates blindfold either into the temple or into the centre of the place where the circle is to be cast, and to perform a ceremony known as the Element Balancing. This takes the initiate on an inner journey through the elements and in a sense it is rather like invoking their own inner watchtowers. We find this especially useful because the initiate will not have been balanced by the invocation of the four elements inside the circle when the watchtowers are invoked.

The rite for Element Balancing is given below. A priest or priestess waits silently while the blindfold initiate is brought in and then laid on the ground face up with his or her head to the north. Those who have brought the initiate then silently withdraw. We prefer not to use the initiating High Priest or Priestess for this because the initiator's words will have maximum impact on the initiate if his or her voice is not heard until the start of initiation proper.

ELEMENT BALANCING

About you all is impenetrable darkness
You float upon the waters of a black sea
You float endlessly, directionlessly
There is no direction
For there is nothing
But water
Water stretches into the far corners of the universe

Your body is light and floats upon the water
The water becomes warmer and warmer
You are floating upon the waters
Of the womb of the universe
And my voice is as the wind
Whispering in your ear

You are becoming more and more sleepy
Your past life is slipping away from you
Floating away on the darkness of the waters
Let it float away
Be at peace
All is warm and dark
And still

A great silence reigns over all the universe
It awaits the moment of rebirth
Your past life and thoughts are but a dream to you now
And you are becoming sleeper and sleeper
You are at peace
At rest

You are sinking
Sinking into the deepest sleep
And as you fall into that sleep
You dream
You dream that you are sinking down
Down below the waters
Down, down to the great sea bed
You lie there for a moment
Your back resting on the sand

The currents stir the sand against your trunk and limbs
The swirls of sand
Sink onto your body
Softly the sand covers your eyes, face and hands
The sand envelops you layer by layer
Gently and lovingly
Slowly over a million years
The sand settles upon your body
Until you are buried deep beneath the sea
Deep beneath the earth

Deep beneath the earth you lie
Unmoving, waiting
Whilst above you time and change march on
Your limbs cannot move
But you hear within you
The steady beating of your own living heart
Buried deep you lie in waiting
And far above you
Muffled by earth, you hear
The growing of seeds and the roots' spreading struggle
For above you the sea has receded
And a new world has come to birth

The Earth is waking from a deep sleep
And all around you
You feel the quickening pulse of life
Worms make their tunnels about you
And far above
You hear the scraping and scurrying of rabbits

A warmth steals through you
The Sun is warming the ground above
And you feel a stirring in your limbs
An urgency not felt
For many a thousand year
The soil around you lightens and loosens
Your hands move
And you thrust your hands upward
The soft soil falls about your fingers
The earth is crumbling
Crumbling all around you
You struggle to your feet and climb upward
The soil falling in cascades all about you
To your feet
You clamber upwards and so emerge
Your eyes blinking and aching
Into the light

Wind blows against you
Wind not felt since long ago
The earth is blown away from your body
Your heart rejoices and your eyes see
All about you is the spring
Of a new born world
Green and fresh
And in ecstasy

Your spirit soars within you
And your whole body and being
Feels light, so light
That gravity cannot hold you
You float into the air
Higher and higher
Leaving far behind
The green and growing Earth

You float higher and higher
About you everything is blue
Blue sky stretches out all around you
As far as the eye can see

Your body is becoming lighter and lighter
And less and less dense
It is becoming a body of light
You are becoming transparent
More and more transparent
You are floating higher and higher
On and on

You float and feel the air about you
You are floating like a gossamer sail in the blue
There is a great calm all around you
No wind can buffet you
As you float in the silent blue

And now the air is growing warmer and warmer
Within you and without you
The air grows imperceptibly warmer
And looking upward you see
Hovering far above you
The fiery disc of the golden Sun
Its rays reach out to caress you
Its golden light beckons you
Its warmth caresses your body
Falling in cascades about you

You are drawing nearer and nearer
Closer to the Sun
Its light is becoming stronger and stronger
Brighter and brighter
More and more intense
Its orb is beginning to fill
The whole expanse of your vision
You have no fear and float irresistibly drawn
Into the radiance of the Sun

You are swallowed by the Sun's golden light
Wrapped in a golden glow which becomes a golden flame
Journeying nearer and ever nearer to the centre
The source of its heat
The flame is becoming hotter and redder
Your body is beginning to burn
But there is no pain
Your whole being is aglow with flame

Fire is within you and fire is without you
Fire that does not burn because you are fire
You are the flame of life

And the flame of life is you
Flames run their flickering tongues
Along your golden, fiery limbs
Flickering, licking tongues of fire
Purging and cleansing in a golden glow
There is no pain for you yourself are fire
Only the flame of life
Around you and within you
A glowing oneness with fire

And now you are beginning to move
Your body is beginning to travel through the flames
You are moving away from the centre of the Sun
Not back to Earth
But further and further away
The red flames are changing into many colours
The flames are becoming the colours of the sunset
Amber and orange, pink and gold
You are travelling through the Sun
And emerging into night
The blackest night
Where no star shines

And far below you
You see
The flaming orb of the Sun
But leaving this behind
You turn and float away
Leaving behind you all elements
And reaching
Nothing

Be at peace now in the silence
Of the temple of the Gods
Let all be still within you
And without you
Let all thoughts
Slip away from you
Forget all cares and be at peace
Lie still in the great darkness
That is the womb of the Earth

You are unborn
Your former life is but a dream
It is no more
It is dead to you now
Its achievements, its hopes, its fears
Let all slip away from you

You wait between the worlds
The past and the future
Empty out all thoughts
And empty
Feel a great breeze blow through you
Cleansing and releasing you from the past

Your body has dissolved into the darkness
You are finite no longer
You flow into the four corners of the universe.

Once the Element Balancing has finished we like to leave the initiate in silence for a while before one or two opposite sex members of the coven who are called the initiate's sponsors come to perform the binding.

As candidates for initiation we are not only naked, we are also blindfold and bound by ritual cords. The binding involves three cords. One cord is tied first around the initiate's wrists which are placed upright behind his or her back. The cord is then taken up and round the initiate's neck, back round the wrists and then back up to the neck leaving a long loose end hanging from the front of the neck by which the initiator can lead the initiate around the circle. The second cord is tied above the initiate's left knee rather like a garter, and the third around the initiate's right ankle. In this way the initiate's feet are 'Neither bound nor free'. He or she is almost committed but not quite, for at the last moment the initiate is always free to draw back and declare that they are not ready for initiation.

The binding symbolizes our spiritual state before the initiation for the cords in Wicca are known as 'the material basis'. The initiate is bound to the world of matter, of materialism, the world of the ego. Before the rite we are prisoners, but not completely. By seeking initiation we have taken the first step on the path of our spiritual journey and our feet are already almost free. At the end of the initiation we are freed from the cords and can throw away the fetters which hold us back from our spiritual destiny; we are set free to seek and find ourselves.

The bound initiate is like the Hanged Man in the tarot. The Hanged Man hangs happily from one foot, with one foot bound and one foot free, and like the Wiccan initiate has his hands bound behind his back. The Hanged Man is not seeking to escape from this position. His strange position of suspension between the worlds, hanging between Heaven and Earth, is a

chosen one; so too is that of the initiate who, bound, now stands between the worlds, at the edge of the circle awaiting release.

To allow this binding and blindfolding, we must again make an act of love and trust and be prepared to become vulnerable as a child. If we are to journey into ourselves we must be prepared to let go of our defences, postures and disguises, for only then will our egos let us avail ourselves of the secret powers of the Gods which lie buried deep within us. This is a very difficult and challenging thing to do. We like to pretend we are strong and dislike making ourselves vulnerable, but as Jung wrote⁵:

In the end one has to admit that there are problems which one cannot solve on one's own resources. Such an admission has the advantage of being honest, truthful and in accord with reality, and this prepares the ground for a compensatory reaction from the collective unconscious: you are now inclined to give heed to a helpful idea or intuition, or to notice thoughts which had not been allowed to voice themselves before. Perhaps you will pay attention to the dreams that visit you at such moments, or will reflect on certain inner and outer occurrences that take place just at this time. If you have an attitude of this kind, then the helpful powers slumbering in the deeper strata of man's nature can come awake and intervene, for helplessness and weakness are the eternal experience and the eternal problem of mankind.

The initiation therefore opens us to the influence of the beneficial forces in the universe which are very willing to help, but only if asked, only if sought.

Once the candidate has been 'properly prepared' he or she will either be taken to the outside of the circle to wait on the outside while the circle is cast, or he or she may be left alone and only brought to the circle edge when it is time to enter the circle. Both methods have advantages. To be left alone bound in the darkness is a very sobering experience and while it does not take very long to cast a circle, to the bound initiate it can seem a very long time indeed. There is plenty of time for reflection and to decide whether one really wants to do this after all! We do, however, think that there are advantages in having initiates on the edge of the circle when it is cast so that they can hear the words of this initial part of the ritual which are in themselves very beautiful.

Even if initiates are placed outside the circle it is good to leave them alone for a while to meditate on the idea of rebirth and

what they wish to achieve from it. When the date for the initiation is first fixed, initiates can be asked to think about their personality and which aspects they would wish to lose and which to be improved and strengthened.

Immediately prior to the initiation the initiate is given two passwords. These are traditionally secret, but since they have already been published in many books, I will state them here so that their meaning can be discussed. They are *Perfect Love* and *Perfect Trust*.

Perfect love is something which few of us are capable of achieving at all times and with all people but in the world of the sacred circle we seek to act in accordance with the principle of perfect love and to take that principle with us into everyday life. Jung⁶ argues that people's love for one another can and should have a spiritual or divine quality. It is this love which is the Perfect Love, a love which loves others because they carry the divinity within them, even though at times they may deviate far from it.

We can 'love perfectly' and love others only to the extent that we are able to love ourselves. Self-hatred and lack of self-esteem mean that we will be incapable of the unselfish outpouring of love which is implied by the words Perfect Love, an outpouring of a force which seeks nothing additional in return. The return is the joy which we receive from our own act of loving, for to love enriches the lover as much as the loved.

Perfect love becomes possible in the circle because of the intimate contact between the ego and the divine archetypes. Whatever the qualities invoked into the priest or priestess, these qualities become manifest in the circle where our consciousness has been opened to them. If we invoke the Great Mother and the Sky Father, archetypes of female and male love, our egos will absorb the qualities of those archetypes and it is possible to manifest them in our own lives. This happiness is not just for the priest and priestess on whom the God or Goddess is invoked, but for all those who participate in the experience. The ritual and the group working will at that point have united the group on the level of the collective unconscious and what happens to one will happen to all.

The coven is the community of the Goddess and the God and must be made in their image. It is a home, a place of wholeness, truth and love in which we can grow to spiritual matu-

urity. Entering a circle with someone is one of the most intimate things one can do with another. Along with removal of clothes goes the removal of many other barriers to intimacy and the friendships formed within our new spiritual family, the coven, create very strong bonds between people which are one of the pleasures of coven life.

These new friendships can have disadvantages. Other friends and partners who are not involved in the Craft may bitterly resent these new intimacies. One High Priestess told me that her adult children had complained that she thought more of her witch friends than she did of them and marriages have foundered as one partner meets new people, grows and changes and makes new friends, and the other partner is shut out.

We cannot enter into Wicca at all unless we are prepared to give the group into which we are to be initiated Perfect Trust for, without allowing ourselves to be bound and blindfold while naked by them, we cannot undergo the initiation. However, Perfect Trust does not just mean trust in others, it also means trust in ourselves and also trust in the wider powers of the universe itself, trust in the Gods.

We are born full of fears, fears of the unknown and of the dark, and these are fears of both what is within and what is without. We are afraid to look within ourselves because there is much about ourselves which we despise and of which we are ashamed and we do not wish to acknowledge this to ourselves, let alone to others, but in Wicca we must face these things; we must see our souls naked and unveiled. We are afraid of the dark, the 'things that go bump in the night', but we must enter into that darkness. We must discover the forces which surround us and which move the universe. We must look upon the faces of the Goddess and the God.

With the removal of our clothes, we are like crabs removed from their shells; we feel exposed and endangered. We trust, but there is also an element of fear. This fear is appropriate, for initiation is not a step to be taken lightly. We are afraid of what we will meet in the circle and so we should be, for what we will meet there is ourselves, good bits and bad bits, wise bits and foolish bits, spirit and flesh. We are blindfold because we are blind, and this symbolically is the true state of our vision for we have not yet seen ourselves in the mirror of truth. Until we have done that the veils of our egos come between us and

the rest of creation. Like the child in the womb who has not yet been exposed to the day, we await in darkness the entry into the circle of light.

THE RITE

The circle is cast as described in the next chapter and the initiation commences with the Bagahi Rune. The meaning and origin of the rune is obscure, but the first known version appears in a medieval manuscript of the thirteenth century troubadour Rutebeuf which is now in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. This may be in a form of Basque and Michael Harrison in *The Roots of Witchcraft*⁶ has suggested that it is an exhortion to clean one's plates and drinking vessels and come to the feast to eat, drink and be merry. If Harrison is correct, this is not a very profound note on which to start an initiation, but at least it is a joyous one. In a more mystical vein, there is only one other place in the *Book of Shadows* where the Bagahi Rune appears and this is in the Hallowe'en or Samhain sabbat. Hallowe'en is the feast of the dead and the first degree initiation can be seen as a death to the old life and a birth into the new. The rune is therefore said ~~before~~ the initiate enters the circle, when he or she is 'dead' and awaiting rebirth. Not surprisingly, the spelling of these words has been corrupted over the years and slight variations appear in different Books of Shadows. This is a copy of the medieval text.

BAGAHİ RUNE

Bagahi laca bachahe
 Lamac cahi achabahe
 Karrelyos
 Lamac lamec bachalyos
 Cabahagi sabalyos
 Baryolas
 Lagozatha cabyolas
 Samahac et famyolas
 Harrahya!

After the rune, the text of the initiation speaks only of 'reading the Charge' and in the *Book of Shadows* the God is not invoked in the first degree initiation. As with the mysteries of

Isis, the first initiation is that of the Goddess, the mother, and it is only in the later Wiccan initiations that the God appears.

The thinking behind the rebirth of the first initiate pre-dates the role of the father in fertility and in some very traditional covens, the female initiate traces her line of initiation not from the High Priest who inducted her but from the High Priestess of the rite. Although in a woman's initiation the ceremony is performed by the High Priest, the role of the High Priestess is very important because the first degree initiation is considered an initiation of the Goddess, a birth into the community of the Great Mother. Thus reborn, the initiate becomes a child of the Goddess and will become a brother or sister of all those in the coven and the wider community of Wicca.

In our own rite we prefer to have both the divine forces present as we feel this is more appropriate in the Aquarian Age. In particular, when a woman is initiated we prefer to invoke the God into the initiator so that it is the God rather than the priest who performs the initiation. The initiator should then take part in the invocation of the divine forces and the Goddess and God aspects which are invoked will be those appropriate to initiation, the Mother aspects of the female and, if desired, Father aspect of the male deity. The invocation of the Goddess is always followed by what is often called The Great Mother Charge which is discussed in chapter six.

The *Book of Shadows* mentions 'reading the Charge', but the rite and, in fact, the whole of the initiation work is much better if the High Priestess and Priest know the Charge and the ritual by heart. Learning the Charge by heart sounds rather an awesome undertaking and Alexandrian covens frequently read from the text. That the Charge could be learned was not something which occurred to me until I was initiated into Gardnerian Wicca and I discovered that my High Priestess, Fiona, appeared to know not just the Charge but the whole *Book of Shadows* by heart, a daunting but challenging revelation!

Having observed how much more smoothly the rites flow when the participants know what they are doing and do not have to fumble in the dark trying to read, I have been converted to the learning method. Wicca springs from an oral tradition and there are sound occult reasons why rituals were never committed to paper. Reading is an activity of the left brain, but magic is an activity of the right brain and requires us to effect a change

of consciousness which is much easier to maintain without the interference of the left brain.

Once the divine force has been invoked, the initiation itself commences and a Priestess makes a door in the circle so if the initiate has been left in a place apart the sponsor can leave the circle to fetch the initiate. The broomstick is then laid across the threshold of the doorway. The broom is a female and male symbol, 'the rod which penetrates the bush', and it is via this symbol of sexual union that the initiate enters the circle of rebirth.

Confronting ourselves as we really are is the first step on the journey into Wicca and indeed into all magical and initiatory systems. Across the gateway of the broom, the initiator therefore places the point of a sword or ritual knife called an athame on the candidate's heart and challenges:

O thou who standest on the threshold between the pleasant world of men and the Terrible Domains of the Lords of the Outer Spaces, hast thou the courage to make the assay? For I say verily, it were better to rush on my blade and perish than to make the attempt with fear in thy heart.

The Challenge is made in such dramatic terms because it is important that the initiate understands that there are spiritual and psychological dangers in seeking inner growth and these are all the more dangerous because they are subtle and unobvious. One of the straightforward dangers is that, having commenced the initiation, the initiate may panic:

... if we step through the door. . . we discover with terror that we are the objects of unseen factors. It can even give rise to primitive panic because, instead of being believed in, the anxiously guarded supremacy of consciousness — which is in truth one of the secrets of human success — is questioned in the most dangerous way.⁷

The unconscious mind is extremely powerful. What we ordinarily call our 'self' is only a tiny part of us, rather like the tip of the iceberg. Beneath is untold strength and power, but it is a strength and power which we will have to learn to control or else it will overwhelm us. The words of the Challenge show us that physical death is a lesser thing than spiritual death. Many initiates have come to the Challenge with 'fear in their hearts' but have not 'rushed upon the blade'. The fear is not

the true barrier; many come afraid, but what the initiate must be willing to do is endure the fear.

The challenger stands in the role of what readers of H P Lovecraft novels will know as the 'lurker on the threshold', the Shadow who stands on the portal of the unconscious. The figure we fear to face which contains all within us which we do not wish to see. But Wicca is about seeing and since the effect of first degree initiation is inevitably to raise the Shadow we must confront it. Jung writes⁶:

The meeting with oneself is, at first, the meeting with one's own shadow. The shadow is a tight passage, a narrow door, whose painful constriction no one is spared who goes down to the deep well. For what comes after the door is... the world of water, where all life floats in suspension; where the realm of the sympathetic system, the soul of everything living, begins; where I am indivisibly this *and* that; where I experience the other in myself and the other-than-myself experiences me.

The symbol of the first degree, the downward pointing triangle, is the element of water. In order to be born we must enter the waters of the womb, the world of the magic circle. There is often in myth and legend a connection between the Shadow and the fish. Jung wrote a great deal about the spiritual quest which is symbolized in the Islamic myth of the Khidr. In this appears Nun, whose name means fish in Hebrew, who is the 'father of the Shadow'.

In the tarot, the card of the Shadow is the card of the baleful Moon, the path between the ordinary everyday world and the world of emotions; a path ruled by the astrological sign of Pisces, the Fish. When the Guardian of the Portal challenges us and asks if we have the courage to 'make the assay', we must be ready to enter the circle, the world of water, the stream of life, and to leap upstream with the salmon of knowledge to its spawning ground, the place of origin of our own being.

What we see when we negotiate the 'tight passage', the 'narrow door', when we undergo the spiritual birth of initiation over the broomstick and leap into the waters of the unconscious, is our own reflection which is mirrored in the water. This is not, however, the bright spectre of ourselves which we like to present to the world, but the darkness which we have hidden and which awaits us on the other side of the veil, the Shadow. So long as we have projected everything negative in ourselves onto the

environment, we have avoided seeing where the true source of that negativity lies which is within ourselves — our Shadow. Once we can face up to the Shadow, a great deal of the journey is already done.

Our persona has been removed with our clothes which we left outside the circle and it remains only to step forward with courage into that darkness. We must take that step blindfold, even as when we entered the physical world we entered into a world we could not see. We do not know what we will meet there. We have yet to see our own faces reflected in the mirror of truth, but we have two passwords to sustain us and the initiate answers the Challenge:

I have two perfect words, perfect love and perfect trust.

With love and trust we enter into the circle, trusting in the rightness of what we have decided, possibly trusting in the rightness of our own decision more than we have ever had to before, especially if we are young. We submit ourselves to the rite and whatever it will hold and so in love and humility we cross the boundary of the circle into the welcoming arms of the initiator:

All who have are doubly welcome. And I give thee a third to pass thee through this dread door.

The initiator places the sword on the ground underneath and at an angle to the broomstick and gives 'the third', which is not a password but a kiss. In some covens the initiate is swung across the threshold by the initiator but if there are sponsors waiting with the initiate they may follow the older tradition of pushing the initiate into the circle from behind so that the initiator catches them prior to giving them the kiss. For a man who is being initiated by women the symbolism of the new birth is very obvious. The sponsor is the mother/priestess who gives the final push which brings the initiate to birth in the world of the circle and it is the High Priestess/Goddess who as midwife receives him into her arms. Alternatively, the sponsors can lift the initiate over the threshold so he or she, as it were, flies in. This adds a certain element of surprise to the proceedings! Obviously the relative weights and sizes of the initiate and sponsors are a practical consideration here.

The world which the initiate has entered is the world of the circle:

... a boundless expanse full of unprecedented uncertainty, with apparently no inside and no outside, no above and no below, no here and no there, no mine and no thine, no good and no bad.⁹

It is a birth into the world of the unconscious, the world of symbol, the world of water.

Having entered the circle, the initiate is led to the four quarters and presented to each in turn:

Take heed ye Lords of the East/South/West/North that (name) is properly prepared to be made a Priest(ess) and Witch.

This is a very short and simple part of the rite, but a very important one. A major purpose of the initiation ceremony is to introduce the initiate to the Lords of the Watchtowers so that they will recognize him or her as an initiate and come when summoned. In inner terms the psychological qualities which correspond to the four elements will henceforth be accessible while within the circle. The extent to which each will be accessible will vary and the relative strengths and weaknesses of these become obvious once new witches start to invoke the watchtowers for themselves.

Once the initiate has been presented to the quarters, the rite calls for the coven to:

Circle three times with dance, step and chant.

It is usual here to chant the Witches' Rune which is given in chapter four. In addition, a rather nice practice adopted by many covens is to place initiates in the centre of the circle and joining hands to push them across the circle from one person to another. This is very disorientating but also exhilarating and very good for releasing tension. Talking about the inner symbolism of Wicca makes it sound very serious but, to use the Goddess's words, Paganism is a religion of 'mirth and reverence', of seriousness and laughter, and this part of the rite usually leans towards the latter.

When we have all recovered from this energetic activity, the initiate is placed in the West of the circle. The West is also the cardinal point which corresponds to the element of the initiation, the element of Water. The West, because of its association with the setting Sun, is considered to be the quarter of death which, in Paganism, where life and death are seen as an ever-turning wheel, is the beginning of the return journey of rebirth.

The initiator or another Priest or Priestess of the same sex then gives the instruction on how Wicca views the relationship between humankind and the Gods. This explains that the divine is immanent within us and can be united with the Gods, the divine forces in the outer universe.

The initiate is now taken from the western quarter of the circle, the quarter of death, to the East, the quarter of the rising Sun, the point of birth. A bell is rung 11 times in the rhythm 3.1.3.1.3; the three are one and the one are three, the rhythm of the Triple Goddess. The initiator then kneels before the initiate. This is one of the most important and moving parts of the ritual. It is an act of humility on the part of those who are initiating and a reminder that to initiate is both a privilege and a great responsibility. It should be done by the most senior High Priest or Priestess present.

In other religions the postulant kneels while the priest towers above him, but in the Art Magical we are taught to be humble and so we kneel to welcome them and say:

Blessed Be thy feet that have brought thee in these ways.
Blessed Be thy knees that shall kneel at the sacred altar.
Blessed Be thy phallus/womb without which we would not be.
Blessed Be thy breasts formed in beauty and in strength
Blessed Be thy lips that shall utter the sacred names.

These are the words of what is known as the 'five-fold kiss' and with each verse the initiator kisses the appropriate part of the body. For the initiate the kiss is a symbol of the sacredness of the body which has been given to us by the Gods so that we may experience the beauty and joy of the material world. For a woman the body is considered a temple of the Goddess whose divinity she carries in the centre of her soul; for a man, his body is the temple of the God; and for both sexes the body is a sacred and holy shrine to be revered and not despised, to be honoured and not treated with shame.

The initiate is next asked whether he or she is ready to swear the oath and, if so, the cord around the initiate's ankle is tied loosely to the opposite ankle so that the initiate has, 'Feet neither bond nor free' and the initiate's 'measure' is taken. The measurements are those of a shroud, the length of the body and the distances around the head and the heart. These measurements were considered by the ancients to be extremely

powerful because they had strong sympathetic links with the individual. The possessor of someone's measure could do them great harm and the measure was taken as a way of ensuring that the individual would not betray the coven.

In the Gardnerian tradition the initiate's thumb is also pricked and the blood put on the measure, thus strengthening the link, and a clipping of hair is also taken. We have abandoned these additional points, not least because I am far too squeamish to stick needles in people's thumbs; and in the Alexandrian tradition the measure is taken but returned to the initiate at the end of the rite because Alex and Maxine wanted the initiate to feel free of any possible coercion.

In the world of symbolism where one symbol may represent many things, the measure is not only the winding sheet, but also the umbilical cord which links the initiate with those who have given the initiation. Our own practice is to retain the measure until the third degree initiation, not in order to have power over our initiates, but in order to remind us and them of our responsibilities towards those to whom through initiation we have 'given birth' into the world of Wicca. At the third degree, when the initiates become coven leaders in their own right, we return the measure to symbolize that they now have no higher authority than themselves and must take full responsibility for their own development.

Once the measure has been taken, the bell is rung three times and the initiate is assisted to kneel and then lightly scourged. The scourging has to be light because the initiate is scourged 40 times, 40 being a sacred number in Wicca. Many initiates complain that the scourging does not hurt enough! Most people want to suffer in order to be worthy of the initiation and in the initiation ceremonies of our ancestors, and of the Sioux Indians until recent times, the endurance of physical pain was a very necessary part of the rite.

For these peoples such endurance was very valuable. Their lives were hard and difficult and involved battles with animals in hunting, with the elements against which they had little shelter, and against other humans with whom they battled for scarce food resources. A very strong resistance to pain and the willingness to persist in the face of physical difficulties were essential for the survival of the tribe and only those who were prepared to undergo such things could be admitted to full adult-

hood — primitive societies could not afford passengers.

Today such physical endurance forms a more minor part of our lives and unfortunately the gifts of initiation are not won by enduring a small amount of physical discomfort. It is an effort of the mind, soul and spirit which is required to achieve the goal of initiation, which is higher consciousness. The scourging is seen as a form of ritual purification, for only the pure can take the oath. In the Gardnerian tradition, the initiate at this point takes a new name, a witch name, by which he or she will be known in the circle. In the Alexandrian tradition witches usually take a witch name at a later date.

The wording of the oath reflects a climate of persecution, promising to protect our brothers and sisters even unto death and 'never to reveal any of the secrets of the Art, except it be to a proper person, properly prepared, within a circle such as I am now in'. These are words which present problems to writers of books such as this of how to speak about Wicca while retaining the element of secrecy which must always be part of a mystery religion. This requires a certain delicacy of judgement in steering a course which is acceptable to the majority of Wicca. However, they do not just apply to writers and we are all responsible for ensuring that we teach the mysteries only to those who are worthy and responsible people.

The initiate is assisted to rise and the bell is once more rung 11 times, 3.1.3.1.3. The initiate is then consecrated three times with the symbol of the first degree, the downward pointing triangle of water.

I consecrate thee with oil
I consecrate thee with wine
I consecrate thee with my lips
Priest(less) and Witch

The blindfold is now removed for the initiate has negotiated the narrow passage which leads from the darkness of the womb to the light of the magical world: the initiate is reborn.

In seeking to enter Wicca, we admit to ourselves our helplessness and weakness and in that paradoxical way of the unconscious, the source of our being is filled with strength. Now that the initiate has entered the circle in weakness and humility, he or she is greeted with a kiss and presented with the magical weapons, the witch's 'working tools'. These are eight

in number and are symbols not of weakness but of power.

The first weapon is the magic sword which symbolizes the trained and focused will. Initiates are told that with this in their hands they are 'the ruler of the circle'. The second weapon is the black handled ritual dagger called the athame, which is known as 'the true Witch's Weapon'. The athame is the initiate's own personal ritual knife which he or she will have bought or made before the ceremony and can be used interchangeably with the sword. Its partner is the third weapon, the white handled knife which must be used only inside the circle. The fourth weapon is the wand which is considered to be a symbol of the phallic God and many witches' wands are made with pine cone tips to emphasize this. The pentacle and censer of incense follow and then the initiate is presented with the scourge.

This is the sign of power and domination. It is also used to cause purification and enlightenment. For it is written: 'To learn you must suffer and be purified.' Art willing to suffer to learn?

This is the most important part of the presentation of the tools. The initiate is asked to affirm his or her willingness to suffer while holding the scourge, the symbol of suffering. The suffering which the individual must face is in coming to terms with him or herself, naked before the Gods and before his or her fellow initiates; for only when that inner reconciliation has been made can the initiate truly progress and develop as a person of power. The initiate is then presented with the last of the tools, the cords.

Initiates are now given the First Instruction which tells us that the origin of the power of witches comes from within us and that there is no part of us which is not divine. We are also told that the Wiccan Rede or Law is:

An it harm none, do what you will.

In other words, we must decide for ourselves what is right and what is wrong, always bearing in mind that we should not cause harm to others. The initiation is now almost at an end. The initiator taking an athame salutes the new witch with an invoking pentagram:

I now salute you in the name of (the Goddess) and (the God) newly made priest(ess) and witch.

Lastly, the initiate is presented to each of the watchtowers:

Hear ye Mighty Ones of the East (South, West, North) (name) has been consecrated a priest(less) of the Goddess.

The initiate has now experienced the Goddess mystery, an initiation of the birth. It is not until the second degree that the initiate experiences the mystery of the God, the mystery of death; and not until the third degree that he or she experiences the mystery of marriage, the point at which the mysteries of the Goddess and the God are united.

The initiation proper is now complete and the initiate can be introduced into that finest of Wiccan arts, feasting.

THE WORK OF THE FIRST DEGREE

The individual has been initiated; he or she has undergone the ceremony and been proclaimed a priest or a priestess and a witch. What happens next? What does not happen is that the individual suddenly acquires magical powers which he or she did not have before. These are developed gradually as the result of effort. In the first degree we must work on and learn about our craft and more is said about this in the chapters which follow. We must also work on and learn about ourselves and one of our first tasks must be to deal with the problems which the initiation itself may raise.

In the first degree initiation, the persona is symbolically stripped away, but one of the pitfalls of this is to replace the discarded persona with another more exciting one — that of the witch. The name 'witch' is very alluring; more so perhaps for a woman than a man for whom there are less glamorous historical role models. For a woman, while the word 'witch' does have the negative connotations of hag, it also has very glamorous connotations — those of power, mysteriousness and sexual allure — Morgan le Fay, Vivianne the Lady of the Lake, Circe. The persona of the witch is therefore for women something with which it is easy to identify and many people go through a stage of adorning as much of themselves as possible with occult jewellery and enhancing their 'witchy' image with exotic clothing and make-up.

Although traditionally witches were both men and women,

as the numbers of men killed in the witch trials will testify, in the popular mind witches came to be thought of as female and there are therefore no real stereotypes of what a male witch should look like. Men tend either to escape this stage completely or to take the other course and dress in black polo neck sweaters and large dangling pentacles, rather like the classic Satanist in a B movie!

When someone is first initiated, this in itself is no bad thing. The concept of 'witch' is something with which we must come to terms and openly advertising ourselves to be in the occult is one of the ways of doing so. Where it becomes negative is when it goes on for too long and people identify so strongly with the persona of witch that they become cyphers and symbols and no longer themselves. The more strongly we advertise ourselves as witches, the more we will be treated as witches by others, and as nothing else. They no longer see us but see only their concept of the witch — whether good or bad.

If we enter Wicca with our partners, as many people do, there may be changes in our relationships with one another. Men who have been used to being the successful and dominant partner in a relationship may well find that their partner is much better at magic than they are and quickly gains an intuitive understanding of Wicca which they initially lack. In Wicca women have a high status and, for some women, it may be a new departure to be treated in this way and the dangers to the ego are obvious. Very masculine men may also find some difficulties at first in adjusting to not being treated as a superior sex. If a couple has been accustomed to playing stereotyped male/female sex roles, their relationship will have to adjust to the new status which Wicca accords women.

Frequently when people enter the world of magic and Wicca they expect to encounter spiritual dangers in the form of exotic-looking demons brandishing swords; would that the pitfalls were as easy to spot as this! The dangers of the occult are much more subtle. What we raise when we enter Wicca are the archetypal forces within, the powers of good and evil which spring from inside us and with which we must find reconciliation.

Although everything is experienced in image form, i.e. symbolically, it is by no means a question of fictitious dangers but of a very real risk upon which the fate of a whole life may depend.¹⁰

In the ancient mystery schools, the candidates for initiation

were either those trained from a very early age for the priesthood and who were therefore, to use a Wiccan phrase 'properly prepared', or mature women and men who were now seeking greater meaning in their lives. Many occult schools have traditionally turned away the young, refusing to consider people before their mid-thirties. In Wicca, however, many would-be initiates are in their late teens and early twenties, and I was 19 when initiated.

One of the major goals of the mysteries is to harness the contra-sexual tendency, the anima in the man and the animus in the woman, in a positive way and to allow it to be integrated into the psyche to enrich and enhance the personality. However, this process was never designed for unprepared young people and there are dangers in awakening our contra-sexual side before we have consolidated our own primary sexual identity as men or women. In the second half of life Jung¹¹ wrote that:

What must be regarded as regression in a young person — feminization of the man (partial identity with the mother) and masculinization of the woman (partial identity with the father) — acquires a different meaning in the second half of life. The assimilation of contra-sexual tendencies then becomes a task that must be fulfilled in order to keep the libido in a state of progression. The task consists in integrating the unconscious, in bringing together 'conscious' and 'unconscious'. I have called this the individuation process. . .

The danger for a young person who becomes interested in spiritual growth too soon is that it can hinder rather than facilitate their development and can become a means to seek an escape from the demands of life rather than facing them. To become immersed in the spiritual quest is one way of avoiding growing up and coming to terms with the demands of the material world and there is a danger that, as Jung put it¹², a young person 'regresses to the mythical world of the archetypes', into a life of fantasy.

In Wicca we are not offering a substitute for reality, but an enhanced and enriched reality. Young people who wish to enter Wicca may be rather surprised to find that the first magical task their potential coven leaders set them is to go out and get a job or, if this is impossible, to at least do some voluntary work in the community in which they live which will connect them with the everyday world about them. This is not to improve

their moral virtues, although this can be a useful by-product, but purely for their own benefit.

In some respects, though not all, the spiritual journey is therefore easier for an older person, but for young people in whom the archetypal forces have been awakened, the answer is not to forget about this until mid-life. There are dangers in Wicca as in all the spiritual paths, but like all dangerous journeys it does not mean that they should not be undertaken, for one of the benefits of Wicca is that it exposes us to what Jung called the 'divine archetypal drama', the world of myth. For those whose psyches have become open to the archetypal powers, it is important that they do not retreat to a secret phantasy life but seek to ground their experiences in the outer world of reality and to make them meaningful on the material plane. The seasonal rituals, the initiations and even the simple magic circle in which Wicca operates externalize what is happening in the unconscious and allow us to see it, to understand it, to come to terms with it and to grow.

Wicca is therefore an adventure, an adventure deep into the realm of one's own spirit and Godhead, the most difficult journey, but the journey which at some point in our incarnations we must all begin to undertake. It is a journey of light and darkness, of laughter and love, but also of pain and desolation, but who can turn from the quest for the Grail when the Grail itself calls?

3

THE CIRCLE OF BEING

The rites of Wicca may take place indoors or outdoors, in a room specially consecrated and set aside as a temple or in a living room where the chairs have been pushed back to make some space. But wherever the location, the rites always take place within a sacred and consecrated space called 'the circle'.

Readers of Dennis Wheatley novels will be familiar with the preparations of the white magician who expends considerable effort in marking out a circle on the floor of a room from which every speck of dust has been removed. The magician makes strange chalk symbols around it and sometimes a barrier of salt is poured along the edge. Some witches do create a physical barrier when they cast their circles: Alex Sanders had a portable wooden circle painted with esoteric symbols which could be neatly folded into quarters for easy transportation, but this was not used for the majority of rites.

Other witches who cannot keep a separate room for a temple paint a magic circle on their floorboards and then cover this with a carpet when not in use. When working magic outside, some witches will use their magical sword to draw a physical circle in the earth, but the usual custom is to draw the circle not upon the ground, but in the air; for the circle is not a physical one, but a psychological one.

The circle is not necessarily circular. When working Wiccan rites indoors, the priestess will cast the circle around the perimeter of the whole room so that the physical barriers of

the walls and the psychic barrier of the circle coincide.

Why do witches work within a circle? Wicca operates in the world of archetypes. The different aspects of the Goddess and the God are manifestations of the 'dominant archetypes' of the Anima, Animus, wise old man, witch, shadow and earth mother. There are also 'organizing archetypes'. These are the archetypes which surround and contain the dominants and create a space where the power of the dominants can be safely contacted without overwhelming the psyche. In Wicca these archetypes appear in the form of the magic circle and the four quarters made by the cross within the circle, which represents the perfected self, the goal of all religious, magical and spiritual systems.

The circle has been used for millennia as a place of healing and refuge and in Wicca it is said to exist 'between the worlds'. It is poised between 'the world of men and the realms of the Mighty Ones', between humankind and the Gods, between the astral world and the physical, between the psychological and the spiritual, in a space created where those who are in the physical body can meet with non-physical forces in a safe and harmonious way. It is like a clearing in the jungle of everyday life where we can rest from its clamour and demands; a place of peace where our sometimes warring conscious and unconscious minds can meet and work in harmony. By entering the sacred precincts of the circle, we are not only clearing a physical space (literally if we have to clear the living room of furniture), we are also clearing a space in our own psyches; a space where something can happen and the disorganization of our psyches can be made whole.

THE WATCHTOWERS AND THE FOUR ELEMENTS

If the circle is representative of the perfected self, then the four quarters or watchtowers of the magic circle are the four functions or aspects of consciousness which we must access if we are to achieve that perfection. The association of the four watchtowers with the four magical elements is very ancient; so too is the related concept of the elements being ruled over by personages called elemental kings or lords. The elemental kings

rule over beings called elementals. In Wicca, the watchtower elementals are referred to as either the Mighty Ones or the Lords of the Elements.

There seems at some point to have been a fusion between two different ideas, that of the Mighty Ones as powerful ancestral guardians of the witch's clan, and the idea, which originates in ritual magic, of the elementals. The elemental kings have control over the elementals and are non-physical beings on a different path of evolution from that of humanity. They are more specialized in their functions and are thus in some ways more limited, but they are also immensely powerful. They will allow us to summon them but must be treated with respect. Each watchtower is associated with one of the four elements of air, fire, water and earth. In addition there is a fifth element which cannot be perceived by the physical senses which is called ether or spirit.

The elements can be thought of as energies in different states which have molecules vibrating at different speeds. The physical universe is composed of energy in four different forms. Energy in its densest and slowest form, where molecules are locked together to form solid shapes, is earth. Water is less dense. It is fluid and can form solid shapes only when held by a container made from an Earth element material. Energy which has sufficient form to be seen but not form enough to be grasped or held in a fixed shape is fire. Air is energy which is formless and where the molecules move so quickly that they cannot be seen by the eyes except through air's effects on other objects, such as the wind blowing through the trees. In a world around us, air corresponds to the sky and wind, fire to the Sun, water to the sea, and Earth to the land.

The fifth element, ether, verges on the physical and forms force fields around physical objects. Although ether is so fast moving that it cannot be seen by the physical eye, we begin to perceive these force fields or etheric counterparts of physical objects when we develop etheric sensitivity through Wicca, magic and other forms of psychic development. What people perceive as the aura is part of the force field of the human body which permeates the physical body and extends a little beyond it. This force field as a whole is called the etheric body.

Ghosts are etheric entities which are the etheric bodies of people and animals whose physical bodies have died. Usually

people who have seen ghosts say that they have seemed completely solid and they only realized that they were not living people when they tried to touch them or the ghost performed some physical impossibility such as walking through a wall.

Life can exist on many levels other than the physical and the elements are not physically alive. They do not have the attributes of physical life — bodies which metabolize and reproduce. Like all things in physical existence, however, the elements have etheric counterparts and these are the elementals which are alive and conscious on the etheric plane.

Elementals congregate around their naturally occurring element in the physical plane. Human beings have always been aware of these naturally occurring elementals. In deep caves we feel than unseen eyes watch us. When we touch standing stones and certain rocks, we sense that they are tingling with some kind of life force. Sometimes the wind appears to be a living thing with a will of its own. Different languages have given them different names, but pools, wells, rivers and the sea have always been thought of as inhabited by water nymphs, mermaids and undines. The magical tradition names the four groups of elementals:

Air — Sylphs
Fire — Salamanders
Water — Undines
Earth — Gnomes

People have always thought of the elementals as humanoid. A glance at art will show women with long flowing hair like strands of waterweed inhabiting rivers and small men with gnarled features inhabiting the earth. Elementals were endowed with forms appropriate to their nature.

It is important to make a distinction between the entity and the image with which the human mind clothes it. The real form of elementals is not lovely ladies with fishes' tails, but these are useful symbols which express to our minds the essence of the elementals' nature.

These images are not formed in an arbitrary way. Human consciousness works in a similar way in all times and cultures and the forms in which the elementals have been depicted are very similar. These symbols can be very helpful. Contact with elementals causes an appropriate symbol to be stimulated and

we then perceive the force in the form of the symbol. This is an act of passive clairvoyance. Stimulating the symbol by deliberately visualizing it will cause the process to happen in the opposite direction and will bring us into contact with the force. This is an act of active magic and it is in this way that we invoke the watchtowers.

PREPARING THE CIRCLE

The witch's circle differs from a church which is a building where sacred space is permanently defined by the boundaries of the walls. These boundaries are consecrated once and for all by a bishop and do not need to be renewed. In Wicca, even when a group has a room which is set up as a permanent temple or if it works within a specially painted circle on the floor, the sacred space must be created anew for every rite.

Humans have always believed in the 'other world'; that world which was neither of heaven or earth but which in some cultures was called the Land of Faery. This is the world of the traveller who falls asleep and finds himself lured by a beautiful maiden to a land where the years pass like days and no one ever grows old — a land beyond the bounds of time. This is the land of the Wiccan circle, a sacred space not ruled by clock time or by linear thought but by the timeless truths of the myths and dreams of the human psyche. No watch or clock may be brought into the circle and a key feature of Wiccan rites is a strange acceleration of time so that what seems like one hour is really three or four or five.

When people first enter Wicca, they may find it difficult to enter this sacred space. There is no border crossing through which we can pass and find ourselves automatically in the Land of Faery. To enter we must make an inner journey via the actions of casting the circle.

It is customary to speak of the series of acts necessary to create a circle as 'casting' or 'drawing' the circle. This process is also called 'building' the circle, or even more graphically 'building the spiral castle', that other-worldly dwelling glimpsed by the Celtic heroes and heroines of the past. Although the casting or building consists of symbolic gestures and words, the important part is not the outer activity, but the inner activity

of the mind. The outer acts and words are pleasing things of great beauty which are triggers for the unconscious and focus the minds of the group.

It is easy with ritual to forget this inner side and to become so preoccupied with the outer form that we forget the inner process. Once they have mastered the outer form of the ritual, one of the most important things we teach our initiates is on occasion to dispense with this and to create the circle with their minds. This is to train the mind in concentration and visualization and does not make the outer ritual redundant. For the majority, the outer mode will remain the preferred one, but the psyche is lazy and it is easy to allow ourselves to slip from the level of concentration and visualization necessary to truly make magic so that the ritual degenerates into beautiful and meaningless gestures. To make the mind do all the work occasionally is a useful antidote.

When casting a circle, we first prepare the place where the sacred space is to be made by sweeping it with that popular motif of witchcraft, the witch's besom. In outdoor rituals this can have practical uses, but the main purpose is symbolically to sweep clean our minds. As the circle is swept we put aside all thoughts of the outside world, all the vexations and worries of everyday life and, most importantly, any negative thoughts and emotions which have no place there.

How, you may ask, can witches just 'cast out' unwanted emotions like this? Wicca and magic teach us concentration and initially it is this ability to concentrate on one idea to the exclusion of all others which enables us to prepare ourselves for the circle. As the symbols of the circle become integrated into our psyche, however, they precipitate a changed state of consciousness without any intervention of the conscious mind. As one priestess said to me, 'As soon as I hear the swishing of the broom, stillness ripples through my mind. The outside world just fades away.'

This simple action of sweeping is traditionally the only mental preparation for entering the circle. However, in our own rites we have incorporated a technique which originated far away from the misty hills of Cernunnos' Britain, in the Eastern systems of consciousness change. This is the opening of the chakras.

To some the use of the chakra system seems alien but to bor-

row from the East is not a new development in Wicca, which owes much to the ancient mystery schools of the Mediterranean and Near East, which were themselves a meeting point between East and West. Witches have always worked with the energy centres of the body, the chakras, but it is in the East that the terminology and mapping of the system has been most fully developed. It is to the East, therefore, that we can turn when we want to give intellectual explanations of what witches are doing with their bodily energies and we readily use the chakra system in order to help people develop the control over these energies, which is necessary in Wicca.

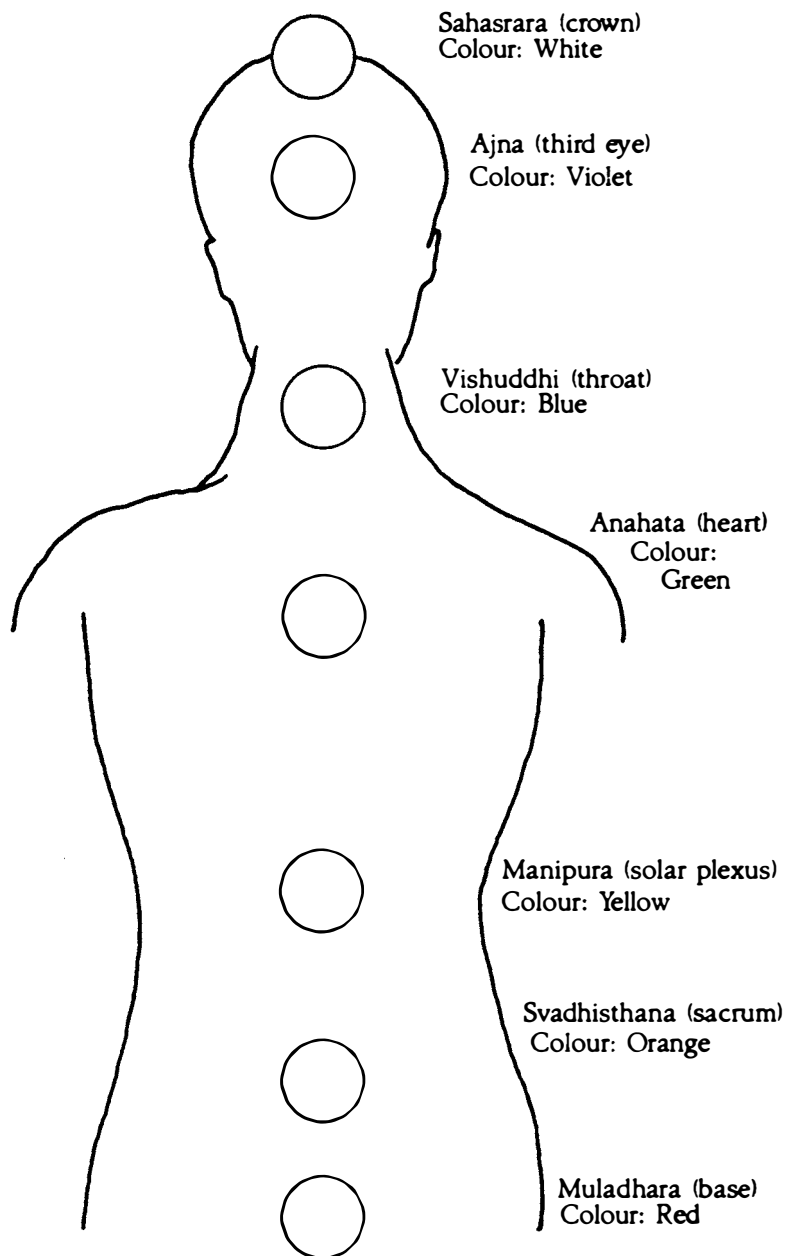
THE CHAKRAS

There are seven major chakras. The first, the muladhara chakra, is at the base of the spine; the second is the sacrum at the level of the pelvis, the svadisthana chakra; the third is the manipura chakra at the solar plexus (the second and third chakras are also sometimes associated instead with the solar plexus and spleen); the fourth is the chakra at the centre of the breast bone which is known as the heart chakra, the anahata; the fifth is the throat chakra, the visuddi; the sixth is the third eye, the ajna chakra; and the seventh is the sahasara chakra, the crown chakra at the top of the head.

Clairvoyantly, the chakras are seen as pulsating or spinning circles of light which follow the colours of the spectrum. The chakra at the base of the spine is seen as a pulsating circle of red light; the sacral chakra is orange; the solar plexus is yellow; the heart chakra is emerald green; the throat chakra is bright blue; the third eye is violet; and the crown chakra is seen as a pulsating circle of white light.

OPENING THE CHAKRAS

In a group, the technique of opening the chakras can be carried out by each person individually, or one person can talk the rest of the group through the process. In the beginning the latter method is best and someone whose clairvoyance is developed should act as group leader. As they talk the group through



THE CHAKRAS

the process they should watch everyone and ensure that each person has opened each chakra before moving on. Chakras can be opened either from the crown chakra down or from the base of the spine chakra upwards. Initially most people find it easier to work from the base up and it is this upward flowing energy which is needed for circle casting and spells.

To open the chakras, first visualize a round circle of pulsating red light at the base of the spine. Visualize this getting larger and larger until it covers the whole of the lower spine. Now imagine that you are drawing a current of energy into the chakra then into your body so that the whole of the bottom part of your body is beginning to fill with energy.

Draw more and more energy into the lower part of your body so that it is like a tank being filled with petrol; then as the current of energy comes into your body allow it to coil round and round inside you like a snake and then allow the snake of energy to rise, still spiralling until it reaches the level of your pelvis.

Visualize the snake spiralling round and round inside your body around your pelvis and as it does so visualize your sacral chakra glowing with spinning orange light. Allow the orange circle to grow larger and larger, spinning with energy. Draw more energy in from the base of the spine and bring it up through the body to the level of your sacral chakra, then draw more energy in from the base of the spine and bring the coil of energy up past your pelvis to the level of the solar plexus chakra.

Concentrate now on the base of the spine again and renew the energy in the base of spine chakra by drawing in more energy from outside until the red glow at the base of the spine begins to spin faster and faster and to grow wider and wider. Draw more energy up the spine and into the sacral chakra so that this too spins faster and grows wider and glows with a bright orange light, then allow the snake of energy to rise up through the centre of the body to the level of the solar plexus where it begins to activate the solar plexus chakra which starts to glow with a golden yellow light. Draw more energy up to this yellow glow at the solar plexus until it begins to spin and to grow into a large circle of golden spinning light. Go back to the base of the spine and draw more energy up the centre of the body and into the solar plexus chakra and allow it to open wider and wider. Allow the chakra to spin faster and faster until there is a golden spinning sun at the solar plexus chakra.

Go back to the base of the spine again and draw more energy in and up the spine past the sacral chakra, past the solar plexus chakra, up to the centre of the breast bone where there is a small green fiery glow which is the heart chakra. Allow the fiery glow to begin to spin and to grow wider until the fiery glow covers the whole of the chest area.

Go back to the base of the spine and draw the energy up the spine, up through the body past the heart chakra to the throat where there is a small blue glow. Allow the energy to stream into the throat chakra and to spin the energy in the chakra faster and faster until there is a pulsating blue centre at the throat.

Go back to the base of the spine again and bring energy up through all the chakras to the level of the throat and renew the throat energy once more. Then go back to the base of the spine and draw up more energy past the sacral chakra, past the solar plexus, past the heart and into the throat and then go back to the base of the spine again and draw a current of energy right up through the centre of the body, up past the throat and into the third eye at the centre of the forehead. Allow this energy to merge with the violet spot at the third eye and to spin the third eye energy faster and faster until there is a spiralling violet centre in the middle of the forehead.

Go back to the base of the spine and draw more energy into the body and up through the body past the sacral chakra, past the solar plexus, past the heart, past the throat and into the third eye. Allow the violet glow to spin faster and faster and then allow the current of energy to shoot up through the head and out of the crown and then to cascade around the body and down to the feet in a white stream. Go back to the base of the spine and draw up more energy right up through the body past the sacrum, past the solar plexus, past the heart, past the throat, past the third eye and out again through the crown chakra and down the body to the feet. Repeat this for as long as you wish.

Different people can open the chakras at different speeds and initially some people will take quite a long time. In the beginning, we all have chakras which we find more difficult to open than others and these will not be the same for each individual. The purpose of continually going back to the base of the spine is to draw more energy into the etheric body and it is this energy which opens the chakras. Where people are having difficulties,

the leader will have to take the group back to the base of the spine much more.

CLOSING THE CHAKRAS

After opening the chakras it is very important to close them again. Eating will close the chakras and if they are opened at the beginning of the circle, they will be closed down again by any feasting at the end which will 'earth' the energies which have been raised. However, we may often wish to open our chakras at other times, such as before sending out a current of healing to someone or before meditating and it is important to get into the habit of closing down before banishing the circle.

The chakra at the base of the spine draws in etheric energy and the crown draws spiritual energy into the body from outside — the energy of Earth and the energy of Heaven — and these chakras should not be closed. The central chakras, however, transmit and receive energies to and from those around us and since we do not know what kinds of negativity those we meet casually may be carrying, it is important that these are properly closed down. Many people will unintentionally act as 'psychic vampires', draining etheric energy from those who have it in abundance, and it is important that the etheric body should not be depleted in this way.

Closing the chakras can be done much more quickly than opening them. One of the easiest ways is to imagine each of the chakras as stained glass windows of the colour appropriate to the chakra. Starting at the top, the crown chakra, draw a fountain of white light down the outside of your whole body so that it completely covers the third eye and closes the violet light as though a white shutter was being drawn over it. Then draw more white light down from the crown past the third eye to the throat chakra, and then over the throat, shutting the chakra. Draw more light from the crown down and over the heart chakra and then draw more white light down over the top of the head, over the third eye, over the throat, over the heart chakra and down over the solar plexus chakra. Then from the crown of the head draw more white light down right past the solar plexus, past the sacrum and down to the base of the spine. Do not, however, attempt to close the base of the spine chakra.

CASTING THE CIRCLE

Once we have swept the circle and opened the chakras, to clear our minds of external thoughts and energize the etheric body, we usually say an introductory invocation which focuses our minds on the purpose of the circle. Covens tend to have favourite invocations which they use for esbats, but at Sabbats may use special invocations appropriate to the season. This is an esbat invocation which we often use:

ESBAT INVOCATION

Let us be at one to worship the power
The power which moves the universe
For behold
The Lords of Light have set their stars upon the heavens
The Earth spins and the Moon holds her course
Let us walk proudly and hold our heads high
For the sky is our Father and the Earth our Mother
And we are the children of the Gods

The circle can now be cast, using the four traditional elements — earth, air, fire, and water — and the witches' blade, the sword or athame. Although she will be assisted by a priest, these first actions of casting the circle are always carried out by a priestess and, while both High Priest and High Priestess are in charge of the circle, it is the High Priestess who has ultimate authority. The world of the circle is a mirror image of that of the outer world which is still largely patriarchal.

The reasons for this are many. It is not because the Goddess is superior to the God, or the female superior to the male, but because it is the feminine energy which is considered to be the impregnator on the magical and spiritual planes; just as male is on the material plane. While both male and female are necessary for any act of procreation, whether physical or magical, in the magical realm the flow of energy is not from the male to the female, but from the female to the male. When we talk of the actions of God and Goddess, of male and female, we are not referring to the two physical sexes. When we say the female energy we mean not only the female energy which is in women, but also the female energy which is in men.

One of the reasons why witchcraft has been popularly asso-

ciated with women is because women tend to find it easier to generate the etheric energy which is produced by the lower chakras of the body and which is necessary to produce acts of sympathetic magic. Women tend to be more instinctively in touch with this etheric energy, the power of which will wax and wane with the hormonal processes of their menstrual cycles, pregnancy and menopause. Men have to learn to make use of this power by gaining access to their own inner feminine, the Anima. While it is the feminine energy which takes the active role in magic, it is the feminine energy in us all.

Another reason why women take a more active role in casting the circle is that one of Wicca's important myths says that out of love for the Goddess, the God 'knelt and laid his sword and crown at her feet'. The sword and crown are symbols of the God's power. The meaning of this symbolic gesture is that although the God could overcome the Goddess with his physical strength, he chose not to do so, but instead laid himself open to her spiritual power.

This gesture also symbolizes the relationship between what are often called the four worlds. These are the physical world, the world of earth; the emotional world, the world of water; the intellectual world, the world of air; and the spiritual world, the world of fire. The crown and the sword are symbols of the world of air which is the intellectual world, the world of the head, which in recent millennia has been dominated by men. In the circle between the worlds, the God subordinates his intellectual world to the spiritual and intuitive world of the Goddess and in Wicca both sexes must learn to use not the world of the intellect, the world of the conscious mind, but the world of the unconscious, of intuition, the world of the feminine.

In Gardnerian Wicca less importance is placed on this symbolic gesture, but in Alexandrian Wicca when casting the circle, the magical tools, which are symbols of power and in particular the magic sword, are taken from the altar by the priest who hands them with a kiss to the priestess who will use them. She returns the tools to the altar via the priest in a similar way. This does not apply to the broomstick, which is not a magical tool.

There are two ways to cast a circle. One is for a priestess and priest to cast the circle while the rest of the coven wait outside.

The other is for the circle to be cast with the whole coven inside. There are practical reasons why one method may be favoured over another. When working in an indoor temple it is useful to be able to use the whole of the available space and if the coven is to wait outside the circle, either some of the room will have to be excluded, or they will have to wait outside the room altogether which means they cannot participate in the processes of casting the circle which prepare the psyche for magic.

When working outdoors this is less of a problem, but we feel there are psychological advantages in commencing the rite by having the sacred space gradually created around one and assisting either physically or mentally in this creation. As with all such matters, however, each group must find what works best for them and it is important to try out different methods and to see what works best on different occasions.

With the sweeping, we have cleared the space which is to be used for the circle of all unwanted influences. What we do now is seal off the space to create a vacuum which can be filled with spiritual forces and magical energies. The order in which the remaining actions are carried out will vary slightly according to the preferences of different covens, but the essential components are always the same.

The first part of circle casting is to sterilize the circle edge with water which has been purified by mixing it with salt. The water must first itself be prepared by consecrating. Water is always consecrated by a priestess, for water, like earth, is traditionally seen in magic as a feminine element. Placing the blade of her athame into the water, she says:

We exorcise thee, O Creature of Water, that thou cast out from thee all the impurities and uncleannesses of the spirits of the world of phantasm. In the names of (the God) and (the Goddess).

What are these 'impurities', 'uncleanlinesses' and 'spirits of the world of phantasm'? Traditionally, water is regarded as an element which is capable of absorbing outside influences. In part this is due to the physical nature of water; water can be contaminated. It can be muddy, which is visible contamination, but it can also be invisibly contaminated by disease and bacteria, or in modern society by the Water Authorities' fluoride and chlorine! To counteract this physical contamination, some witches use pure spring water for the consecration.

The 'world of phantasm' is, however, a reference to the fact that the element of water is considered to absorb etheric or emotional energies. To prepare the water for use in the circle, we want to clear it of any energies which have been absorbed beforehand. To drive these out, the priestess draws power from her base of the spine chakra into her solar plexus, which can then be projected out of the body through the arms and hands into the blade of the athame and thence into the water.

To witches who are unfamiliar with the chakras, these concepts may seem an additional complication, but in fact if our magic is effective we will have been using the chakras without being aware of it. The power which witches have always been taught originates within them is etheric energy drawn in through the chakras, but most of us are taught to use this energy instinctively without consciously thinking of its origin at all. However, for those who before initiation were not natural witches who instinctively used this power, it is much easier to use it if we understand its source and activate our chakras to produce it. When we have worked in Wicca for a while, as soon as we pick up our athame or sword, the blade of which will have become impregnated with our own etheric energy, we will begin to project the power automatically. When we first learn Wicca, however, most of us need to think consciously of producing power and this is easier if we understand the chakras mechanism which produces it.

As the priestess projects the power she visualizes it as violet or golden coloured light entering the water and giving it a coloured tinge. The colour of the element of ether is traditionally violet but ether can be manipulated by the mind to take on all the other colours of the spectrum. Many people therefore prefer to visualize the power which flows from the athame or sword via the solar plexus as golden yellow, the colour of the chakra.

The visualization is very important and so too is the role of the coven. While one priestess alone can make the circle, her actions will be infinitely more powerful if the coven assists her by performing the visualizations with her. A useful way of reminding the coven of its role is to use the pronoun 'we' rather than 'I' when casting a circle with others.

The actions of the priestess and the coven have the effect of cleansing the water but, in order to retain this psychic purity,

salt is added. Salt is a sterilizer and in a magic circle it is used to prevent cleansed water from absorbing any new influences. First, the priestess blesses the salt with her athame and again the priestess and coven visualize the power as golden or violet light of the solar plexus as it enters the salt.

Blessings be upon this Creature of Salt. Let all malignity and hindrance be cast forth hencefrom, and let all good enter herein.

With salt, the priestess performs a blessing rather than an exorcism because unlike water it is already pure. She is not driving 'malignity and hindrance' from the salt, but asking the salt itself to drive malignity and hindrance from the circle which it is about to help make. The priestess then adds the salt to the water and draws an earth-invoking pentagram over it:

But remember and ever mind, as water purifies the body, so the scourge purifies the soul. Wherefore do I bless thee that thou mayest aid me. In the names of (the God) and (the Goddess).

The words the priestess says are the final stage in the cleansing process and a reminder of the words of the first degree initiation, 'Art willing to suffer to learn?'. The element of earth is activated by the pentagram and the positive force of the blessing is added to the water.

If we are casting the circle with the coven members inside, the priestess will now consecrate the priests with the salted water and her priest will then consecrate the priestesses. If the coven is outside the circle this consecration, together with the purification with incense which follows, will be done to the place at this point and to the people after the coven has been brought into the circle.

The consecration consists of making on each witch the symbol of their initiatory degree with the water. Traditionally, the degree symbol used was that of the most junior member present, since the symbols of the higher degrees were not to be seen by those who had not undergone the initiation. Now that so much has been written about Wicca and the degree symbols are generally known, many covens use the witch's appropriate degree symbol at all times.

The priestess now uses the salted water to consecrate the place of working. Starting in the North, she sprinkles the ground with the salted water as she and the coven concentrate on the con-

cept of the consecrated water forming a barrier which seals the circle and prevents other minds and etheric entities entering in.

The starting point of the consecration is important. Certain directions have always been considered more sacred than others. In Islam, which functions without an altar, this is not a set sacred direction, but instead prayer is oriented to a sacred site, Mecca, the birthplace of Mohammed. In Christianity the sacred direction of the altar is East, the direction of the rising Sun. In Wicca, the North is traditionally considered the most sacred direction, the home of the Gods.

The differences in orientation between Wicca and Christianity reflect their Dionysian and Apollonian leanings, the religion of the night versus the religion of the day, of the unconscious versus the conscious. The North is the direction through which the Sun passes at night and it represents the deepest part of the unconscious mind. Our Gods are the archetypal forces which inhabit the collective unconscious. In the Northern hemisphere, whether the altar is placed in the centre of the circle or at the side, it is always oriented towards the North and it is from this point that the actions of casting the circle begin. In the Southern hemisphere, where South is the direction of the Sun's nadir, a good case could be made for placing the altar in the South.

The Wiccan custom of honouring the North as the sacred direction is one which we owe to our Pagan ancestors. In Wicca, North is the direction of holiness and the home of the Elder Gods. The Pole Star in the North was considered particularly sacred in the mythology of Northern European peoples and this was the direction of the Spiral Castle of the Goddess Arianrhod, 'Caer Arianrhod', where the dead heroes of the Celts went to dwell. In some Middle and Near Eastern systems however, where the deity is seen as a force of light ever at war with a deity or other powerful being of the dark, the North, which is the point at which the force of the Sun is at its weakest, is associated with evil. Hence, in qabbalah, the North is seen as the province of qliphothic magic¹. This is not the case in Wicca which, as a religion primarily oriented to the Moon rather than the Sun, worships towards the North as the point at which the Moon's influence is strongest in relation to the Sun.

Having the altar on the North/South axis is also important in that it aligns the circle with the Earth's magnetic currents.

In order to align the electro-magnetic field of the body with that of the Earth, traditionally we are told always to sleep with our heads to the North and our feet to the South. Mediums often used to sit with their backs to the North when giving clairvoyance in much the same way that a Wiccan Priestess will stand with her back to the North when the power of the Goddess is invoked upon her.

Having consecrated the circle, the next stage is to purify the coven and the place of working with incense. While water and earth are traditionally feminine elements, air and fire are considered masculine and here we like to depart from tradition and let the priest rather than the priestess use the censer to purify the coven members, using the appropriate degree symbol, and then the circle. The censer of incense symbolizes both fire (the burning charcoal) and air (the incense smoke) and the priest commences in the North and he and the coven concentrate on the concept of the circle becoming a place of purity.

The psychic vacuum has been created and a barrier can now be drawn to make the circle a sacred place, a safe space. For the consecration and purification, it is more convenient for the coven to stand, but at this point, particularly in Alexandrian Wicca, it is customary to kneel in honour of the Goddess, as the God knelt when he first gave to her the sword.

The priest hands to the priestess her athame or sword and, commencing in the North, she begins to cast the circle. Although the sacred direction is North, the priestess does not begin the words of the casting until she reaches the East. The North is the home of the unconscious world of images, not the conscious world of words. It is in the East that we enter the domain of the spoken word:

We conjure thee O Circle of Power that thou beist a boundary between the world of men and the realms of the Mighty Ones. A Guardian and a Protection that shall preserve and contain the power which we shall raise within thee, wherefore do we bless thee and consecrate thee in the most sacred and powerful names of (the God) and (the Goddess).

As she casts the circle, the priestess projects power from her solar plexus through the blade while she and the coven visualize violet or golden yellow light flowing down the blade and making a barrier around the circle.

After the casting, in the Alexandrian rite the priestess or priest

will often purify the circle with a candle. Here the candle symbolizes not the element of fire, but the light of the divine force which will be drawn into the circle with the invocation of the Goddess and God.

The circle has now been cast and one of what Jung calls the 'organizing archetypes' has been put into action. The second stage is for the Four Quarters, the Watchtowers, to be invoked at the four cardinal points of the circle.

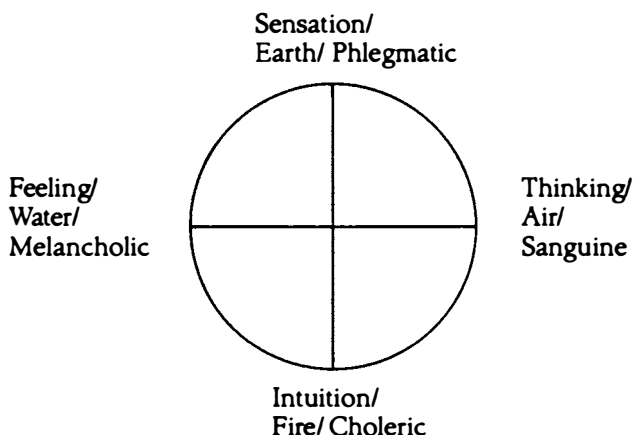
THE WATCHTOWERS

Invoking the watchtowers involves making contact with the elemental forces in the outer world and also the elemental forces within. In the outer world the elementals are most often found around their physical element but they can move quite freely about the astral plane. They can be drawn to any place by magic, just as human beings can travel to any place on the planet. However, some environments are much more hospitable to us than others. In some environments we can only survive in special circumstances and only for short periods, but because of our skills and flexibility we are in fact able to survive in a much wider range of environments than can elementals. If elementals are to be contacted away from their natural home, a suitable artificial environment must be created, just as one would prepare a tank of water for a fish or a warm cage for a tropical bird.

In a magic circle this is done by having the physical elements present in the circle act as a home for the elementals. When invoking the watchtowers, a priestess and priest will hold a symbol of the element at each quarter while her or his partner uses an athame to draw the appropriate elemental pentagram. Usually the priestess will take the more active role and will draw the invoking pentagrams, but occasionally the coven may prefer the priest to draw the pentagrams. In some covens the priest will draw the pentagrams for the 'male' elements, air and fire, while the priestess draws those for water and earth.

The four elements are found on the material plane as four types of energy: solid matter, liquid, combusting energy and gas — earth, water, fire and air. They are also found on the etheric plane in the form of the elementals and in the external realm

of consciousness, the astral plane, in the form of the elemental kings. The four elements or energy types also exist in our inner realm of consciousness, the psychological realm. Carl Jung believed that there are four ways in which people experience the world and thus four basic personality types which corresponded to the four elements of magic and to the ancient idea of the four 'humours':



Jung² believed that in the undeveloped individual one mode of consciousness always dominated. To be balanced and to create the perfected self, we must learn to use all four functions:

For complete orientation all four functions should contribute equally: thinking should facilitate cognition and judgement, feeling should tell us how and to what extent a thing is important or unimportant for us, sensation should convey concrete reality to us through seeing, hearing, tasting, etc. and intuition should enable us to divine the hidden possibilities in the background, since these too belong to the complete picture of a given situation.

This does not mean that we will all use all four functions equally and all emerge with the same personality. We will continue to be true to our dominant type, be it feeling, sensation, intuition or thinking, but we will be able to use the other functions when appropriate.

Jung divided the four functions into two groups — perception and judgement. Our perception tells us what is happening, it is the process by which we receive information and the two perceptual functions are sensation and intuition. Our judge-

ment takes the decision as to what to do about the information gleaned by perception. Our judgemental functions are thinking and feeling.

Sensation operates through the physical senses, our eyes, ears etc. and is the means by which we discover facts. Intuition shows us meanings and relationships which are beyond the reach of the senses. Sensation is grounded in the present. It tells us what is happening now. Intuition looks beyond the present and tells us how situations are likely to develop. Intuition is the function of the imagination — telling us how things might be. Sensation is the function of factual memory — telling us how things are and used to be. The fictional Sherlock Holmes, a predominantly thinking type, was someone with a highly developed sensation function which noticed physical clues which others missed and a highly developed intuition which was then able to interpret these clues in an imaginative way to reconstruct the crime.

The magical weapons which are associated with the four elements symbolize the qualities of the functions. The weapons of sensation are the earth symbols of the pentacle and the shield, which are used to guard and protect us. In the circle, the pentacle is used to protect us against outside forces which seek to enter. It is also used to focus the power of a spell in order to 'earth' it and bring it into manifestation in the world.

Our sensation function protects us against a lack of reality. Sensation people are practical and realistic. They can see what needs to be done and can bring together the disparate ideas, wishes and dreams of the other three functions and turn them into reality. Raising a great deal of power for a spell is of no use whatsoever if that power does not reach its destination. Similarly, all the bright ideas, high ideals and flashes of insight of the other three functions are of no use if they cannot be bound together and the necessary steps taken to put them into action.

Both the spear and the arrow, weapons of fire, can be sent high into the sky to travel long distances quickly and reach another place. This is how intuition operates. Thinking starts off at one point and follows a logical step by step progression until it reaches its destination. Intuition travels by leaps and at great speed. The arrow of intuition flies into the air and it

is as though it touches the heavens and comes back to earth with a bit of divinity attached to it. Intuition can travel in two dimensions at once, achieving both height and distance, and it can reach levels of consciousness which the thinker steadily walking to his goal step by step along the ground can never reach.

Once we have obtained information through our sensation or intuition, we must then use our judgemental functions, feeling and thinking, to enable us to act upon it. Our thinking function is best for dealing with things which work logically. Feeling decisions do not work very well when dealing with computers and machinery. The feeling person will be convinced that if you speak to the machine nicely it will respond, though, just to confuse the issue, sometimes it does! Thinking is a logical and analytical function and decides impersonally on the basis of cause and effect. This is the task of the sword, the weapon of air, which is a powerful weapon which cuts and separates out what is good from what is bad. In the qabalah it is associated with the sphere of Geburah, the sphere of judgement and justice, and we use our thinking function to judge and discriminate.

Feeling types understand people much better than thinking types because much of human behaviour is based on feelings rather than logic. The cup, the weapon of water, is a vessel and a container which preserves and cherishes what is sacred. Feeling decisions will take into account what is important to people and will not ride roughshod over them. It is the function of the ethics and ideals which enable us to sacrifice ourselves for others; something which our thinking side finds very illogical. When we want to find out about ourselves or clarify what is important and what is not important, we can go to the feeling person and drink of the cup of their knowledge and so come to understanding. The feeling person makes us realize that we are important and worthwhile and with that inspiration, and refreshed from the wine of the cup, we will go forth and seek the best within ourselves and so find our own Holy Grail.

By invoking the watchtowers we activate the four functions within our psyche. The circle and the four watchtowers are a pattern of perfection for the personality and provide a template for our psychological and spiritual growth. The world of the circle turns our inner world inside out so that we can see our-

selves. Usually when we first learn to invoke the watchtowers, we will find some of the elements much more difficult to invoke than others. These are usually the elements which represent our weakest functions which we use little if at all and are the aspects of our personality on which we will have to work if we are to achieve one of the aims of the mysteries, which is to heal the personality of its lop-sidedness and make it whole.

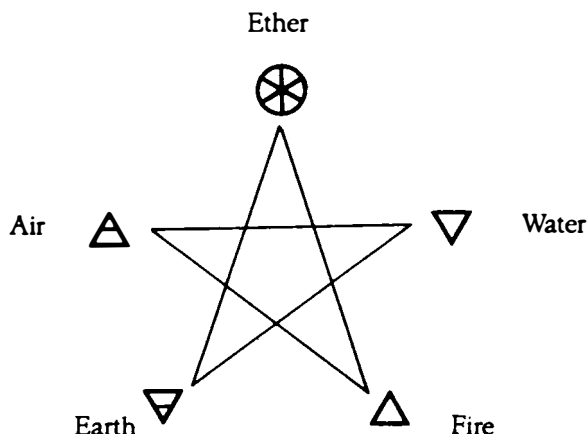
Our spiritual journey into the core of our being, to our own inner Godhead, is a journey made via this wholeness, the four elements within the circle of the balanced personality. The symbol of the watchtowers in the circle, the symbol of the circle cross, is a symbol of this balance and wholeness. When we achieve balance, we stand in the centre of the circle at the crossroads of the four functions and from this vantage point we can have a true and unbiased view of the world around us. Thus released from distortions and with our humanity made whole, we can seek that higher vantage point which lies in the third dimension above the central point. This is the point of the fifth element, the element of ether which lies beyond the four functions immanent in the material world, the fifth and transcendent function, the world of the divine self.

INVOKING THE WATCHTOWERS

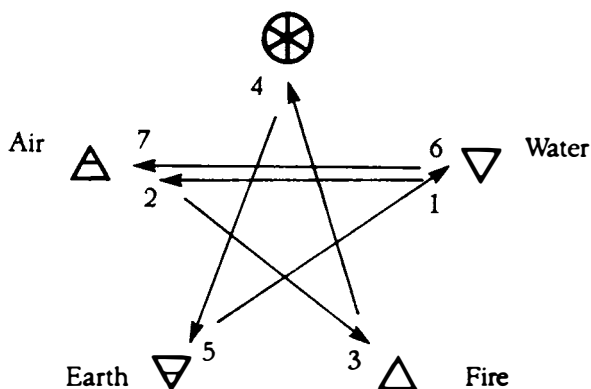
To invoke the watchtowers a priest and priestess will stand facing the cardinal point. One person will draw the invoking pentagram of the element with an athame while the other holds the appropriate magical symbol. In some covens, the coven will also draw the pentagram with their athames. Before the pentagram is drawn, the person who is invoking will draw power through their base-of-spine chakra to activate the solar plexus and will then send a current of etheric energy through the athame to make the pentagram. The coven will then visualize light of the appropriate elemental colour flowing out of the blade and forming a pentagram. as the priestess or priest says the words of invocation.

INVOKING PENTAGRAMS

Each point of a pentagram is associated with a particular element:



To make invoking pentagrams, we commence at the opposite end of a line to the element in question. For air we start at the right hand point of the pentagram, the point of its opposite element, water.



We then draw a pentagram following the order of the numbers above and to complete the pentagram we 'seal' it by making a sixth and final stroke which then ends the pentagram at the appropriate elemental point. The other pentagrams are made using the same principle.

In Gardnerian Wicca the names of the kings or lords of the elements are rarely mentioned, but in Alexandrian Wicca, the elemental kings as well as the elements themselves are invoked and visualized. Usually, the Greek names of the four winds are used, but some covens which are more oriented towards the Celtic or other mythologies may prefer other names. The first watchtower which is invoked is the East.

Ye Mighty Ones of the East, Eurius Lord of Air, we summon, stir
and call ye up, to guard our circle and witness our rites.

Once the invoking pentagram has been drawn, the coven visualizes the image of the elemental king appearing behind the pentagram. When the presence of the element has entered the circle and the elemental king has been successfully visualized, the priestess or priest will welcome him, followed by the coven:

Priest/Priestess: 'Hail and Welcome!'

All: 'Hail and Welcome!'

The priest and priestess will then similarly invoke the watchtowers of the South, West and North, visualizing etheric light of the appropriate colour and using the name of the elemental king and an appropriate elemental symbol; the candle for fire, the water bowl for water, and the pentacle for earth.

The images for the elemental kings are derived from sets of magical correspondences between the elements and other phenomena such as the seasons, ages of man, magical weapons and colours, which have been built up over the centuries. These are now imprinted, as it were, on the group consciousness of the Western mystery tradition and some are given overleaf.

CORRESPONDENCES

Element	Air	Fire	Water	Earth
Elemental	Sylphs	Salamanders	Undines	Gnomes
Weapon	Sword	Wand/Candle	Cup	Pentacle/ Shield/Black mirror
Colour	Blue	Red	Sea Green	Yellow/Brown
Season	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Ages	Boy	Young Man	Mature Man	Old Man
Nature	Hot & Moist	Hot & Dry	Cold & Moist	Cold & Dry
Name	Eurius	Notus	Zephyrus	Boreas

Eurius can be visualized as a pale youth with light coloured hair, dressed in blue garments and wearing a sword. Notus can be visualized as a man in his twenties or thirties dressed in red garments and armour and bearing a spear. His hair is the gold of summer Sun. Zephyrus can be visualized as a middle-aged man in sea green garments bearing a cup. His hair is russet red, the colour of autumn. Boreas can be visualized as an old man with dark grey hair streaked with black. He wears yellowy-brown or black robes. He bears a pentacle, shield or black mirror.

These watchtower visualizations are simple ones which are easy for new initiates. Individual covens may build up more elaborate images than these, perhaps by visualizing an appropriate seasonal scene as a backcloth and/or by including the elementals or other appropriate symbols. Initially these images must be formed consciously, but with practice they will appear spontaneously.

BANISHING THE CIRCLE

The circumference has been drawn and the four quarters invoked; the cross within the circle is complete. What happens within the circle I will leave to later chapters, but first I will explain how we dismantle that which we have created.

If we have opened our chakras at the beginning of the rite it is important before banishing to ensure that we close them. It is then customary to close the circle with some kind of blessing prayer to thank the Gods for their assistance and to send out positive thoughts to those who have been unable to attend the meeting.

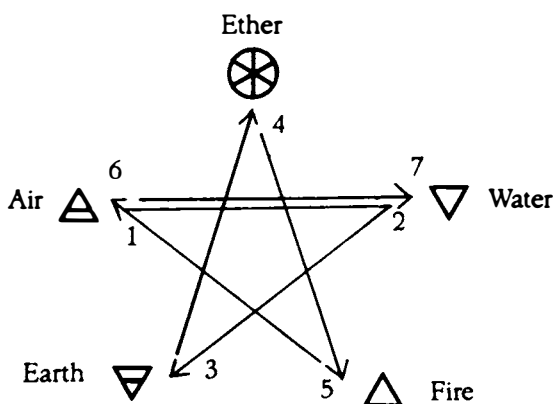
The final action is to banish the watchtowers. This is done by going to each of the quarters and performing a banishing pentagram which is made in the reverse direction to the invoking pentagram. The watchtowers are banished deosil starting from the East. The coven visualizes a pentagram of the appropriate colour suspended in the air at the quarter. At the East a priest or priestess will say:

Ye Mighty Ones of the East, Eurius Lord of Air, thank you for attending and ere ye depart to your fair and lovely realms, we bid you hail and farewell.

At the same time we draw the banishing pentagram. When we draw invoking pentagrams we visualize light flowing out of the athame. To banish, we must visualize the lines of light which form the pentagram being drawn back into the blade of the athame, so that as the movements of the banishing are made, one by one the lines of the pentagram disappear. By drawing the energy in this way we are drawing back the energy we have invoked out of our own psyches and replenishing it. Banishing is very important because we do not wish to leave our etheric energy hanging about around the circle.

BANISHING PENTAGRAMS

With banishing pentagrams we start at the point where the invoking pentagram finished which is the point of the element and we then retrace our steps. An air banishing pentagram would be drawn:



Having banished the East, we proceed to the South, the West and the North in the same way and thus our journey is finished:

The Rite is ended.

4

THE MAKING OF MAGIC

Once we have been initiated, one of the first things we will learn is how to make magic, which, as Aleister Crowley said, is:

...the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will.¹

To many, the idea that magic can be a science may seem odd, but ironically it is recent scientific advances which are giving us greater insight into how magic works. Magic is also an art, but perhaps it is also like playing football. People often ask if magic works and the answer is that it does, but not all the time.

Most people can learn how to kick a ball around a field, but the level of skill will always vary; not all are World Cup class. Our ability to perform magic will also vary, although this can be improved with practice. Each piece of magic we do is, however, rather like a different game and our success will depend on the strength of the opposing team. By 'opposing team' I do not mean 'the forces of darkness' or other horror movie notions, but the other trends, energies and psyches which are being brought to bear on the situation. Magic is influenced by cosmic tides; some astrological configurations are more favourable for certain types of magical happening than others. Magic is also influenced by the wills of other human beings in the situation, including the person for whom the work is being done.

In Wicca we believe that each of us has a free will. We cannot have other than free will because each of us in our innermost centre is divine. It is possible therefore for people to refuse help and to set up barriers against our magic and this is a choice which must be respected. This can be a conscious refusal, but hidden unconscious motives of people involved in the situation are also very important.

Sometimes we may have worked very hard to help someone to sell their house, only for completion of the sale to be continually thwarted by a whole series of extremely unlikely mischances. Here witches have to be good psychologists and try to find the source of the 'blockage'. Is the person secretly afraid of change and unwilling to leave the familiarity of their old town? Is it perhaps their partner who is unwilling; do they want different things?

Sometimes magic is not physically possible. Magic will not grow back missing limbs, but it will arrest the course of diseases and galvanize the body's auto-immune system to make someone well.

If magic works, how does it work? This is not always something which witches think much about. In my first circle after initiation I was told we were going to clear someone's new house of an oppressive atmosphere. Everyone sat in a circle, joined hands, closed their eyes and seemed to have slipped into a trance. My problem was that they hadn't told me what to do. Doing what seemed logical, I visualized a house full of grey mist and went into each room, gathered all the mist by the window, opened the window and fanned it all out, shutting the window behind it. I finished and opened my eyes to find one of the priests smiling at me. 'Very good', he said encouragingly, and the rite moved on.

While some covens have a lot of post-initiation training, others do not and new initiates are left very much to work out for themselves how to make magic. For the 'natural' witches and the very intuitive, this is the best way; explanations would only confuse them! For those burdened with a more thinking-oriented psyche, explanations are useful, but I am conscious that as yet we understand only part of the truth. There is much which we still have to learn and we must await the input of generations to come, but here I offer some of the points which to me are important.

RAISING THE POWER

Magic involves the use of energy and a change in consciousness and in a Wiccan circle the first step is usually for the group to perform a circle dance and chant in order to release etheric energy or 'raise the power'. The dance and chant can take place after we have invoked the Gods who complete the circle, but after all the concentration, visualization and stillness of the circle casting, it is good to do something active in the circle in order to release any tension.

The dance is one of the eight ways of raising power which are known in Wicca as the eight-fold paths. Its origins are ancient and date at least as far back as the Paleolithic Age. In Paleolithic religious practice, the dance was a means by which the members of the tribe achieved emotional and rhythmic unity between themselves and their totem animal. The dances were led by a shaman priest who would adopt the guise of an animal by wearing its skin, horns and tail. The purpose was to obtain food. In a state of changed consciousness, the tribe could communicate with the animals they wished to kill, leading them to where they were lying in wait and persuading them, as it were, to sacrifice their lives for human survival. This is a practice still carried out today by pygmies and others who have not lost contact with this older way of life.

Dance remained part of the ritual worship of Neolithic society, but with the prosperity brought about by agriculture and domestication of animals, the aim was more to promote group sexual unity and fertility than to assist in hunting. The dance remained a key feature of later Dionysian types of Paganism and the group activity which followed gave rise to the type of complaints that the historian Livy recorded about the Roman Bacchanalia. Group sexual activity remained part of the Old Religion into recent historical times and greatly excited the Christian inquisitors who no doubt derived much salacious pleasure from such sexual descriptions in their own repressed lives. This type of sexual activity was extremely useful in older societies where fertility was all important and ensured that as many women as possible would achieve pregnancy. In Wicca today, however, the dance is used to achieve unity at the level of the group mind rather than the group body.

In magic, the direction of movement has special significance.

Since deosil, or clockwise, is the apparent direction of the Sun (in the Northern hemisphere*), it is associated with the direction of evolution and has been seen traditionally as the direction of 'good', 'white' or 'right-hand path' magic. Conversely widdershins, or anti-clockwise, is seen as being against evolution and therefore the direction of the forces of chaos and 'bad', 'black' and 'left-hand path' magic. Usually in the circle the dance is performed deosil, but on occasion we find widdershins magic useful. For instance, when we are working magic for someone with cancer, we find it much more successful if we operate on two levels and perform deosil magic in order to give the person's auto-immune system the strength with which to fight the cancer and widdershins magic to stop the progress of the cancerous cells.

The rhythmical movement of the dance has the effect on the dancers of releasing the hold of the ego and allowing individual personalities to merge into one group entity. This sense of unity is not a collective illusion, but a reality. Below the level of consciousness, in the deeper levels of the unconscious, individual psyches can merge as one. What is felt by one is then felt by all and telepathy in the form of shared emotions and shared images and visions occurs.

We share emotions and images rather than thoughts because at this level we have passed beyond the realm of words and language which are the symbol system of the conscious mind. We have descended into the unconscious, the source of two levels of our nature which are not human but are our highest and our lowest, the animal and the divine. It was this paradox, that of becoming close to our animal selves and also finding the source of our divinity, which was the great insight of Dionysian Paganism which involved, as Jung² put it:

... liberation of unbounded instinct, the breaking loose of the unbridled dynamism of animal and divine nature; hence in the Dionysian rout man appears as a satyr, god above and goat below.

The dance which unites our animal energy and our inner divinity breaks the hold of the normal everyday conscious mind which deludes us that we are separate and alone and allows us to reunite once more with the world within and the world

*See Chapter 10 for the southern hemisphere.

without. The dance is a feature of Dionysian religion which with its ecstatic practices seeks to release us from our individuality, so that we can merge with others and with the outer universe itself. This 'letting go' of our individuality releases us from the strait-jacket of our persona and our ego so that we can touch the true centre of our being which lies not in the rational world of the conscious mind but in the depths of our unconscious. This state is enjoyable in itself, but in Wicca the dance also has a more specific purpose as a means of performing magic. There are two ways in which the dance can be used. Both involve a change of consciousness, but the second also involves the release of etheric energy.

THE SPIRAL DANCE

Traditional witch belief has always held that the human body has within it a latent power which can be released through use of the eight-fold paths. This power which was known to western European witches is the etheric energy which is used in various forms of yoga including the tantric system. Etheric energy is absorbed by clothing and for this reason in magic special robes rather than ordinary clothes are worn, so that the energy is not carried into everyday life. However, ritual clothing as well as other clothing, inhibits the release of this energy into a central cone of power and witches nearly always perform their rites naked unless it is an outdoor ritual where it is too cold.

The ease with which this power can be released is in part a matter of practice. Rather like driving a car, it is something which after a while we can do without thinking about at all. It is also a matter of mood and quite possibly a matter of the strengths of certain celestial influences. Traditionally, witch gatherings are held at the full Moon. In the Great Mother Charge we are told, '... better it be when the Moon is full'. This is partly for practical reasons. As those who live in rural areas will know, prior to the days of cars it was not feasible to travel about the countryside in the pitch darkness. However, the major reason why in these days of artificial lighting, Wiccan meetings usually take place near the full Moon is the long-held folk and occult belief that the Moon affects our physical and etheric bodies and our psyche and that our psychic and magical abilities are

greater at the full Moon.

In recent years, the fact that the Moon affects the human mind and body has been borne out by scientific research. Scientists have discovered that as well as having its well-known effects on the mentally unstable, lunar energies also influence physiological events such as bleeding and the incidence of the outbreak of certain diseases.³ The effect of the Moon may be indirect rather than direct in that the phases of the Moon cause fluctuations in the Earth's magnetic and electrical fields. The human body can detect very subtle changes in the Earth's magnetism caused by the lunar cycle and it is this ability to detect magnetic changes which is used by dowzers and some healers.

The full nature of the connections between lunar and other celestial energies and events in the physical and etheric bodies and the psyche are yet to be fully explored but, as those who have tried it will know, working magic at times other than the full Moon is more tiring and requires greater effort than full Moon magic, and the powers of the full Moon can be used to energize the etheric body in ways which are not possible when its influence is weaker. However, despite these disadvantages, the waning moon is a good time for magical work of a 'winding down' nature which causes things which are happening to cease to happen. Cancer is again something which responds well to a combination of waning Moon and waxing or full Moon magic.

Although the dance is usually performed in a ring, it is often referred to as the 'spiral dance' because the movement of the energy is an upward spiral. In a large circle the dance can however be performed as an inward turning spiral. In this case the dance leader, the Lord or Lady of the Dance, will end up at the centre of the circle as the central focus of the raised energy and will be its main transmitter.

The dance, like other movements in the circle, requires a balance of male and female energies and if possible the ring should consist of alternating members of the opposite sex. If the coven does not have an equal balance of male and female members then some members can sit in the centre of the circle to direct the power. If the imbalance of sexes is small, someone who has good access to both their male and female energies should be placed next to someone of their own sex. They will then provide both polarities and can re-polarize the energy as

it passes through them. With a very large imbalance it may be necessary to create an outer and an inner ring of dancers of the same sex and for the outer ring to direct all the power inwards to the inner ring who will then spiral the power to the centre of the circle and allow it to rise from there.

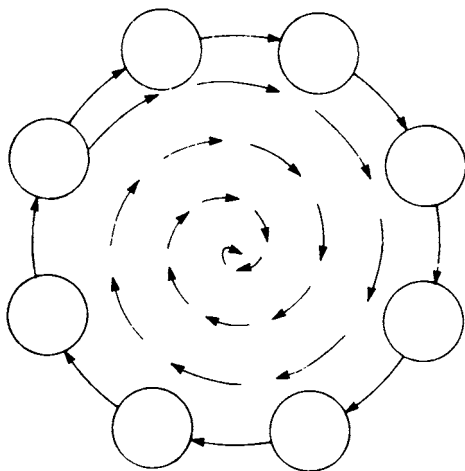
When dancing to raise power, the effect is enhanced if the coven is together on an etheric level. Depending on the level of experience of the group, this can be done by the whole group or by one of its more experienced members. I will assume the latter and that this person is a priestess, but it can be done by either sex.

At the beginning, the priestess raises energy in her base-of-spine chakra and when it has built up sufficiently, she allows the energy or power to flow out of the chakra and to spiral around her body in a deosil direction like a snake. When a strong spiral of energy has built up, she then visualizes the energy shooting out to the priest in front of her and entering his base-of-spine chakra. As the priestess's energy enters the priest, it will merge with his own energy and the merged energy stream should then be directed out of his body and spiralled deosil around him until it is sufficiently strong to direct to the next person along.

When the spiral of energy returns to the priestess, she will absorb it not into her base-of-spine chakra but into the next level up, her sacral chakra. The snake of energy is again directed round the circle and again as it returns to her, she will absorb it into a higher chakra. Meantime, the other dancers will be constantly drawing more energy into their base-of-spine chakra and allowing it to rise up the body so that as the main spiral passes through them it is made stronger. This goes on until the power has reached the level of the third eye.

If we are holding an image in our minds, the chakra which is involved is the third eye, the chakra of clairvoyance and 'seeing'. When the dance is used in order to effect a specific intent, we will hold in our minds a picture of what we wish to happen. If we want someone to get well, we could picture them being bathed in golden healing light and their body absorbing it and beginning to glow with vitality. If someone has broken their leg, we might visualize them walking at first very tentatively and then more and more surely, until they are running and jumping. Magic works much better with pictures than words

because in order to do magic we must use the older and deeper levels of the psyche.



The Spiral Dance

To the clairvoyant eye, the cone of power rising through the chakras of the dancers looks like a rainbow which is red at the level of the base-of-spine chakra and then passes through the spectrum until it reaches the level of the third eye, when it will appear violet. Many books on Wicca describe the cone of **power** as violet because it is when it reaches the third eye that most witches will look at the power to make sure it is there! As the spiral reaches the topmost chakras, the crown chakra is stimulated and in its final form the power looks more ultra-violet/silver-white, a mixture of the colours of the energies of the crown and third eye chakras.

As the power reaches the top of the head it is projected towards the centre of the circle so that all the energy is joined into one column of light above the ground. This projecting of the energy is done by the third eye and crown chakras working together to push the power out in spiralling lines of energy which twist around one another and join at the tip. This is the making of the alicorn, the unicorn's horn and as myths and legends tell us, it is a powerful magical tool.

USING THE POWER

What happens next will depend on the purpose of the dance. The dance can serve as an introduction to the magical working when it links the group's consciousness into a group mind and creates a reservoir of energy which can be drawn on later in the rite. It is also used as a means of performing specific pieces of magic, for instance healing or getting someone a job. In this case, as the power is raised, the dancers will hold in their minds an image of the 'intent', i.e. what they are aiming to achieve. As the spiral of power reaches the third eye this picture will be energized and as the power joins above the centre of the circle, it is as though an astral negative had been developed into a picture which is brought into being in the material world. Holding for the last time the image of what is desired, the cone of power is now 'sent', i.e. the dancers let go of the energy and allow it to fly out of the circle and towards its destination.

The dance is usually accompanied by a chant. These can be chants from the *Book of Shadows* or chants specially constructed for a particular magical intent. One of the best known chants for raising power is *The Witches' Rune*.

THE WITCHES' RUNE

Darksome night and shining Moon
East then South then West then North
Harken to the Witches' Rune
Here we come to call thee forth

Earth and Water, Air and Fire
Wand and pentacle and sword
Work ye unto our desire
And harken ye unto our word

Cords and censer, scourge and knife
Powers of the witches' blade
Waken all ye unto life
And come ye as the charm is made

Queen of Heaven, Queen of Hell
Horned Hunter of the night
Lend your power unto our spell
And work our will by magic rite

By all the powers of land and sea
 By all the might of Moon and Sun
 As we do will so mote it be
 Chant the spell and be it done

Eko, eko Azarak
 Eko, eko Zamilak
 Eko, eko Cernunnos
 Eko, eko Aradia

The last verse of this chant is also used on its own. In chanting the way in which the voice is used is all important. We can say the words of a chant in two ways. With a meaningless chant such as 'Eko, Eko Azarak', we can use it solely to occupy the conscious mind and keep it out of the way! In this case the words of the chant are fairly unimportant. Such chants are similar to the playground chants and skipping rhymes which children use, many of which are themselves corruptions of old magical chants. *The Witches' Rune* is a very long chant and can be long because witches use it so often that they can say it in their sleep. Usually, however, chants will only be four or six lines, such as the healing chant below which is a version of a chant in the *Book of Shadows*.

THE HEALING RUNE

This is the spell that we intone
 Flesh to flesh and bone to bone
 Sinew to sinew and vein to vein
 And each one shall be whole again

If the words of the chant are not meaningless but are an expression of the intent, then we can stimulate the throat chakra to inject each word we speak with energy. This is easier if at the same time we use the words to create a picture in our minds. If we say the Witches' Rune, we can visualize the 'darksome night' and the 'shining Moon', etc. This type of spell-chanting is called a 'making' whereby we use the energized words and visualization to call into being what we say, rather as in the Jewish version of the creation myth, the God said, 'Let there be light'.

THE GROUP MIND

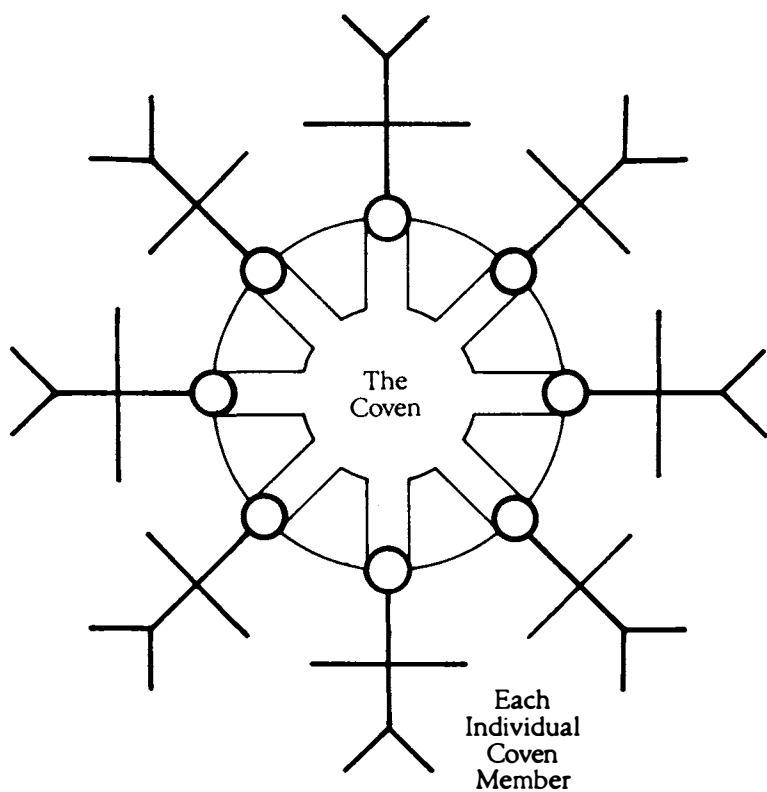
For a coven to make magic in a witches' circle involves breaking down the barriers between the psyches of individuals and

a fusion of part, though not all, of their consciousness in a 'group mind'. There is a level of awareness at which human psyches can communicate directly with one another without the intervention of the usual modes of communication. In that receptive state, symbols can come from the sum total of the group mind which are not the product of any one individual in the circle but are the product of the group itself which, by the workings of the ritual, has become a separate entity; the whole but more than the sum of the parts.

The 'group mind' of the coven exists on the borders of the personal and the collective unconscious. Beyond the personal unconscious which is that part of ourselves which may eventually become conscious, along the lines of land reclaimed from the sea, there lies the collective unconscious. Jung thought that there were two levels of the unconscious. The first he called the 'personal unconscious' and the second, the deeper layer, the 'collective unconscious'. The collective unconscious is a common and inherited collective psyche. When our minds have learned to access this psyche they can, as it were, travel via this route to come into contact with other psyches.

The group mind can be thought of as part of the psyche of the individuals in the group which they have opened up to one another. This tends to create strong bonds between people because a lot of telepathic communication occurs, some of which comes into consciousness. This is quite an important factor when a new person enters the group. The initiation ceremony is a way of opening someone up to the group mind. The group mind can be thought of as operating on two levels — the larger group mind of Wicca and the smaller group minds of individual covens. The initiation ceremony opens the candidate to both. Many covens will prefer to re-initiate new witches who join their group to ensure that they come into contact with that particular coven's group mind, but others find that after a few meetings new people are absorbed.

Group magic involves making links between the personal unconscious of one person and another. These links are initially made only in the circle, but over the months and years the group remains linked outside the circle so that coven members are in permanent psychic contact with one another. This does not mean that we spy on each other's thoughts! People who work together in a Wiccan group will, however, be aware



when someone in the group has problems; they will often have clairvoyant dreams about one another and, as one of our group complained, it is very annoying to write letters to people who immediately ring you up as soon as you put the pen down!

The group mind consists of branches from the personal unconscious of each member which join with branches from the unconscious minds of the others in the group. The group mind is then the centre of a star whose rays are a projection of the psyches of individual members of the coven. Aleister Crowley taught that 'Every man and woman is a star'⁴. Every coven is also a star, a whole which, if it really works well, is greater than the sum of its parts.

A group mind is not made overnight, but is built up as we create links of love and trust with one another. In his book *The Science of the Paranormal*⁵, the experimental psychologist Dr Lawrence Le Shan has set out the conditions which he considers necessary for what he calls 'psi-occurrences' to occur. These are more likely to happen between individuals who interact together in a group which is co-operative rather than competitive; where the group is non-authoritarian; and where people like each other. All this gives us some useful pointers as to the atmosphere we must foster in our covens if they are to be successful and it also means that we must be careful when we bring new members into the group to check that they are compatible with the rest.

THE RATIONALE OF MAGIC

Magic involves the use of powers of the human mind which are beyond those at present acknowledged by many but not all scientists. Our understanding of how magic works has been greatly improved in recent years by the work of some of the more forward-thinking researchers. One to whom we owe a particular debt is the late Maxwell Cade who was a pioneer in biofeedback research. Maxwell Cade and his co-workers⁶ used biofeedback instruments to plot changes in brain patterns which occurred with a number of activities relevant to magic and witchcraft, such as meditation, parapsychological phenomena like metal bending, and healing.

To explain how we achieve the altered states of conscious-

ness in which we can perform magic, it is necessary to explain something about the activity and structure of the brain. The brain produces electrical activity at different frequencies which appear as distinct brain rhythms. In terms of cycles per second, the slowest is the delta rhythm, which in most people is found only in deep dreamless sleep. However, it also appears when people are performing paranormal psychical activities such as healing and metal bending. The theta rhythm is a slightly faster rhythm which in most people appears only when dreaming. However, it also appears in the brain rhythms of people who are experienced meditators and, again, in healers. The alpha rhythm is faster again. It appears when we close our eyes and is associated with the first stages of relaxation. It appears in conjunction with other rhythms when we enter the meditative state. The fastest rhythm, beta, is the normal waking rhythm of the brain.

The brain consists of a base, the brain stem, which is an extension of the spinal cord; above this is the limbic system together with the cerebellum; and above this is the cortex. Both the limbic system and the cortex are divided into two hemispheres, the left and the right. The nerves which control our hand and foot movements enter the spinal column and rise to the brain. At a point at the base of the skull, they cross over so that the activities of the right side of our body are controlled by the left hemisphere of the brain, and the activities of the left side by the right hemisphere of the brain. In about two thirds of people, usually the right-handed, the left hemisphere is dominant. The remainder, some of whom will be ambidextrous, will have the right hemisphere dominant.

For most people, the left hemisphere of the brain is associated with logical thought, discriminating one thing from another, putting things into categories, and speech. The right hemisphere is more 'holistic' and is responsible for recognizing shapes such as faces, interpreting shapes such as maps, appreciating art and music, seeing the whole picture rather than the parts, and seeing the similarities between things rather than the differences. For simplicity's sake, I will call the logical linear side the left-brain and the holistic side the right-brain, although for some people these positions will be reversed. The right-brain, which controls the left hand, is very important in magic, hence the traditional association between left-handedness and witchcraft.

There are four major states of consciousness which are important in a Wiccan circle. The first is the state of everyday waking consciousness which corresponds primarily to the beta rhythm of the brain. The right brain can be considered the seat of the unconscious and the left-brain the conscious mind. In most people there is an imbalance in brain activity, with the dominant left-brain being the most active. People who have practised meditation or other spiritual disciplines, however, show a synchronized pattern of activity with both hemispheres of the brain acting in co-ordination.

When we enter a Wiccan circle there is an initial change of consciousness from the usually lop-sided everyday brain state with its beta rhythm, to a second meditative state which is associated with balanced left and right-brain activity and beta and alpha rhythms. This can be thought of as a higher or deeper state of consciousness and, to the extent that these spatial concepts are meaningful, it is both. As we practise the visualization exercises and concentrate totally on, for instance, the point of the sword as we cast the circle, we learn to use our right-brains until the two halves of the brain work equally well and we can use either as appropriate. The first stage of spiritual development can therefore be seen as the awakening of the right-brain, i.e. gaining access to our unconscious minds.

In learning new levels of consciousness, this first stage can be the most difficult and it is easy to give up. Most of us have a voice in our heads which constantly monitors our behaviour and comments on our performance in everyday life. This is the voice which harangues us for making such idiots of ourselves as we argue incoherently with our boss who has given us the fifth conflicting instruction that day; the voice which inwardly hums the latest song on the radio until it drives us crazy; which agonizes with guilt about drinking too much at that party last night; and which tells us what weak-willed, worthless persons we are for eating all those cream cakes when we are supposed to be on a diet.

In order to achieve higher states of consciousness, we have to stop this inner parent, this 'noise in the system'. We must learn in the circle to concentrate totally on what we are doing. Unless we are in a profession which requires total sensory concentration, such as racing drivers, ballet dancers, tightrope walkers, how often in everyday life do we totally exclude every-

thing else and concentrate solely on one thing, say eating, driving or watching television to the exclusion of all else?

We are not only subject to inner distractions; we also look outward. Normally this outward looking part of our attention is needed for survival. In nature, if you watch deer grazing, you will see that they are constantly looking up, alert for any predators who might approach. A bird's eyes give almost 360° degree vision so that they can take flight in time to avoid marauding cats. In our own lives, we may not face predators but we must practise the same outer scanning as we walk down the street so that we do not fall down potholes and step in front of passing cars. In order to achieve higher states of consciousness, we have to let go of the inner 'watcher'. In the circle, our whole attention must not only be focused on one thing, it must also be focused inward. This can only be achieved with practice.

As we learn to concentrate our minds and get the two halves of the brain working in harmony, we can enter the third state, which is the meditative state. In this state there will be some everyday beta activity so we will still be aware of the world around us, but the most prominent rhythm will be the alpha rhythm, and there will also be a lesser but significant amount of theta activity. The theta rhythm is only usually present when we are dreaming and in this deeper meditative state we are able to access the world of images in a way only usually possible when we are asleep. It is in this state that clairvoyance occurs and images of the future which would normally remain unconscious will emerge. This theta activity is essential for magic.

The fourth state is the contemplative state which in Eastern systems is called samadhi. This is associated with the presence of beta, alpha and theta rhythms, as before, but in addition a strong delta rhythm will appear which normally appears only in deep sleep. This is the state which we aim to achieve when we have the divine force invoked into us. When we are first invoked on, we may only reach the deeper meditative state but, with time, we can enter the state of samadhi, a state which is associated with a vast expansion of consciousness. There is then no sense of subject and object, you and I, self and other, but only a sense of being at one with the universe.

THE MAGICAL REALITIES

Changing our levels of consciousness and the changes in brain rhythm associated with them involve in effect moving into different levels of reality. Lawrence Le Shan⁷ classifies the worlds which surround us into four different realities which are very helpful in explaining Wicca.

The everyday world which we see with our senses Le Shan calls 'sensory reality'. This is the reality which we perceive with what Jung calls the sensation function. It is the world of bricks and mortar, of smell and taste and sight and sound and touch. The world where we 'believe in it if we can see it'. The sensory reality is the world of the element of Earth. In Buddhism, the outer material world which we perceive with the senses is treated as 'maya', illusion, and Christianity has always sought escape from the material through asceticism and the 'denial of the flesh'. In Paganism, we believe we should enjoy the material world, and in particular the beauties of nature, but the material is only one level of reality and to achieve our full potential as humans we must learn to move in other realms.

Another of Le Shan's realities is the 'mythic reality'. This is the reality of sympathetic magic where 'anything can be identical with anything else'. Things such as a person and a wax image of them can be connected by making the image look like the person, by incorporating part of the person's body such as hair or nail clippings, or by a naming ceremony which uses energized words to give the image the same name as the person. In the mythic reality Le Shan says:

The part is identical with the whole, the name with the thing, and the symbol with its object. Each can be treated as if it were the other.

Some of the methodology of sympathetic magic has been used by witches for millennia, such as the doll-like images called fith-faths which are traditionally made of wax or clay. These tend to get rather a bad press as a means of performing 'maleficium' and figured frequently in witch trials. Studies of witchcraft in Anglo-Saxon England⁸ abound with cases such as that of a widow who in AD 970 was accused of trying to murder a man by driving nails into a poppet or doll-type image, and the famous case of the Berwickshire witches, who supposedly plotted against the life of King James I of England, centred on

the use of a wax fith-fath. Such images can be used to do harm, but the image itself is entirely neutral and it is the intent with which they are used which is important. Their most common use today is as a vehicle for distant healing.

Cord magic, which is very popular with Alexandrian witches also has a long history and was used by our neolithic ancestors, as well as in more recent medieval times. Burchard, Bishop of Worms⁹ at the beginning of the eleventh century, describes a technique whereby women who had been deserted by faithless lovers could render the offending man impotent by making three knots in a cord. The Bishop also describes peasants using spells whereby they knotted cords which they then placed in trees or at road forks as a form of psychic lightning conductor in order to direct harm and injury away from their lands and towards those of their neighbours.

The mythic reality functions on the principle of 'as above, so below' which is derived from the famous emerald tablet of Hermes Trismegistus. This has always been part of the world view of witchcraft and magic. In the mythic reality and in sympathetic magic, the symbol and the object, the macrocosm and the microcosm, are subject to the same laws, structure and activity. By bringing them together through ritual, trance etc., the microcosm can be made to affect the macrocosm. Sympathetic magic is more difficult for contemporary Western humans than for earlier cultures. It is the reality of pre-literate cultures, the realm of 'dreamtime' where dream and reality are indistinguishable, and to do it we must let go of the hold which the conscious mind has on the psyche.

Sympathetic magic operates in a symbolic world, but symbols alone will not produce magical effects. The objects which we use must be 'brought to life' and given a consciousness of their own. To do this, we must use the trained will to 'break off' part of the psyche which has been imbued with the will to perform our intent. The psyche has always had the potential to split off parts of itself so that they can function autonomously as separate personalities. These 'sub-personalities', can appear good or bad, as the guides of spiritualist mediums who often have superior intellectual and spiritual gifts to the medium, or as sub-personalities such as poltergeists which are sometimes manifested by sexually-awakening adolescents.

While these instances occur outside the control of the cons-

scious mind, the processes required to produce sympathetic magic are similar to these and similar also to those required in evocation. When we *invoke* we bring into our everyday psyche something which is hidden in the deeper levels of ourselves and expand our consciousness. To *evoke* means to 'call forth' or to 'call up' and here we break off part of our psyche and separate it from ourselves in the same way that some scientists think the Moon was broken off from the Earth. This broken off part will still be under our control to some extent, in the same way that the Moon is subject to the Earth's gravitational pull, but it will move into its own independent orbit. Evoked consciousness is similarly broken off and 'flung out' of the circle by the will of the group and 'sent' to do its work.

For a material object to hold evoked consciousness, it must have a body and this is supplied by an etheric force field formed from the etheric energy released by the coven. Etheric energy can be manipulated by the mind and can be formed into shapes by visualization, but the chakras which release etheric energy are the emotional centres and to do sympathetic magic we must feel personally and emotionally involved with the individual for whom we are practising our art. This is one of the reasons why magic is more associated in the popular mind with maleficium, negative magic, than positive magic and why people have always feared those who have magical powers.

Undeveloped human beings are selfish and full of fears; fears that others will threaten them in some way; fears that others seek what is theirs. They are also full of jealousies and covet their neighbours' goods, spouses, successes and achievements and have strong urges to punish them for their success. As the history of our wars will show, hate is a very strong emotion in the human psyche and, without the balance of inner wisdom, doing bad magic is easier than doing good. Without developed consciousness, altruistic love is something which we have only for our own kith and kin. We will die for our children but we will not die for our neighbours. To love our neighbours requires a higher emotion which brings us into the next level of reality whereby we can see that our neighbour is linked to us and if we hurt him or her we hurt ourselves, whereas if we help him or her we help ourselves.

If we are to be responsible practitioners of magic, this must go hand in hand with spiritual development and the growth

of self-knowledge and inner wisdom. In making magic we must scrupulously examine our motives for each piece of work we do, and if we are asked for magical help we must use our wisdom to decide whether it is truly beneficial for the person concerned and at the same time 'harms none' and is in accordance with the tenet of the 'perfect love' which must be the aim of all magic.

Making magic in a Wiccan circle is frequently spoken of as 'work' and the term is appropriate because magic is hard work. Perhaps I should also make explicit that it is not paid work. Witches work magic on behalf of people who have asked for help and also for people who have not asked but who are thought to be in need. Wicca does not however take payment for magic and a glowing sense of altruism has to be the witch's only reward!

The mythic reality is not just the realm of active psychism, or magic. It is also the realm of the passive psychism which is used in divination. The phrase 'as above, so below' has been largely replaced by a more modern term used by Carl Jung, that of 'synchronicity'¹⁰.

Synchronicity is 'a meaningful coincidence'. Such coincidences often occur via dreams. For instance, the night before we visit a strange town, we dream that we will bump into an old friend. The next day when we make the visit we do bump into this old friend. Someone who is bound to the world of sensory reality would describe this as a coincidence, a random coming together of events, but when we experience numerous such 'coincidences', we begin to question their randomness. Jung believed that we begin to experience synchronistic events when we come into contact with the archetypes. These archetypes are activated by Wiccan initiations and when we first enter Wicca we are likely to find ourselves surrounded by synchronistic events; so much so that we cease to notice them and start to take it for granted that helpful meaningful coincidences will occur.

The principle of synchronicity is the principle by which divinatory symbol systems such as I Ching and the tarot work. They operate by 'taking the temperature of the macrocosm'.

Events which are happening in the greater world are interpreted by looking at the microcosm of the symbol patterns which appear in reading the yarrow stalks or tarot cards. Astrol-

ogy works in the opposite way. We gain understanding of the life patterning of the individual, the microcosm, by examining the macrocosm of the patterns in the stars at the time of the individual's birth.

Jung's concept of synchronicity has elements of the mythic reality, but also of the next level of reality which is the 'transpsychic reality' and these may be a continuum rather than discrete levels. The transpsychic reality is the reality where the individual does exist as a separate entity, but at the same time he or she is also part of the total One of the cosmos, so that no definite separation is possible. Le Shan uses the analogy of the wave and the ocean. We are each of us waves which are distinct from the ocean as a whole, but without the ocean the wave cannot exist and without the waves the ocean does not exist. (This is incidentally a very useful starting point for a meditation exercise.) The individual can have wishes and desires which are different from those of the wider whole and it is therefore possible to try to contact by ritual or prayer the forces of the wider whole and seek their influence to achieve the individual's ends.

The transpsychic reality is the realm of the collective unconscious, that sub-stratum of the human psyche which we hold in common. This is the reality in which ritual magic and much magic which is done in Wiccan circles works. Usually when we are working magic we are trying to in some way influence someone else. By changing our own mode of consciousness so that we open ourselves up to the 'transpsychic reality' and open our channels into the collective unconscious, we in effect move into the same psychic space as the person we are trying to influence.

One of the easiest ways to enter the transpsychic reality is through methods devised by our paleolithic ancestors, dancing and chanting. Here we are not using the chakras to release etheric energy but we are using the hypnotic rhythms of dancing and chanting to enter into a deeper state of consciousness. This level is associated with a very relaxed state of mind where visual imagery becomes very vivid and powerful. Here we do not actively 'will' something to happen, we create an image of it having happened.

The dance itself is emblematic of the transpsychic reality where we are both separate and joined, individual yet one. In

the circle dance the dancers are still separate human figures, but they merge into one entity, the whole which is more than the sum of the parts. When we use the dance in this way we are doing something slightly different from the way in which we use it when performing the Witches' Rune. There the aim was to release etheric energy. Here the aim is to enter a changed state of consciousness where our psyches and the psyche of the person we wish to help blur and merge. Here, rather than breaking off part of our own energized psyche and sending it to do something, we enter into the psychic space of the individual we wish to help so that our state of consciousness and the intent which we are visualizing become implanted within their psyche.

The difference between the magic of the mythic reality and the magic of the transpsychic reality can be understood in terms of the way in which anthropologists frequently distinguish sorcerers and witches. The distinction is not a very good one, but it is useful here in that sorcerers are taken to be users of magical technique — spells and substances and objects imbued with magical power — and witches to be people who are themselves imbued with magical powers.

Lawrence Le Shan's mythic reality is the reality of the sorcerer. It depends on the use of external objects such as fith-faths and cords. Witches can make use of the same techniques as the sorcerer, but they are also the possessors of inborn powers and can make things happen by using the mind without the intervention of wax images etc.

The distinction falls down because the inner powers of the witch are seen as something which only certain people can possess. Sorcery is seen as an art which can be learned, but witches are born. However, while there are many 'natural' witches who are born with the ability to do magic, the powers derive from being able to change modes of consciousness. Earlier societies thought that certain people had a monopoly on such powers (an idea no doubt warmly supported by the Union of Professional Witch Practitioners), but consciousness change can be learned by most people, the main variables being the level of effort required and the level of competence that can be achieved. Those powers of the human mind which are called 'psychic' are similar to other mind skills. While it is now universally accepted that most people can be taught to read, this is a rela-

tively recent idea and reading and writing were once esoteric arts which were only entrusted to the chosen few.

Much understanding of what happens when we do magic can be gained from Maxwell Cade's experiments with healers. These showed that, when healing, healers experienced consciousness change and advanced healers entered samadhi. What is perhaps more interesting is that healers' patients would also enter the same state of consciousness. No physical contact between healer and patient was necessary and the patient need not ordinarily be able to enter this state of consciousness. Healing could take place over a distance and without the patient being aware that he or she was receiving healing. This is the type of healing which is frequently carried out in witches' circles and by witches it is not seen as involving any different processes from other forms of magic which similarly aim to achieve change at a distance and without physical intervention.

We may through magic leave the transpsychic realm altogether and enter the next level of consciousness where we become totally at one with the other person whom we are trying to help. If we go into even deeper levels of consciousness, we lose all sense of our individuality and melt into the last reality which is Le Shan's 'unity' or 'clairvoyant reality'. I think the term clairvoyant reality is perhaps misleading because much of clairvoyance belongs to the transpsychic realm, so I shall call it the unitive reality. Here things are not discrete and separate; all objects merge into one another and all are part of a greater whole that is the cosmos. This is what mystics call the 'way of the one' and is the experience which is associated with the fourth state which we have described, samadhi, the state we enter when the Gods are invoked upon us.

As we learn to practise Wicca we first experience changes of consciousness only within the circle but there will then be a gradual change in our everyday waking state, until we find that we maintain the higher levels of consciousness permanently and we are able to go about our everyday activities while open to higher levels of awareness. As the Flemish mystic John of Ruysbrock said:

Then only is our life a whole, when work and contemplation dwell in us side by side, and we are perfectly both of them at once.¹¹

DEVELOPING MAGICAL SKILLS

The speed with which we acquire the ability to perform different aspects of active and passive psychism will depend in part on the Jungian function which dominates our personality. We will operate best in the area which corresponds to our most developed function.

Thinking people often have difficulty with a system such as Wicca which depends primarily on intuition and at one time there were few predominantly thinking types in Wicca. Thinkers like logical systems and when attracted to the occult tended to join qabalistic groups where they could appreciate the qabalah's complicated and logical philosophy. Some qabalistic groups do very little ritual and many thinking types are content to read about, write about and discuss the occult without doing much on the practical side. In recent years, as Wiccan writers such as Janet and Stewart Farrar have written articulate descriptions of some aspects of the philosophy of Wicca, more thinking people have been drawn to the Old Religion. There have also been some interesting cross-fertilizations between the more intuitive and people-oriented approach of Wicca and the intellectual approach of ritual magic through the number of ritual magicians who have joined Wicca in recent years and, following in the footsteps of predecessors such as Giordano Bruno, have espoused Paganism as their religious path.

The skill of thinking types lies in their ability to grasp the rationale behind the magic which makes them good teachers of Wicca. It also enables them to construct very effective rituals. They understand, if you like, how to wire the circuit to get energy flow and how to use symbolism to draw down the right kind of power. However, while intellectual people are good at designing rituals, they are not necessarily good at performing them themselves. Thinking people often find it difficult to let go of their conscious minds and traditionally ritual magicians, who are archetypal thinkers, have needed intuitives or feeling types in order to perform their rites successfully, hence magical partnerships such as Dr Dee and Edward Kelly, and Aleister Crowley and his various 'Scarlet Women'.

Intuitives may be less good at teaching Wicca, but much of what the thinkers teach will be the fleshed out bare bones of the inspirations of the intuitive. Intuitives are good at chang-

ing levels of consciousness and can usually learn quickly to move into the transpsychic realm of clairvoyance and unitive reality of invocation. It is the intuitives' ability to let the arrow of their intuition fly to the divine centre within themselves which makes them good at invocation and takes them onto another level, where, to paraphrase Dion Fortune, it is possible to 'see things of which ye may not tell'.

Feeling types are people-oriented and are also excellent at bringing people together in a coven and creating a sense of loving harmony and group identity. In fact, it is essential for either the High Priest or High Priestess of a coven to have a well-developed feeling function if the group is to flourish and develop a strong group mind. Feeling people are also excellent at spotting the talents of others and developing them and they make excellent initiators. They also make very good teachers, because they can adapt their teaching to individuals and will understand each person's difficulties and needs.

Feeling types are also very good at finding out what people are really like and this is indispensable to a coven when deciding whether or not to consider someone for initiation. However, what feeling types are not very good at is turning anyone down and it is best for the feeling type to explain what someone is like and for others in the coven to make the decision about whether or not to accept them. Otherwise the coven could find itself full of all sorts of waifs and strays who are not really suitable, but who the High Priest or High Priestess could not quite bear to turn away. Feeling people are also good at healing. This is not so much the healing of broken bones but illness such as cancer which arises from emotional imbalances within the individual. The feeling person can detect these and use their healing insights to rebalance the individual.

Sensation types have a flair for natural magic which uses the hidden properties of natural things. This is the magic of herbs, crystals, incenses etc.; in fact, the traditional *craft* of the witch. Sensation function people often have an innate sense of physical beauty and can create beautiful temples and artefacts. They are down to earth and their common sense is invaluable in the face of all the intuitives who flock to systems such as Wicca. It is the sensation people who remember all the practicalities such as it's five minutes before the start of the initiation and no one's found the blindfold yet; that on Hallowe'en it might

be a good idea to find the matches to relight the candles before we plunge the circle into pitch black darkness and, on a more prosaic level, whose turn it is to do the washing up.

Jung believed that as we grew and developed, so too would our personality. While as children our lives tend to be dominated by one of the functions so that our personalities are very one-pointed, as we approach teenage a second function will emerge. In adulthood a third function should emerge, usually around middle-age and the mid-life crisis is often a result, forcing us to re-evaluate our lives and find them in some respects wanting.

Many people never reach this stage and remain fixed in their adolescent personalities; sometimes because they refuse to acknowledge the changes that are trying to take place within them and try to thrust the new function back into the unconscious. Others go further and access their fourth function, the one which is most elusive. The fourth function is always the function which is opposite our dominant function, so if we are sensation types, our intuition will be the last aspect of ourselves to appear. If we are thinking types, then our feeling response, our ability to relate to others, will be the last aspect of ourselves which we master.

Interest in Wicca often awakens when we are going through a period of transition and a new function is emerging into consciousness. This can happen in teenage as the second function emerges, or at the stage of the mid-life crisis. Astrologically, this is associated with the Uranus semi-return when Uranus moves into opposition to the position of Uranus at the time of birth, although for many people it can occur earlier as we fulfil the goals and ambitions of our youth and seek new challenges.

We are likely to enter Wicca with two or at most three of our functions operating. We will therefore experience our own growth and change while in Wicca and also the effects of the growth and change of others in our covens. This is particularly so because Wicca, like other occult systems, accelerates personal growth and is what ritual magicians often call 'the hot house of the mysteries'. Those of you who are familiar with the qabalah will remember the saying, 'The vices of the sephira always manifest before the virtues'. This is also true of the psychological functions which have negative as well as positive

sides. Bringing new functions into consciousness is very much like learning a new skill. When we initially start trying to walk after having spent our first few months crawling, we are liable to be very wobbly on our legs and fall flat on our faces!

When people first start trying to use their thinking function they are liable to be somewhat over-impressed by their new-found intellectual powers and to believe everything their logic tells them is true. They may also want to convince others of this. If the sword, the weapon of air, is used badly it can injure others, and similarly the thinking function used in a negative way can be divisive and hurt other people. The great danger for the thinking person is to think that they alone are right and that everyone else is wrong and that it is their job to tell them so. When our thinking emerges we can become very critical of others and a negative influence in a group.

When people first develop intuition, they are unlikely to be very discriminating about their source and may decide that they are in contact with the inner planes, whether they see these in traditional terms as 'the masters' or follow the modern predilection for extra-terrestrial intelligences. Intuition is not as accurate as thinking. It is almost as though the arrow is sometimes blown off-course by the wind and does not land in the right place and sometimes it does not quite reach the sky and falls to earth without capturing part of the divinity. However, at first we may not realize this and we can mistake our random ideas for divine inspiration.

The negative side of feeling bears similarities to the negative qualities of the astrological water signs. The receptiveness of feeling can make us interested in other people's lives to the exclusion of our own with the result that life passes us by and we do not grow and evolve. When we first develop feeling we are likely to become too interested in the lives of others and a desire to counsel and help can be perverted into a feeling that we know what is best for them and it is beneficial if we manipulate them into doing it. When people first develop feeling they may fall in love with totally unsuitable partners and make themselves miserable and a pain to their long-suffering Wiccan friends.

When sensation first emerges we may develop for the first time a desire to make things and to learn more about the 'craft' side of magic and we may learn to appreciate for the first time

the beauties of the natural world around us. On the other hand, we may go through a crisis with Wicca and decide that the material reality is the only true one and that we have been spending our time in airy-fairy nonsense. Often the sensation function awakens in us a desire to do something practical in the world and it can even be beneficial to go away for a time in order to achieve this before we turn our attention again to our inner growth. The emergence of the sensation function is often a time when we have to sit back and evaluate where we are in the world and realize that there are many levels of reality and all are equally important.

The emergence of new functions causes problems in groups because at first we are not very good at using them. A different kind of problem arises however when we start to become skilled at using our new function. Whenever we come together in groups, whether Wiccan covens or football teams, we tend to specialize in certain areas which then become 'ours'. If others become equally skilled in 'our' area, this can be very threatening and we may resent it. This is not to paint a negative picture of psychological growth, but it is important to realize that the birth of a new part of ourselves into consciousness, although very worthwhile in the end, is not without some labour pains.

There are some interesting differences in emphasis between the older, more traditional forms of the Craft, including Gardnerian witchcraft, and the newer forms such as the Alexandrian tradition and these can be related to Jung's functions. Gardnerian covens tend to be much more sensation/feeling/intuitive and Alexandrian covens much more thinking/intuitive. Gardnerian covens are usually much more oriented to sympathetic magic and healing than Alexandrian covens, but they do little teachings. Alexandrian covens tend to be more intellectual than Gardnerian covens and more oriented to ritual magic and, because there is less emphasis on developing the feeling side, the covens are sometimes more short-lived. The differences are apparent when reading books by Doreen Valiente from the Gardnerian tradition and Janet and Stewart Farrer from the Alexandrian tradition. In fact one of Doreen's early books was called *Natural Magic* and one of Janet and Stewart's was *Eight Sabbats for Witches* which was devoted entirely to increasing the ritual content of the seasonal celebrations.

FINDING AND BALANCING THE FUNCTIONS

How can we detect our dominant function? You may find that as soon as you read one of the descriptions, it leaps out at you and you recognize yourself. If this is not the case, one clue will be the way in which we first invoke the watchtowers when we usually find one element more difficult to invoke than others. This element is likely to be where our fourth and least developed function lies. Our dominant function will then be the element of the watchtower on the opposite side of the circle. In my own case the watchtower I found difficult was earth, the element of the sensation function, and my dominant function was intuition, the function associated with fire.

Our astrological birth charts will give us other clues about our dominant functions, but unfortunately the dominant function does not relate to the natal chart in a straightforward way. For some people the dominant function is the element of their Sun sign; for some it is the element of the Ascendant; for others it is the element of the ruling planet or the element which dominates their chart. There is also a psychological test which can tell us the patterning of our functions.¹²

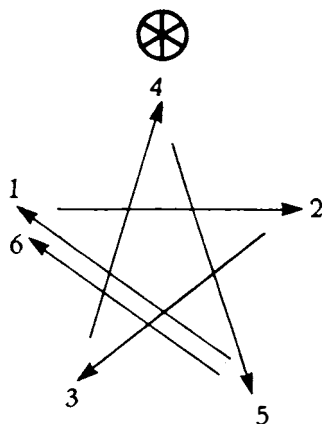
The four functions and their associated skills can be developed in two ways. The essential way is to use the four functions in our Wiccan and everyday lives. Our sensation function will develop as we learn to make things with our hands. There is an old Wiccan and magical tradition which states that we should make all our magical tools ourselves. This is in part to imbue them with our own etheric energy which is imprinted on objects which we handle frequently. The other purpose was to 'ground' all those intuitive people who enter magic and make them deal with the everyday world of matter. Intuition is of no use at all when trying to make and shape a hazel wand, although it may be useful in sending us off to look in just the right place to find a piece of wood with just the right potential!

If we wish to develop our thinking then we should get to grips with the intellectual side of Wicca, read books and work out for ourselves the rationale behind its practices. If we want to develop our feeling function we should learn to listen to and care for others and if we want to develop our intuition we should

practise with the various divinatory systems.

An additional way of developing the functions is by meditating on the four elements. This may seem a more glamorous way of self-development than the more practical suggestions above. The former are, however, essential if we are to become balanced people in everyday life as well as in a Wiccan circle. While the latter is very spiritually beneficial, we will gain more practical benefits from participation in Wicca if we are able to use what we have learned to make ourselves more successful, well-balanced, likeable and interesting people all the time, not just at esbats and sabbats.

Casting the circle and invoking the watchtowers is one way in which we meditate on the elements, but there are exercises which we can do outside the circle. One exercise is to develop the watchtower visualizations. Open the chakras from the base of the spine upwards and then concentrate on the third eye and visualize that it is flooded with violet light. Mentally draw a violet spirit or ether active pentagram against a black background.



Spirit or ether active pentagram

Let the pentagram fade away once it has fully formed, leaving the black background clear once more. Now draw an

elemental pentagram against the black in the appropriate colour. Hold this image in your mind for a little while and then imagine that the pentagram is getting larger and larger until it is many times larger than you are. Now imagine that the black background behind the pentagram is becoming a transparent black veil through which you can just see the elemental kingdom of the element you are visualizing. If this is the element of air, then imagine behind the veil a kingdom in the clouds inhabited by beings who are like vibrating columns of air or wisps of cloud living in a world whose predominate colour is blue. Let the colours of the elemental kingdom become stronger and stronger until the veil fades away and then step into the elemental kingdom and explore.

Once you have entered, see if you can find the central watchtower of the elemental kingdom which is the home of the elemental king and, if permitted, enter in. When you have entered, you may become aware of the presence of the elementals or the elemental king and if so you can converse with them and ask them to show you the secrets of their element. Ask them for their guidance and help in developing the skills associated with their element. In the case of air ask the elementals for help and guidance in developing your thinking capacity. In the case of fire ask for help in developing your intuition. With water ask to develop the ability to love others and equally important to love and accept ourselves as we truly are, witches' warts and all. With earth ask the gnomes to give your hands the skills to make things and the patience to persist if the first attempts arouse more mirth than reverence!

Having entered the elemental kingdom it is important to remember to perform some banishing exercise when we leave or else we are liable to find that element rather over-active within, and possibly without, us for the rest of the day. To leave, come out of the watchtower and visualize a large black cloth hanging down in front of you. On this form the banishing pentagram of the element in light of the appropriate colour and let it hang there in vivid colour for a few moments. Then visualize the black cloth becoming a transparent view through which you can see the outlines of the everyday surroundings of your room beginning to appear. Let the veil become more and more transparent and the everyday world more solid and then let the banishing pentagram withdraw line by line in the same way

that you would banish a watchtower in a circle.

When we do exercises such as these we should always record the results. This can be in written form but often the elementals will show us symbols to guide us and it can be very useful to draw and colour these and also to draw the elementals and elemental kingdoms. It does not matter if our drawing skills produce something approximating the efforts of a five year old. Many years later when we look back on exercises and review what we have learned we will find that one picture is infinitely better at conveying what we experienced than hundreds of words.

The most important piece of magic we will ever do is the magic we do on ourselves, a magic of transformation. The rounding of the personality is one of the major aims of Wicca and of all systems of magical and spiritual development. From this solid foundation of the cross of the four functions within the circle of the rounded whole, the spiritual growth and psychic and magical powers which enable us to climb new heights will spring.

5

INVOKING THE GODS

To our Pagan ancestors, the divine existed within and without manifest creation; it also existed within human beings. The Roman philosopher Seneca¹ described this sense of the divine being both without and within:

God is near you, he is with you, he is within you.

The older mystery cults at the end of the Age of Aries and the beginning of the Piscean Age offered the hope of becoming a God in the after-life. The Egyptian *Book of the Dead* or, to give it a better translation, *The Book of Coming Forth by Day*, spoke of 'becoming Osiris' after bodily death as the soul made its journey through the kingdom of the dead. By the end of the Piscean era, this promise of expansion of consciousness was offered before death, through the mystery initiations. Jung² says of this:

To carry a god around in yourself means a great deal; it is a guarantee of happiness, of power, and even of omnipotence, in so far as these are the attributes of divinity. To carry a god within oneself is practically the same as being God oneself . . . in the pagan mystery cults the neophyte, after initiation, is himself lifted up to divine status: at the conclusion of the consecration rites in the syncretistic Isis mysteries he was crowned with a crown of palm leaves, set up on a pedestal, and worshipped as Helios.

In Wicca we bring the individual into contact with the divine part of his or her psyche through *invocation*. Invocation takes

place only within the circle and involves a technique similar to that known in magic as 'assumption of god forms'. The divine forces are always invoked into someone of the same sex as the deity by someone of the opposite sex (for simplicity's sake I will call these by the rather clumsy names of invokee and invoker). Although this couple have the principal responsibility, like all processes in the circle, the effect is achieved much more easily if the whole coven assists in the etheric activity and visualization which proceed the invocation and thus reinforce the invoker's actions.

The procedure involves the person who is invoking kneeling before the person who is to be invoked upon. Both will visualize a particular archetypal form of the Goddess or God. The invokee will then open his or her chakras to draw energy into the etheric body and enter the meditative state of consciousness.

Invocation involves the invoker drawing the divine force into the body of the invokee and at the beginning it is desirable for the invoker to link his or her etheric energies with the invokee so that he or she can use these etheric links to 'inject' the etheric body of the invokee with a particular archetypal image and force. To do this the invoker directs energy from his or her base-of-spine chakra into the base-of-spine chakra of the invokee and then draws this energy back into his or her sacral chakra and then directs back to the sacral chakra of the invokee and so on up the body until the energies reach the level of the third eye.

At this point the invoker can create a visual image of the God or Goddess form and then project it into the third eye chakra of the invokee, bringing it back in a circuit through his or her crown chakra. The invoker can then 'develop' the image, i.e. visualize it forming at the crown chakra of the invokee, then growing larger and descending behind the invokee so that there is an image of the archetypal form standing behind him or her.

If the invocation is a long one then some of this process can be carried out during the beginning of the invocation, but if not, it is important to allow a silent period beforehand to prepare the invokee, especially when people are new to invocation. The Goddess or God is now asked to 'descend into the body' of the Priestess or Priest. In saying invocations we are performing a 'making' and it is important that the words are 'charged'; that is, they must be spoken as energized words of power which are directed towards the chakras of the invokee

using the energy of the throat chakra. The words should be accompanied by appropriate visualization on the part of the invoker. This is an invocation which we use at the Spring Equinox and which contains a lot of visual imagery.

SPRING EQUINOX INVOCATION

I invoke thee O Diana,
Huntress of the wood
Lady of bright imaginings
Silver Star of our desire
Crescent Moon of midnight clear
Diana the wild, Diana the pure
Virgin huntress white as snow
Fair thou art as the music of the harp
Radiant thy smile as moonlight on water
Light thy step as blossom on the wind
Thy womb is the Cauldron of Creation
Which shall bring forth all hope to men
O Lady of the word of power
Who makes the shadows flee
Turn thy ear Diana
As we invoke thee
By seed and root
By bud and stem
By leaf and flower and fruit
By life and love
I invoke thee and call upon thee
To descend upon the body of thy servant and priestess

When words are used to conjure visual images, they act very powerfully on the psyche of the invokee and will take him or her into a very deep state of consciousness where the boundaries of the self merge into the greater whole. At this level of consciousness the invokee can become at one with the words and images which the invoker creates until the invokee is the archetypal image which they reflect. This does not usually happen straight away and when people are first invoked on they may reach no more than a meditative state of consciousness. With time, however, deeper and deeper states of consciousness are reached which take us into samadhi and beyond. Here there is no subject and object, you and I, self and other, but only a sense of a vast expansion of consciousness and oneness with the universe. This is Lawrence Le Shan's fourth reality, the uni-

tive reality, where we enter into oneness with others and with the universe itself.

As we enter these states, much of the brain's higher frequency beta rhythm disappears and with it much of our awareness of the outside world. All sounds other than the words of invocation tend to fade away and if we have our eyes open, the circle around us will seem to recede into the distance and become very remote. There is often a sense of the body becoming taller and taller so that the circle seems far far below. There can also be a sense of the circle and the people in it and even the wider universe itself being somehow no longer external to us but in us. As one person said, 'The constellations move within me'. One invocation asks the Goddess to 'pour forth' and this sense of a divine force or power flowing through the invokee and into the circle is usually very strong. When we come out of the state our memory of what has happened will be hazy, although as we gain in experience of the process, it is possible to retain greater contact with the outside world if we wish.

Invocation has a strong effect on the crown chakra which is the link between our individuality and our divine selves. When we are invoked upon, energy from the crown chakra descends down through us into our lower chakras. At first this energy is likely to descend only as far as the heart and for most people it takes many many years before the force is able to enter their lower chakras. This flooding of the etheric body with crown chakra energy is frequently accompanied by a very visible change in appearance of the person on whom the invocation has been made, so that they take on the appearance of the God or Goddess form which the invoker has been visualizing behind them.

When through invocation we have entered a deeper state of consciousness, we fuse with the archetypal image and at that moment become the Goddess or the God. The invocation is not however, something which happens only for those on whom the God or Goddess has been invoked. In chapter two on the first initiation, I described five ways in which Jung³ thought the psyche could be renewed, energized and 'reborn'. The fourth experience is what happens for the individuals on whom the Gods are invoked. This is a temporary transmutation of the essential nature of the person; the mortal becomes temporarily immortal. The fifth experience is what happens for the rest of the group.

Jung, from his Christian experience, described this fifth type of transformation as an 'indirect rebirth' experienced by 'witnessing the transformation'. The word 'witnessing' suggests that the rest of the group merely see something which happens not to them but to someone else, but this is not true of Wicca and at the invocation all the group are likely to enter the same state of consciousness as the invokee.

Changed states of consciousness can be communicated to others; hence the great interest for Wicca in Maxwell Cade's experiments with healers and the experience of enlightenment which many followers of Indian gurus have experience through contact with the guru. The role of the invokee is therefore a dual one of changing their own consciousness and merging with the archetype, but also of communicating that changed consciousness to others. The method by which this is done through the 'charge'. A charge is a spoken piece of poetry or prose in which the invokee speaks as the God or Goddess and addresses the worshipper. Like the invocation, the words of the charge must be spoken as words of power energized by the throat chakra.

The effects of the charge on the individuals in the circle will depend to some extent on the invokee's ability to draw down the divine force and on the level of development of the individuals themselves, but they are likely to enter either the deeper meditative state of consciousness or into sāmādhi and, depending on their sex, to become at one with the invoker or the invokee. If the deity is the opposite sex, it is as though it has answered our call and manifested for each of us individually. We are in Le Shan's transpsychic reality where we are united with but also separate from the greater whole. If the deity is of the same sex, it is as though the deity has manifested not only within the person on whom he or she has been invoked, but also within ourselves; we have entered the unitive reality.

There are a number of charges in the *Book of Shadows*, including the Great Mother Charge which is used at first degree initiations and which is discussed later in this chapter, and the charge will reflect one or more aspects of the deity invoked. After a time, many people find that they create their own charges which are expressions of the aspect of the deity which is most important to them at the time. We consider it very important that these charges and also the invocations

which are used should be known by heart by those who say them.

I mentioned in chapter two that in the *Book of Shadows* it mentions 'reading the Charge' but when we first experience consciousness change, to speak at all is quite difficult and for most people it is probably impossible to carry out the left-brain activity of reading while remaining in the contemplative state of consciousness. To use charges and invocations effectively, we must know them so well that it is like turning on a tap. The invocation or charge should pour forth without any conscious attention on our part and we can concentrate on drawing the divine energy into the circle.

The next stage is to create our own charges. Good charges often arrive from the unconscious as complete entities with no intervention from the conscious mind other than to record them. These often arrive at unexpected and inconvenient moments such as sitting in the bath or driving the car. The latter means saying the charge over and over so as not to forget it before arriving somewhere where one can write it down. No doubt, this amuses one's fellow drivers at traffic lights and gives credence to the traditional image of witches muttering under their breath!

The final stage is to have no prepared material, but enter the unitive state of consciousness and then to open the throat chakra and to allow the deity itself to speak through us. What often emerge are some of the most beautiful charges that we are likely to hear and perhaps, like a beautiful flower, their power to move us is enhanced by their ephemeral nature, for it is rarely possible afterwards for speaker or listeners to remember fully what was said.

THE NATURE OF DIVINITY: THE DIVINE WITHIN

When we invoke the Gods, we are effecting a change of consciousness whereby the individual is put in touch with the divine core of his or her being. The human psyche has many levels. The first and most familiar level is the conscious mind. This has two aspects. The persona is the face or mask which we

present to the world, what we pretend to others that we are, our 'front'. Our persona may be singular or plural. We may have one face which we present all the time or we may have a number of different roles which we play at different times — the dutiful daughter, the efficient businesswoman, the dare-devil man about town, the loving father. The masks will change as we go through the transitions from teenage to adulthood to old age; hence all those ex-hippies now in pin-striped suits!

The ego can be thought of as lying 'behind' the persona. This is what we think we truly are. There is another part of ourselves which is strongly related to the ego which is called the shadow. The shadow is that which we are but think we are not; as opposed to the ego which is what we think we are but which we are not. The ego concept of ourselves is not all good. Most of us have sufficient insight to know that we are not perfect, but there are always some aspects of ourselves which we prefer not to see. However, we cannot completely ignore these characteristics, so we come to a compromise and we project them onto others. It is other people who have these undesirable characteristics which we cannot face. These characteristics form the shadow.

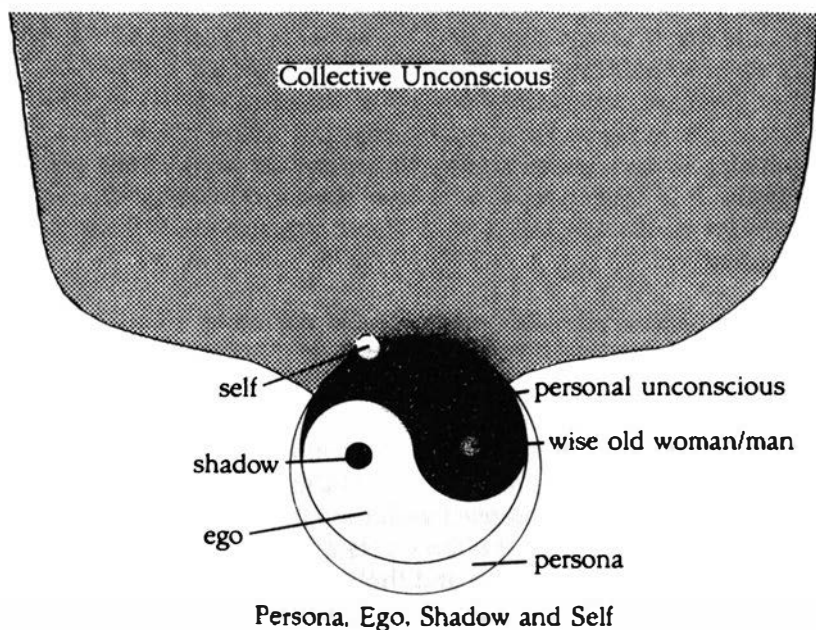
The shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly — for instance inferior traits of character and other incompatible tendencies.⁴

The concept of the shadow is sometimes a difficult thing for people to accept, but most of us can think of certain types of people who cause us to react with the kind of bristling of psychic fur with which a cat often greets a friendly dog. These are the people whom we meet and thoroughly dislike for reasons which our friends cannot understand. The shadow is what we encounter when we first look into the personal unconscious and it is why many people are afraid to look; but we must confront ourselves and own these characteristics if we are to start the journey to our inner Godhead.

The next layer of ourselves is the personal unconscious. We do not normally have access to this in waking consciousness, but it makes itself known in dream and vision and also in the famous 'Freudian slip'. The unconscious is always seen as a place of darkness. It is the place to which Orpheus descended

to rescue his wife Euridyce from death, a place which to some people is hell.

Why do people have so many negative images of the unconscious? In part it is because when we first start to look into this unknown aspect of ourselves we tend to see first that dark spot lurking in the whiteness of the ego, part of us which we could not fully suppress in the unconscious but which we cannot fully face, that shadow part of ourselves which we would really rather not know at all. Our conscious and unconscious minds can be symbolized by the yin/yang symbol, with the shadow as the dark spot in the light of the conscious mind, the fatal flaw, Achilles' heel.



If you can imagine that this is not a flat two-coloured disc but a sphere, you will realize that the dark spot in the white leads like a tunnel into the centre of the ball and through to the darkness on the other side. This dark spot is the rabbit hole through which Alice fell and found herself in Wonderland and this too is the entrance to our unconscious.

The light spot in the dark of the yin/yang symbol is the archetype of the Wise Old Woman or Wise Old Man, and this is

the entrance to the other tunnel, the tunnel to the Self. The Self has been symbolized in fairy tales as a golden ball which must be rescued from the bottom of a deep well guarded by a fearsome ogre and the Wise Old Woman or Man appears to help the hero or heroine in the attempt. It is only if we can face the shadow, this lurker on the threshold, the guardian who bars the way at the initiation, that we can then see that what the black shadow in the doorway protected was a new kingdom full of untold wealth and riches. In Wicca we have to lose our fear of the dark and go down the tunnel into Wonderland.

Beyond the personal unconscious is the collective unconscious. Jung⁵ saw the collective unconscious as being a common and inherited collective psyche:

In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited.

We can access this collective psyche through dreams and its contents are also represented in myths. Since the collective unconscious is common to all humanity, the myths which different human cultures produce are very similar, even if the groups were widely separated by time and space. Within the collective unconscious are archetypes, figures which recur constantly in the myths and religions of all peoples, such as the Great Mother, the Sky Father, the Child, and also an archetype which Jung called the Self. This is the enduring centre which is greater than our ordinary everyday selves and which endures beyond bodily death. It is with the material of the collective unconscious that Wicca works — the archetypes of the Gods, the archetypes of the Self and the relation between them.

The archetypes of the Gods serve a dual role as archetypes of the divine forces which move in the outer universe, but at the same time they are archetypes of our own inner divinity, the Self. When we invoke the God or Goddess we attune ourselves to that divine spark within us. Aleister Crowley in *Magick and Theory and Practice*⁶ said 'Invoke often' for it is by this linking to our divine selves that we grow in consciousness.

This concept that we are at our core divine is a difficult one

for the ego to handle. Usually when we first access the divine self within us, we see it as an external god, but it is the divinity within which we have met and not the divinity without; that divine spark which has as its origin a greater divine whole from which we all sprang forth. In the first degree initiation we are taught:

Single is the race, single of Gods and of men, and from a single source we both draw breath.

We are both human and divine and in our initial encounters with the Self, we may perceive it not as God or Goddess but in the form of another archetype which is the Wise Old Man or Wise Old Woman. Often we will come across this wise person in dreams and pathworkings and when we first encounter the Self in this way, we may think that we have met with an inner planes teacher. We are unlikely to recognize this wonderfully wise person as part of ourselves! In a sense, however, we have met a wise teacher, for the role of the Self is to imbue our personalities with the wisdom of human experience which we have gleaned over the centuries of incarnation and also with the divine wisdom gleaned at its point of origin.

The first encounters with the Self through the processes of invocation may create problems. To quote Jung, coming into contact with the divine part of ourselves creates feelings 'even of omnipotence'. Within the confines of the circle, as we speak as the Goddess or the God, this is what is meant to happen. The danger of such mystical experiences is, as Jung points out, that an archetype can 'take over' the ego.

... the archetype appears strange, as if not belonging to consciousness... if the subject identifies with it, it often causes a devastating change of personality, generally in the form of megalomania or its opposite.⁷

Identification with an archetype of a particular God or Goddess form is an aim of religious or magical rites. Identification with the archetype is what enables the individual on whom the divine force has been invoked to bring that divine power into the circle or temple. In fact Jung⁸ saw the identifications made in ritual as beneficial because myth and ritual lead us to an understanding of the true nature of the archetypes. What is important is that identification with the Goddess or God is not carried into everyday life and that having encountered and

appreciated something of the nature of the Self, that the individual does not by a process of ego inflation mistake the operations of his or her everyday ego for this inner divine Self and the promptings of his or her unconscious for the directive of the Goddess or the God. Here the role of the High Priestess and Priest is crucial in giving guidance through the rocky rapids of our spiritual journey.

Invocation creates a temporary change within us, but the longer term aim of all spiritual systems is to make this change permanent. When we are invoked on, we make a 'bridge' between our everyday selves, the ego, and our divine Self. As through invocation we access our Self more and more, this bridge, which Alice Bailey in *Esoteric Psychology II*⁹ calls the antahkarana, is made permanent. Ultimately we cross this bridge and instead of our ego reaching out to contact the Self, the centre of our consciousness is transferred to the Self.

Our normal state of consciousness is one whereby we constantly monitor our behaviour, so that we are divided from ourselves. We are the looker and the looked upon. As we learn to use either half of our brain at will, we find that we are able to stand back from the two sides, Maxwell Cade and Nora Coxhead associate this 'standing back' with Jung's transcendent function¹⁰ which he believed existed in the oldest and deepest level of brain, the brain stem.

The permanent cessation of this inner division is what is implied by Jung's term *individuation* and this can only occur when the ego and the Self are united and we become centred in the Self. Individuation is associated with a permanent change of consciousness into the state of samadhi and beyond, whereby we are identified not with any of the four functions of the personality but with the fifth and transcendent function, the point in the centre of the circle (which is the astrological symbol of the Sun); the central point at which the four quarters of the circle cross join; the fifth and hidden element, ether; and the Self.

THE NATURE OF DIVINITY: THE DIVINE WITHOUT

If the divine is within us, is it merely psychological, an imagi-

nary construct? Are the outer forms of the Gods 'real'? Do they have meaning? What we are personifying in ways which reflect our own inner unconscious selves is the power of the divine force in terms of symbols. Jung wrote¹¹:

Symbols are not allegories and not signs: they are images of contents which for the most part transcend consciousness. We have still to discover that such contents are real, that they are agents with which it is not only possible but absolutely necessary for us to come to terms.

In Wicca we would say that what lies beyond the images is a divine reality. These images are not random but are true expressions of the nature of the divine translated into human terms and we therefore treat them with respect and honour. The full nature of that reality is as yet beyond our human understanding and we therefore clothe this multi-faceted reality in archetypal images which are an expression of the truth, but not the full truth, much as we translate complicated scientific laws into simple terms for school children.

The Gods are considered to be expressions of the divine within humanity. The Gods are also considered to be divine forces operating in the universe. Whether they are seen as aspects of an impersonal life force or as cosmic beings with an individuality will depend on our own inner experiences and each individual will interpret this differently. However, in Wicca both concepts of the divine owe much to the later interpretations of Paganism of two groups of Greek philosophers, the Neoplatonists and the Stoics.

The Pagan Neoplatonists saw the divine as a being who was of a different nature from humanity and who was outside the created world of the transcendent. The Stoics believed that the universe was itself divine and that human beings were part of this divinity. In other words the universe and humanity were permeated by divinity; the divine was immanent. Within Wicca today most people accept that the divine is immanent, with some people believing that it is also transcendent and others not.

The concept of immanent divinity tends to be accompanied by the idea of metempsychosis. When we die we have no individuality which endures, but the life force within us is never lost and flows back into the ocean of being to reappear in other

life forms. In Paganism, a transcendent concept of divinity tends to be accompanied by the idea of reincarnation; our individuality endures in a series of physical existences possibly culminating in non-physical existence.

My own view leans towards reincarnation and a sense of an enduring Self which existed before, during and after physical incarnation. In other words the Self is transcendent (hence Jung's term 'transcendent function'). On the other hand, in incarnation, the divine Self inhabits the body of the material world, so the Self could also be said to be immanent. In the Pagan view the microcosm of the human being is a reflection of the macrocosm of the universe, 'As above so below' and my experience of the outer divinity reflects my experience of the inner divinity; it is both immanent and transcendent.

Our concept of the nature of immanent divinity has evolved over millennia. The Roman philosopher Seneca¹² wrote at the turn of the Age of Aries and Pisces:

When you enter a grove peopled with ancient trees, higher than the ordinary, and shutting out the sky with their thickly intertwining branches, do not the stately shadows of the wood, the stillness of the place, and the awful gloom of this domed cavern then strike you as with the presence of a deity? Or when you see a cave penetrating into the rock at the foot of an over-hanging mountain, not made by human hands; but hollowed out to a great depth by nature, is not your soul suffused with a religious fear? We worship the sources of great rivers, we erect altars at the place where a sudden rush of water bursts from the bowels of the earth, warm springs we adore, and certain pools we hold sacred on account of their sombre darkness or their immense depth.

Like our ancestors, Wiccans recognize that certain natural phenomena have their own form of consciousness, but the tendency today is to see the presences found in trees, caves and pools not as divinities but as elemental forces which are also known as devas or nature spirits. It is the planet itself which is seen as divine and the relationship between the devas and the planetary deity is seen as much the same as the relationship between humans and their inner divinity.

The Earth and the other planets can be seen as conscious life forms whose breadth and depth of consciousness is such that they can be called Gods. The devas are the beings who do the work of the planetary deity. Our view of devas will depend on whether or not we have experienced them but, for our own

survival, human beings must learn to live in harmony with the Earth, the Great Mother. Even if we have not had this sense that certain trees, caves, wells and rivers etc. are sacred and inhabited by a personality, our own lives and the life of the planet can be considerably improved if we accept this hypothesis as a possibility and treat nature and the planet with respect.

An old witch idea is that if we are going to pick flowers, or gather herbs, or trim a tree we should mentally ask the permission of the entity which inhabits them and explain our purpose. If this is acceptable we proceed, taking only what we need. In this way we become much more ecologically minded. When nature is seen as full of conscious entities, and trees and plants etc. are in every sense living things, we learn to work in harmony with nature rather than merely exploiting it for our own ends to the ultimate detriment of the human race and the other life forms which inhabit the planet.

Paganism teaches us to value our planet because it is sacred. It also teaches us to value our own physical selves, our bodies. To digress a little, in Wicca we talk very little about prayer. So little in fact that when a new initiate once asked me 'Are we supposed to pray?' I was very surprised because I had never thought about it! Witches do address the deity in private prayer, but we tend to have few formal prayers like the Christian Lord's Prayer. We simply talk to the Goddess or God and ask for assistance, discuss our problems and offer praise as we see fit. Where we do use set prayers, the best ones are usually those which we create ourselves, but here is one which I thought I would include because it says something about the value which Wicca places on the individual.

PRAYER OF PRAISE TO THE GODDESS

Blessed Be the Great Mother
Without beginning and without ending
Blessed Be her temple of pure white marble
Blessed Be the gentleness of her holy place

Blessed Be the babe who cries to her
Blessed Be the worms which tunnel through her
Blessed Be the moles who make their homes in her
Blessed Be the eagle who guards the hills for her
Blessed Be the deer who lift their heads for her
Blessed Be the birds who fly the air for her

Blessed Be the trees which shake and sigh for her
Blessed Be the leaf which falls for her and nourishes the soil

Blessed Be the ocean who sighs with love for her
Blessed Be the wave that caresses the shore for her
Blessed Be the sand which succumbs to its embrace
Blessed Be the shell that is cast up from her
Blessed Be She, the Mother of Pearl

Blessed Be the stars which shine like jewels for her
Blessed Be the Moon in which we see her face
Blessed Be my spirit which soars the heights for her
Blessed Be my soul which expands in joy for her
Blessed Be my body, the temple of her being.¹³

Wiccans consider the body to be a gift of the Gods; the vessel of our divine Self. It must therefore be treated with respect and care. The word Pagan means country dweller and humans were not designed for a predominantly indoor, city existence. Paganism considers it important that we do not lose touch with the Earth, but find time to get into the country and immerse ourselves in the natural forces around us. If we take the time to walk upon the earth, expose ourselves to the sky and Sun, and absorb the energies of water and trees, their energies will replenish us and act as a counter-balance for those of us who must cope with the stresses of modern urban living.

The stance that the divine is immanent is an antidote which reminds us of an aspect of deity which years of transcendent monotheism were in danger of obliterating. Christianity can be seen as the triumph of the conscious mind over the realm of nature. The Gods were no longer to be seen as within nature, but outside it and nature was no longer sacred and holy, but the creation of a transcendent Father (without the Mother). Our conscious minds learned to suppress the unconscious and keep it at bay. The focus of human attention became the world beyond nature, God lived in Heaven not Earth.

Despite its negative aspects, the transcendent concept of the divine was a necessary step in human development. The psyche of humanity was no longer solely immanent in nature. The human mind, developing in consciousness and self-awareness, had said:

I am. I exist. I am not my body. I am not my intellect. I am not my emotions. I exist beyond the body, beyond all this.

As we have come to believe that we exist somehow 'beyond'

what our senses perceive, so too have we come to believe that the divine also exists beyond the material world. This is not to say this view is right and some would see it as monstrous egotism on the part of human beings to assert their transcendence over the material creation around them. In Wicca each person is free to come to their own views based on their own inner experiences and revelations and it is this which must ultimately determine our beliefs. All our images of the divine, whether masculine, feminine or abstract, like the Neoplatonist concept of the transcendent 'One', are limited by our experience and will evolve as our spiritual understanding evolves. Our images can only hope to give us pointers to the truth.

One concept of divinity which is, however, fundamental to Wicca is that, although some may see the divine as ultimately One, within the divine consciousness we see a duality. Energy is movement and life is movement and change. Where there is movement and change there is action and reaction, transmitter and receiver, passive and active; ebb and flow. The divine is therefore seen as male and female, Goddess and God. While the emphasis on the Goddess and the God differs between covens, traditions and localities, Wicca considers that for wholeness the image of the divine must contain both male and female. To worship either aspect alone will produce spiritual imbalance both for the individual worshipper and for society.

The patriarchal monotheisms which have dominated Western society in the Age of Pisces have produced within individuals and within society a stereotyped masculinity which encourages us to devalue one half of our personalities and emphasizes the Logos at the expense of Eros, intellect at the expense of feeling, the masculine at the expense of the feminine. Wicca therefore worships the Goddess and God using those symbols held deep within the psyche of humanity, the Triple Goddess and the Dual God, whose antiquity and universality gives them a power that more modern Gods will always lack.

CAKES AND WINE

The relationship between the Goddess and the God is symbolized in the ceremony of the blessing of the cakes and wine, which is the last action which takes place before the feast which

ends the circle. It brings us once again to the relationship between the energies of male and female, God and Goddess, in Wicca; for it is the priest who holds the female symbol of the cup and the priestess who blesses the wine within the cup with the athame, the symbol of maleness. Here on the inner planes, it is the Goddess who impregnates and energizes, as the priestess sits upon the altar and the priest kneels before her. The priestess gently lowers the athame into the cup as he says:

As the athame is to the male
So the cup is to the female
And conjoined they bring forth blessedness

Here in this sexual symbolism is the relationship between the God and the Goddess; the two divine forces are ultimately reconciled in One.

The cakes and wine can be seen as the culmination of the invocation of the Goddess and the God. One way in which the power of the deities is poured forth into the circle is through the charges. Another is through cakes and wine in which the sacred food and drink are blessed with the divine forces and imbued with energizing properties. The Christian mystery of the mass takes this one stage further and the cakes and wine there symbolize the actual body and blood of a divine sacrificial victim. In Wicca, the cakes and wine are considered more like magical food which imbue us with energy for the spiritual journey which is life. Following the blessing of the wine, the priest then presents the plate of cakes which are often made in the shape of the crescent Moon. The priestess blesses the cakes with the athame and the priest speaks again:

O Queen most secret
Bless this food unto our bodies
Bestowing health, wealth, strength, joy and peace
And that fulfilment of love that is perpetual happiness

The cup and the plate are passed to all in the circle with a kiss and this is the signal for the feast to begin. Food, wine, dancing, singing and talking now follow. The feasting is seen as an integral part of any Wiccan rite, for all rites must contain a balance of reverence, mirth, work and play. The essential point to any Wiccan circle is that people participate because they want to and because they enjoy it. It is not seen as a duty or

an obligation. The relationship which a Wiccan priest or priestess has with the Gods is perhaps best conveyed by the Great Mother Charge, the Charge which greets all new initiates.

THE GREAT MOTHER CHARGE

At the beginning of the Charge, a priest speaks and tells the Goddess's children to hear her:

Listen to the words of the Great Mother, who was of old also called amongst men Artemis, Astarte, Dione, Melusine, Aphrodite, Ceridwen, Diana, Arianrhod, Bride, and by many other names.

A priestess speaking as the Goddess then continues with the Charge. The first part speaks of how the Goddess worship shall be conducted:

Whenever you have need of anything, once in the month, and better it be when the Moon is full, then ye shall assemble in some secret place and adore the spirit of me who am Queen of all Witcheries. There shall ye assemble ye who are fain to learn all sorcery, yet have not won its deepest secrets; to these will I teach things that are yet unknown. And ye shall be free from slavery, and as a sign that ye be really free ye shall be naked in your rites and ye shall dance, sing, feast, make music, and love, all in my praise; for mine is the ecstasy of the spirit; and mine also is joy on Earth, for my law is love unto all beings.

The way of the Goddess is portrayed as a way which is followed not as a duty, but because it gives us joy in the here and now. This is not the joy of hedonism, although earthly pleasures are considered gifts of the Goddess which should be enjoyed, but 'ecstasy of the spirit', spiritual growth and the expansion of consciousness. The goal is an ideal for which we must strive and a quest which leads to immortality. Next she speaks of what she offers her worshippers beyond life:

Keep pure your highest ideal, strive ever towards it; let naught stop you or turn you aside; for mine is the secret door which opens upon the door of youth and mine is the cup of the wine of life and the Cauldron of Cerridwen, which is the Holy Grail of Immortality.

I am the gracious Goddess who gives the gift of joy unto the heart of man; upon Earth I give knowledge of the Spirit eternal; and beyond death I give peace and freedom and reunion with those who have gone before; nor do I demand sacrifice, for behold I am the Mother of all living, and my love is poured out upon the Earth.

The priest then speaks again:

Hear ye the words of the Star Goddess, She in the dust of whose feet are the hosts of Heaven; whose body encircleth the universe.

The Goddess addresses her worshippers directly, summoning them to know the divinity which lies at their innermost core:

I who am the beauty of the green Earth and the white Moon amongst the stars, and the mystery of the waters, and the desire of the heart of man, call unto thy soul, arise and come unto me; for I am the Soul of Nature who giveth life to the universe.

From me all things proceed, and unto me all things must return; and before my face, beloved of Gods and men, thine inmost divine self shall be enfolded in the rapture of the infinite.

In the Goddess is found the middle way; the way of balance, the positive attributes of masculine and feminine which leads to spiritual and psychological growth:

Let my worship be within the heart that rejoiceth; for behold, all acts of love and pleasure are my rituals and therefore let there be beauty and strength; power and compassion; honour and humility; mirth and reverence; within you.

And lastly, she imparts the message which is the key to initiation which confers not some mysterious magical powers bestowed by others, but the way to the divinity within us.

And thou who thinkest to seek for me, know thy seeking and yearning shall avail thee not, unless thou knowest the mystery; that if that which thou seekest thou findest not within thee, thou wilt never find it without thee, for behold I have been with thee from the beginning and I am that which is attained at the end of desire.

This is the relationship between Wicca and its Gods.

6

THE GODDESS: WICCA AND THE FEMININE

Wicca worships the Goddess, that aspect of the deity who has been much neglected and abused in the recent religious past, but who is now awakening in both men and women as we enter the Age of Aquarius. The Goddess is commonly seen as having three aspects, who are called the Virgin, Mother and Hag, or in Celtic mythology the Three Mothers. The Virgin Mother aspect of the Goddess is associated with the waxing Moon and the Virgin Mary was often depicted as standing on the Moon with seven stars above her head. The second aspect is the Lover/Mother, the sexual Mother. The third is the Dark Mother who appears in some older Christian churches under the guise of the Black Virgin. The Goddess must contain all three aspects, Virgin, Lover/Mother and Hag, if she is to provide the model of psychological wholeness which must be the goal of woman and man.

In recent centuries worship of the Goddess has been suppressed by the Christian Church, but the Goddess survived in three ways. One was in fairy tales and folklore as the Good Fairy, Fairy Godmother or Queen of the Fairies; another was in the sanctuary of the Christian Church itself, as the Blessed Virgin Mary; and she also survived as herself. For some of her Pagan worshippers, the Goddess did not die.

In folklore the Goddess survived in figures such as the German Holda. In eleventh century Germany, Burchard, Bishop of Worms, described Holda as a Pagan Goddess. By the nine-

teenth century she had been transmuted in folklore into a supernatural being who was active around the Winter Solstice. The phallic symbol of the plough was sacred to her and she was particularly concerned with childbirth and agriculture. The fact that she travelled abroad during the twelve days of Christmas, to ensure that the land would be fruitful during the coming year, suggests that she was originally a neolithic agricultural Goddess who gave birth to the Sun Child at Yule.¹

Christianity was unwilling to own the Goddess, but the early Church had found the female aspect of the deity too difficult to suppress and had come to a compromise. Some branches of Christianity, such as the Gnostics, had solved the problem by making the Holy Ghost, one of the three parts of the Christian Trinity, a disembodied female force of Sophia, or Wisdom. This solution did not find favour with the orthodox Church Fathers; nor did it satisfy the gap left in the human psyche by the banishment of the Triple Goddess as Virgin, Mother and Layer-out at Death. A solution was adopted at a Church Council held in AD 431 at Ephesus in Turkey, the site of the famous Temple of Artemis-Cybele, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The Church authorized the veneration of the Virgin Mary, not as Goddess or as a human being with failings, but as something in between, the 'Panagia Theotokus', 'Mother of God'.

The Mary cult, while beneficial in that it preserved some aspects of the Goddess in religion and culture, has had some unhealthy psychological effects on both women and men. The Virgin Mary concept omitted a vital aspect of the Goddess. In Mary, she was Virgin and Hag. She gave birth to the God; she mourned him at the foot of the cross and she attended his body at the tomb; but she was without sexuality. She became mother not through a physical mating with the God, but through a psychic fertilization.

The ideal that Mary portrays is that of a desexualized woman and it denies the value of the human relationship. We are not to progress spiritually through a relationship with each other, through learning the true meaning of human love, but through love of a disembodied Godhead. Sex has no meaning as the expression of love between two people, but only as a means of procreation. For a man this image raised impossible problems in his relations with women. For a love to be truly 'spiritual',

there must be no physical element; it must be ever a love for the unobtainable — the love of Dante for Beatrice and of the monk for the Virgin. Mary is 'Isis Urania', the Queen of Heaven who is not to be sullied by the world of matter. She is the eternally unobtainable Moon who floats above the physical world of the Earth and answers to no man's desire.

For a woman the Mary cult created an image of a 'perfect woman' to which she must aspire. The Virgin Mary is a woman without sin who achieves this perfection by submitting totally to her husband and male God, serving them devotedly and seeking nothing for herself. A woman was not to gain wholeness through her own achievements and finding her own destiny. No divinity was made in her image. Her only role was to serve men; her own spiritual, sexual, intellectual and worldly needs forever denied.

This desexualized substitute could never satisfy all the Goddess worshippers. In the sixth century, the Bishop of Arles in France complained that his flock continued to worship the Goddess Diana and the seventh century British Christian missionary Kilian was killed when he tried to convert the East Franks from their worship of Diana to the worship of Jesus². In 10th century Italy, nearly 500 years after the Council of Ephesus, a Bishop of Verona³, recorded that many people were claiming Herodias as their queen or Goddess and declaring that a third of the world worshipped her.

Devotion to the Goddess as Diana or Herodias continued and 400 years later in Italy women were tried by the Inquisition for worshipping her. She was still being worshipped in Italy in the nineteenth century when the secret world of the Italian witch cult was revealed by the folklorist Charles Leland.⁴ The Goddess was still Herodias, but her name had been transmuted over the centuries to Aradia. Aradia is the principal name by which the Goddess is known in Wicca today. She has many of the attributes of the Egyptian Goddess Isis whose worship had flourished around the Mediterranean and beyond immediately before the Christian era. Aradia was seen as a saviour figure of the peasants who would protect them against oppression. She was a teacher of the magical arts and her lineage made her the daughter of Diana the Goddess of the Moon by an incestuous relationship with Diana's brother Apollo, the God of the Sun.

The worship of Isis, Osiris and Horus had long been a key feature of Egyptian religion, but it received a new lease of life when Isis, Osiris/Sarapis, Horus and Anubis were promoted by the Pharaoh Ptolemy I as the chief Gods of Egypt. This move was due in part to a general trend around the Mediterranean and Near East towards a more unified form of Paganism, which saw all the Gods as different aspects of one greater divine whole. The impetus was also, however, political, for Ptolemy I was not an Egyptian, but a member of a Macedonian family who, in 305 BC, had inherited the kingdom from Alexander the Great who had conquered Egypt a few years before. Ptolemy was keen to establish his hold on the people, but unwilling to abandon totally his own origins, so he commissioned two priests to synthesize the Egyptian and Greek Gods and Goddesses into a religion which would be acceptable to the Egyptians and to the Greek newcomers. The Egyptian, Manetho, was a specialist in Egyptian history, and the Greek, Timotheus, was familiar with the Eleusian Mysteries of Demeter and Kore and was descended from an Athenian family who had emigrated to Greece from Egypt.

Earlier Egyptian theologians had already rationalized the multiple God and Goddess forms inherited over Egypt's long past into triads of a Goddess, a God and their son. Ptolemy's intervention resulted in the establishment as the chief Goddess and Gods, Isis, her consort under the name of Sarapis and their child Horus, with her nephew Anubis by her sister Nephthys as Guardian of the Dead. Isis' original husband/brother, the more well-known Osiris, proved too complicated in his attributions to align to any one Olympian God and the incestuous nature of Isis and Osiris' relationship was unlikely to find favour with Greeks raised on the Oedipus myth. In theory, Sarapis was elevated to the superior role, but Osiris retained his hold on the indigenous population and it was he who appeared to the initiates of the Mysteries of Isis, who would understand the symbolic meaning of a brother/sister marriage.

The Greek counterparts of the Egyptian quartet were Hera, who represented all the Greek Goddesses including Demeter, Aphrodite, Athene and Artemis; Zeus representing Pluto, Dionysus and Asclepius the Healer God; and Apollo and Hermes. By absorbing the qualities of these diverse Greek Gods and Goddesses, Isis and Sarapis became both immanent and tran-

scendent. They were rulers in the Underworld, Earth and Heaven. The reformed religion also made Isis not just one of many Egyptian Goddesses, but *The Goddess*.

The mother of the stars, the parent of the seasons and the mistress of all the world.⁵

This is the Goddess of Wicca; immanent and transcendent and mysterious. On a statue to the Egyptian Goddess Neith, who in the reformed religion was also identified with Isis, was the inscription:

I am all that has been, and is, and shall be and my robe has never yet been uncovered by mortal man.⁶

Like Aradia, Isis was a very humane Goddess who was seen as the protector and saviour of humanity. Other concepts of Isis were also similar to the Wiccan Goddess and so too was the nature of the Isis mysteries. The Mysteries promised the initiate inner transformation and expansion of consciousness, for Isis was the great initiator. In an inscription found in the Greek islands, her words were:

I have revealed to mankind mystic initiations, I have established the Gods' temple.⁷

She was also 'Queen of all Witcheries', for Isis was the great sorceress. She was also the great healer, who in many of her temples was partnered by Asclepius, the Greek God of healing.

The Isis mysteries represented a new stage in development of the Goddess and thus of the psyche of women. The Great Mother, as she was known, had become a universal deity throughout the Near East and Mediterranean long before the emergence of the revamped cult of Isis. In the worship of this earlier Great Mother, the role of the male was not always a pleasant one. The main seasonal celebrations of the Great Mother Cybele and similar Goddesses centred around the tearing apart of a male sacrificial victim who represented the God as her son/lover and the strewing of his body to the Earth.

For a woman, the four deities of the Isis mysteries — Isis, Osiris, Horus and Anubis — are symbolic of her four psychological functions. Isis represents the dominant function and the three male deities are her three subordinate functions. The task of Isis was that of all women which was to bring these three male aspects of herself into consciousness and, in order to do

so, she, like all women, had to undertake a heroic journey, a quest.

Isis' second function is represented by her husband Osiris, who was slain by his brother Set, the destroyer. In order to bring Osiris into consciousness, Isis had to resurrect him by reconstructing the body which Set had strewn in pieces across the Land of Egypt. Having re-assembled Osiris, Isis impregnated herself with his phallus and gave birth to her third function, her son Horus. Set and Anubis are in many ways two sides of the same coin, the positive and negative aspects of the darkest and most mysterious of the functions, the fourth, the Dark Lord. It is Set who destroys Osiris, but it is the black dog-faced Anubis who assists Isis to find the pieces of the body.

When Isis comes to re-assemble the body, there is another interesting transition, for it is not Anubis who assists her, but Isis' dark sister Nephthys, mother of Anubis and wife of Set, who was originally a Persephone/Hecate figure, the Queen of the Dead. Nephthys is Isis' shadow. Here she helps her, but it was the shadow Nephthys who was also one of the causes of Osiris' death, for it was Nephthys' infidelity with Osiris which was one of the chief causes of Set's wrath against him. In human growth it is often the shadow who precipitates a crisis and in the tarot this crisis is symbolized by the Tower. In this case it is the death of Osiris which shatters the cosy edifice which the ego has built of itself and forces us to make the spiritual journey to find our wholeness, the Self.

In the story of Isis, we have moved beyond the myth of the Great Mother Cybele and her son/lover Attis. Cybele has her followers tear apart the body of her lover and has no regrets; the pieces are not re-assembled. In Cybele we have a woman who rejects all masculinity. Only the feminine is valued; the masculine is destroyed. While 2000 years of Christian patriarchy may make this a very tempting proposition to some feminists, in destroying what she hates woman destroys much which she loves and needs. In destroying Attis, Cybele does violence to herself, for Attis is her son, the product of her own psyche and the symbol of her unconscious mind. The masculine is not without, it is within her and in destroying it she destroys the possibility of her own wholeness.

This division and separation of the psyche, which requires the woman to thrust out of consciousness any love of the mas-

culine, belonged to an earlier stage of human psychological development than the myth of Isis and Osiris. In Isis we have a woman who seeks her masculinity and uses it to give birth to a new part of herself and to become more than she was before. She retrieves the phallus the symbol of creative power and makes it her own. For, in Wicca, the Goddess speaks to both woman and man saying, 'It was I who gave birth to you . . . I am the power', not a Father God in Heaven, but the Goddess, the Mother.

JUNG AND THE FEMININE

Jung believed that we are dual — conscious and unconscious — and that in our dreams and visions our unconscious side is always portrayed as a contra-sexual figure; the animus in woman and the anima in man. Jung sees anima and animus as innate and biological; each sex contains genes of the other sex.

Wholeness consists in the union of the conscious and the unconscious personality. Just as every individual derives from masculine and feminine genes, and the sex is determined by the predominance of the corresponding genes, so in the psyche it is only in the conscious mind, in a man, that has the masculine sign, while the unconscious is by nature feminine. The reverse is true in the case of a woman.⁸

In dreams and fantasy we tend to symbolize those unrealized qualities within us which lie in our unconscious as contra-sexual figures. Jung believed that although we needed to access all four personality functions to achieve wholeness, men and women had different starting points and, while in women the dominant judgemental function was usually feeling, in men it was thinking. The man's anima tended therefore to represent his feeling side and women's animus her thinking.

Jung saw this difference as innate, but many psychologists today believe that the nature of those unrealized qualities will depend on the society in which we live. In societies where men are conditioned to be 'rational' and intellectual and to suppress their feelings, then the anima will represent feeling to them. When women are conditioned to suppress their thinking and denied the education and career which develop their intellect,

then the animus will represent thinking to them. In today's society we are undergoing changes in the roles which men and women are expected to play and this is no longer so true as it was in Jung's day. Nevertheless we still live in a patriarchal society where there are pressures on women to see success in terms of marriage and children and building successful feeling relationships and greater pressures on men to be successful in career terms.

Jung's vision of the importance of the feminine bore similarities to that of the Witch Master George Pickingill and also to the pre-Raphaelite artists whose work celebrated the wholeness of women and the strength of the feeling realm. Jung's vision was, however, inevitably flawed, as are all human visions. On the one hand, he was conditioned by the contemporary society in which he lived and on the other he was heavily influenced by the past. It was from the images of God and Goddess in mythology and religion that Jung found much of his inspiration, but those he studied were in the main the products of patriarchy not matriarchy the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome, the tenets of Christianity and Islam.

Jung also suffered a more fundamental handicap; he was not a woman. However sympathetic we may be as psychologists, there is deep within us a place where others cannot tread. Just as no white person can truly experience what it means to be a black person in a white society; no man can experience what it is to be a woman in a male-dominated world. In the psychology of women, it is women who must make the last pronouncements.

The role of both anima and animus is to portray those functions which we have not yet brought into consciousness, but the goal of the spiritual quest is to absorb these qualities into our self image, to own them as ours. For a man the goal is to find in the Goddess those aspects of himself which society has denied him. These qualities are necessary if we are to be creative people, for creativity comes from wholeness. The role of the Goddess was to act as muse and inspire the man. The man finds the Goddess, the real muse, when he ceases to look for her in women and turns inward to seek her in himself.

In his psychology, Jung confused his anima with a woman's self and equated the supportive role the anima should play for a man with the role a woman should play in society. This was

a fundamental error but an understandable one, for we all see least clearly that which is most central to us. Jung wrote much on the anima and relatively little on the animus, a symptom of the fact that he could not understand it as well as the anima. The concept of the animus in Jungian psychology is heavily influenced by the writings of Jung's wife Emma who saw the animus as symbolizing four major qualities: 'Word, Power, Meaning and Deed'⁹.

For a woman the goal is to absorb into herself the qualities which she has projected onto her animus. As women we must recognize that it is not the animus which is the power; nor is it some male figure in our emotional life, be he father, lover, husband or son; these qualities are ours, the qualities of the Goddess. To paraphrase the words of another faith, 'She is the Power, the Kingdom and the Glory, for Aeons and Aeons'. She is the Power. She is the Word, She is the Deed. She is Meaning.

The function of Goddess and God charges in Wicca is to convey the true nature of the deity and also to address directly the worshippers. The nature of the message will depend on the worshipper's sex and the sex of the deity. If they are the same then the charge can be seen as a message from the Self to the ego. If they are different, the message to the ego is from the anima or animus. Charges in Wicca frequently have two slightly different messages, one for a woman and one for a man. Here is a charge which speaks to a woman to say what she can become, not for the sake of man, but for herself. For the man it is the message of the anima; this is the strength and creativity which owning his own feminine will give him.

THE CREATION CHARGE

I am thy Goddess
High born, full-blooded and lusting free am I
The wind is my voice and my song
High and low
Breeze and whirlwind
Soft and sweet
Loud and shrill

Wild is my will
And impetuous my desire

I take whom I will
No man can refuse my love and live
And he to whom I have revealed myself
Is the blessed of man
He has won the favour of the High Gods
And who shall refuse the behest of the Gods
For you are but leaves
Blown upon the wind

I am thy Goddess
Before the beginning of time was I
I made the mountains into peaks
And laid with soft grass the valleys and the meadows
Mine was the first foot which trod upon the Earth
And where I walked there sprung forth flowers
And mine was the voice that gave rise to the first song
And the birds listened and heard and made return
In the dawn of the world I taught the sea its song
And mine were the tears which made the first rains

Listen and hear me
For none can escape me
It was I who gave birth to you
And in the depths of my earth
You will find rest and rebirth
And I will spring you forth anew
A fresh shoot of greenness

Fear me
Love me
Adore me
Lose yourself in me
I am the wine of life
I stir the senses
I put song in the heart and on the lips of men
Before the battle I give my strength
I am the Power¹⁰.

THE VIRGIN MOTHER

In the Creation Charge, the Goddess speaks as the creatrix of the Earth, as the inspirer, as birth and death, the beginning and the end, the first and last of the Gods of this world. The Goddess speaks as Virgin; not Virgin in the sense of unsex-

ual, but Virgin in the sense of a woman not owned by or needing man. For a woman the charge says, 'You are the creatrix; you have need of no other'; for a man it says, 'I am the creatrix; you have need of me'. For society teaches woman dependence and man independence and to own our other side, we must learn its opposite.

For a man the Goddess is the anima, that all-powerful, frightening and beautiful figure who beckons him from the portals of his unconscious to make the heroic journey into the psyche to find the Grail, the divine essence of himself. In our Spring Equinox festival the priest invokes 'Diana Huntress of the Woods' as:

Lady of the word of power
Who makes the shadows flee

This is the aspect of the Goddess which Bachofen in his study of *Mother Right*¹² called 'pre-sexual'; that which emerged before human beings were aware of the relationship between motherhood and sexuality. It is the stage where woman alone is the creatrix and the role of the man is unimportant. This aspect of the Goddess is frequently called Isis Urania. She is transcendent, pre-existing both material creation and time itself. She is the inspirer of man, but he is nothing to her; nothing but 'a leaf blown upon the wind'. She is the unattainable and man's only role is to worship, revere and to receive whatever gifts she chooses to bestow. Jung¹¹ writes that:

...the Urania type of mother-image predominates in masculine psychology. . . the man identifies with the son/lover on whom the grace of Sophia has descended with a *puer aeternus* or a *filius sapientiae*.

It is true that many men cleave more to the Queen of Heaven than to the Queen of Earth. We tend first to love what is most beautiful and on the surface this is always the young woman in the flower of her womanhood; the young woman who is not possessed by man but who lures him to pursue her, to hunt her down, to make her his. At the Spring Equinox the Goddess charges:

SPRING GODDESS CHARGE

Hear then the words of Diana the Moon
The Bright Virgin

Changing but unchanging
My mystery is unanswerable
But solve ye that mystery
My nature is unknowable
But strive to understand me
Darkness and light are met within me
I flee from thee, but lure thee on
I seek for thee, but hide my face
I speak to thee, but my words are silent

For some men this lure of the chase and the brief moment of conquest are the end. Having captured the star, having brought the Queen of Heaven down to Earth, the man no longer wants her. Face to face she looks too ordinary; it is the unattainable which he desires. The *puer aeternus* or eternal youth is a Peter Pan who has decided never to grow up and never to face the consequences of his own sexuality. This is the Don Juan syndrome where the man cannot mate with a real woman for, as soon as he possesses her, he despises her. It is the promise of the Goddess he seeks and not its fulfilment. If a man is to find his own divinity, he must cease to be the son and become the husband and father; not Peter Pan, but Pan the Phallic Lord, for it is through mating with the Goddess that a man becomes a God and a King.

THE LOVER/MOTHER

The second aspect of the Goddess is the Lover/Mother. She is the full Moon, Paradise, the cup, the Grail, the Motherland, Earth, the pool of still water, matter, the ploughed land, the cornucopia, the rose, the lotus, the magic circle, the cauldron. This is the woman who has known sexuality and carries the man's seed within her womb. Here the Goddess has descended to Earth. At this stage, Bachofen argues, there developed the concept of the *hieros gamos*, the sacred marriage. Now the male's role is important; for it is he who fertilizes the woman and the land and without him both are barren.

The transition to the second aspect of the Triple Goddess is symbolized by the appearance of the Goddess's daughter. Demeter begets Persephone, or Kore. Demeter's origins lie in the Great Mother Goddess who creates alone, but Persephone is different. She too bears a child, but the child has a father,

for she is wed to Hades the Dark Lord of the Underworld.

In Wicca the Persephone figure is Aradia, the Goddess of the Earth, the daughter of the brother/sister marriage of the Sun and the Moon. These are her words:

THE ARADIA CHARGE

I am Aradia
Daughter of the sea
And daughter of the wind
Daughter of the Sun
And daughter of the Moon
Daughter of dawn
And daughter of sunset
Daughter of night
And daughter of the mountains

And I have sung the song of the sea
And I have listened to the sighing of the wind
I have heard the hidden secrets of the Sun
And I have drunk of the tears of the Moon
I have seen the beauty of the dawn
And the sorrow of the sunset
I have lain 'neath the darkest dark of the night
And I have beheld the might of the mountains

For I am stronger than the sea
And freer than the wind
I am brighter than Sun
And more changing than the Moon
I am the hope of the dawn
And the peace of the sunset
I am more mysterious than night
And older than the mountains
Older than time itself
For I am she who was
Who is
And who will be
For I am Aradia¹².

Aradia begins as 'the daughter'. She is immanent in creation, the product of the forces of nature, but she goes forth to seek experience of the world. She learns the song of the eternal sea, the life force; she knows pain 'the sighing of the wind' and 'the

sorrow of the sunset'; she knows the darkness of fear and despair 'the darkest dark of the night' and at the end she comes to the mountains, the high place of the Self which transcends the world of matter.

In the Aradia Charge, we have an image of the Goddess who has glimpsed the Self which is outside matter and time and endures for ever; but she is not yet the Self, for she is still measuring herself against outside criteria. Aradia defines herself by the qualities of others, compared with whom she is 'stronger, deeper, wider, more mysterious, older'. She has experienced a 'partial rebirth' and her ego is strengthened and renewed, in full realization of its power and with the strength that comes from the knowledge that it has an eternal core.

Persephone likewise suffers pain and anguish. She is stolen away from the world she knows and loves by the forces of darkness. In experiencing these things, however, she learns the secrets of life and death and finally she eats willingly of the pomegranate, the seed of Hades. Now, as this sexual symbolism tells us, she knows sexuality and is no longer the unattainable virgin, but woman as she truly is, a queen in touch with her own physical nature and full of sexual desire.

Persephone is a figure of the threshold, a figure of transition. First the virgin aspect of the Goddess and then the lover, but not wholly either. To find an image of the Goddess which is completely the Lover/Mother, we must turn to the Celts and the story of Maeve, Queen of Connaught¹³. Maeve has entered English literature in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as Mab, Queen of Fairies, but she has her origins in pre-Christian Celtic Ireland where, as queen of one of its ancient kingdoms, she led her troops into battle and boasted that she could best 30 men a day — on the battlefield or in her bed. This is the true image of womanhood which is hidden behind the veil of the Virgin, the image of the Queen. This is not the Goddess who flees the man, but the Goddess who summons him to her bed to serve and impregnate her.

What kind of man dares to want a woman whose sexuality may be stronger than his? According to Maeve this man must be neither selfish, or timid, or jealous; he must be as generous and brave as she. This is the woman who has sexual expectations, not the Heavenly Virgin who is content with no more than adoration. This is the Goddess before whom a man might

fail. This is not the Isis Urania Goddess of the son/lover. She is not for princes, but the mate of kings. Jung¹⁴ writes:

...the companion of the chthonic [Earth] mother is an ithyphallic Hermes (the Egyptian Bes) or a lingam... in the West Hermes is... the god of revelation...

Small wonder that many men flee; for who can face the huntress and who dares to take the part of the God of Revelation? But the purpose of the fleeing hind is to lead the hunter hero to the clearing in the forest, where beneath the light of the full Moon, he is confronted by the naked beauty of the full Moon Goddess. This is Isis Urania come down to Earth and seeking his seed within her so that she may transform herself from the unobtainable Virgin to the Mother of all things living, Queen of Earth now as well as Heaven.

The Lover/Mother gives the Goddess duality, mother and daughter, Demeter and Kore.

Demeter and Kore, mother and daughter, extend the feminine consciousness both upwards and downwards. They add an 'older' and 'younger', 'stronger' and 'weaker' dimension to it and widen out the narrowly limited conscious mind bound in space and time, giving it intimation of a greater and more comprehensive personality which has a share in the eternal course of things.¹⁵

Demeter and Persephone/Kore can give us only an 'intimation', a hint of what is to come. For a woman the Goddess is ultimately the Self; that to which she aspires and that which she essentially is. However, in order to find the Self, we must first have a strong ego. Demaris Wehr in her book *Jung and Feminism*¹⁶ has pointed out that many women today have had their egos undermined by the low value which society places on the feminine. In Wicca we learn to value the feminine and where necessary grow and nurture the ego which has not been taught to value itself; for in order to let go of its grip, the ego must first experience a sense of power and control.

One of the most important things which Wicca teaches a woman is this sense of control over her own destiny, which she may not have learned in the outer world. In the circle, as a woman takes the sword from her priest, both men and other women kneel to her. Thus she demonstrates for herself her own inner power and for other women she provides a much needed role of strong womanhood to which they can aspire. There is

a song created by the women who made a peace camp at the Greenham Common missile base in England which goes:

I am a strong woman
I am a story woman
I am a healer
My soul will never die

When she has experienced this sense of power, a woman's ego can become strong and from this position of strength she can move forward. A woman enters the circle, the world of the unconscious, the underworld, and emerges a Queen. Persephone/Kore represents the ego of woman. She descends to the Underworld as a cipher — Demeter's dark-eyed daughter, Hades' doe-eyed bride — but emerges as Queen of the Underworld, wielder of the sceptre of power.

In the dual Goddess, Persephone and Demeter, one part of the Goddess is still hidden. The Moon has reached fullness, but is not yet waning. The missing element is hinted at in the qualities of the mother and daughter; for in the Greek temples the sacrifices to Demeter were not made on the altars which stood open to the Sun. They were poured into holes which went deep beneath the Earth and it is in the Underworld that Persephone finds her destiny. It is the grandmother, the Hag, who holds the answer to the 'greater and more comprehensive personality'. To find the Self we must encounter the Dark Mother.

THE DARK MOTHER

In mating with the Lover/Mother a man finds his own sexuality. He ceases to be Herne the Hunter, lord of the greenwood and becomes the Phallic Lord, the second aspect of the God which arose in the human psyche. He becomes a Sun King and father and leaves behind for ever the role of prince and son. Jung writes that the hero often fears this transformation and this is so, for he does not know what the consequence will be. In our midsummer rite the Goddess calls the God to:

...leave the greenwood of your youth and bear the burdens of a King and Man.

But the God does not wish to sacrifice his youthful freedom:

I married thee my Love
And not thy land
I roam the woodland wild
The deer my companions and the birds my friends
The greenwood is my home and not the seat of kings.

There is also another reason why the ego recoils from the burdens of kingship:

I fear to take this kingship
For before me I see
Darkness and pain
And blood upon the corn
The shadow of my death.

At Beltane the God has married the Goddess, but he has not forsaken his woodland home for her circular clearing, the world of the tribe and the village, the world of responsibilities. He fears to enter the circle for within it the Goddess herself may change and it is this transforming aspect of the feminine which men often fear. Many of the images of the Goddess are really images of transition. Many transformations are positive: the lotus in its virgin white purity can become a symbol of sexuality; the virgin hind may give herself to the hunter; and the fearsome Hag may transform herself into a beautiful maiden.

Other transformations are, however, less pleasing for always lurking behind the Lover/Mother is that third aspect of the Goddess which is feared by man. 'Sacrifice yourself for me', says the anima, but it is she who is the sacrificer. This is the Hag, the wielder of the sickle, the destroyer. The hare of the full Moon mother is a shape changer who beneath its rays may lead the hunter to the swamp or to the cliff edge and so to his doom. The bow and arrow of the virgin may be turned against the seeker and take his life. Lured to the magic circle by the full Moon mother, she may curse those who enter by turning them into swine. The Goddess does not deceive him, for his contra-sexual self, his anima, knows that she leads him to his death, but only through death can life be renewed; only through death comes rebirth:

Dark in truth is the fate of kings. . .
But the fear of the shadow is greater than itself
For from the ashes of the fire

The phoenix is reborn
And out of death comes forth new life
Though in another form.

The Goddess asks him to 'embrace this destiny for us all'; the anima asks for the hero's ego death, for only through this sacrifice of the image of ourselves as we think we are can we find the Self we truly are.

For a woman, Hecate is the Wise Old Woman who guides her to the Self. This is a role which in older societies would have been played by a real old woman, a wise woman, a grandmother, a witch. In Wicca, women are given the titles of priestess, witch and queen. Persephone is the priestess who journeys to the Underworld. There she is crowned Queen, the equal of her mother Demeter and, as Mistress of the Underworld, she is Hecate the witch and the secrets of life and death are hers. In Wicca we must value the witch, that person most abused, for it is she who will show us the way to our destiny. Her witchcraft is neither black nor white, for what she reveals is amoral, it is the knowledge of good and evil, of the life itself.

Hecate is the most difficult aspect of the Goddess for both men and women to understand. It is easy to love what is beautiful like the virgin Persephone. It is easy to love what is powerful and strong like Maeve the Queen. It is not so easy to love what is old and weak, a woman no longer fertile, who has given over her worldly dominance to others. Hecate teaches us an important lesson, however, which is that the feminine should be valued for itself; not because it brings sexuality or power, but because deep within it there is an eternal wisdom, for Hecate is also the High Priestess, the keeper of the Mysteries.

Hecate is not the priestess who seeks the inner knowledge, but the High Priestess who has found it and imparts it to others. For a man, while the Virgin aspect of the Goddess is an initiatory priestess who brings him across the threshold of the psyche into the world of the unconscious, it is Hecate who sits enthroned before the Veil of the Temple as the High Priestess, the card in the tarot which is ruled by the Moon. To reach daylight on the other side of the veil, we must all become at one with the Dark Mother of night.

MOTHER OF MYSTERY CHARGE

I am the Mother of Mystery
All places, all times, all seasons are alike to me
You have sought me in the wind amongst the trees
In the flowers amongst the grass
In the streams amongst the hills
In the waves upon the ocean

Like unto the sea I am
Gentle and calm
Fierce like the thunder
Changing am I but unchanging
You sought me in a whisper in the shadows
And I was there
You sought me on the mountain top
And I was there
All the peoples of the ages
They have sought me
They have found me
And ever changing was my face
In the silence of the night they call me
And I take them to my embrace¹⁷

The embrace of the Dark Mother is death. In one Pagan song we sing:

Hecate, Cerridwen, Dark Mother take us in
Hecate, Cerridwen, let us be reborn.¹⁸

Sometimes the death of the ego is violent and, struggling, we succumb. Sometimes the old life slips away quietly one night, taken away in the embrace of the Dark Mother and we find that we have entered a new kingdom of untold expansion of consciousness, never more to return.

THE TRIPLE MOTHER

For both woman and man the ultimate image of the Goddess is the Triple Mother whose aspects are reconciled in One. She is the Moon who is ever-changing but ever the same:

AUTUMN GODDESS CHARGE

I am the waning Moon
The Goddess who is fading from the land

In the Springtime I sought my Lord
And mated with him beneath the trees and stars
At Beltane I wed my Lord
Beneath the first blossoms of the hawthorn tree
And in the Summertime I ripened the apples in the orchards
And the fruit grew round and strong
Like the seed within my womb
At the corn harvest I cut down my Lord
That by his death our people might be fed
And now in the Autumntime
I descend beneath the Earth
To dwell with my Lord in his dark kingdom
Until our child is born
At the Winter Solstice I will bring forth the child
And renew your hope
And at Candlemas I myself will return
To renew the land

I leave you, but I return to you
When you see my power fade
And the leaves fall from the trees
When snow obliterates like death
All trace of me upon the Earth
Then look for me in the Moon
And there in the heavens you will see the soul of me
Soaring still amongst the stars
And in that darkest time
When the Moon is covered by shadow
And there is no trace of me in Heaven or on Earth
When you look outward and your lives seem cold and dark and
barren
Let not despair eat at your hearts

For when I am hidden
I am but renewing
When I am waning
I am making ready for return
Remember my promise and look within you
And there you will find the spirit of me
Awaiting those who seek
For by the well-spring of your being
I await you always

I am Diana in Heaven
And on Earth, Persephone
And within you that dark Hecate
Triple am I
The One in Three
My body the Earth
My soul the Moon

And within thy innermost self
The eternal spirit of me.¹⁹

Here the Goddess is Earth, Moon and Spirit. In the Triple Goddess, a woman finds the reflection of her true Self and a man the true image of his inner feminine. The Goddess is then complete. She is no longer Isis Urania, the unattainable Moon, or Queen Maeve who dominates, or Cybele the Great Earth Mother who devours, but all these and more. She is Isis the Triple Mother who is seen first in the world without and then only finally when that has been stripped from us, do we find her in her true home, the inner world of a man's soul and a woman's spirit.

7

THE GOD: WICCA AND THE MASCULINE

The God is worshipped in many forms in Wicca, but his primary form is that of Cernunnos or Karnayna, the Horned God. This image of the God is the earliest which we know in human history and it is an image of great power which has endured in the human psyche through centuries of repression. The first representations of the God were made 12,000 years ago in the Paleolithic Age in cave paintings in Spain and France. These show a horned hunting God who is part animal and part man. The species of animal varied in the different paintings. In La Pasiega at Santander in Spain, there is a bison-headed man playing a musical instrument; in the Caverne des Trois Frères at Ariege in France, a man in antlers and deer-skin; and at Forneau du Diable in the Dordogne in France a goat-horned figure.

These paintings do not tell us much about the role of the God in paleolithic society. There is only one painting which we can definitely say shows some kind of ritual and this is at Cogul in Northern Spain where nine women, one of whom originally held a knife, dance around a male figure who wears garters. The significance of the ritual we must guess for ourselves but, given that this was a hunting society and the inclination of the human mind to sympathetic magic, the fate of the male figure may not have been a happy one.

In neolithic times the God became associated with agriculture and the crops and the next oldest image we have of the

God is that of the vegetation God. From neolithic societies which developed the art of writing we know many of the names of the Gods. There was Osiris whose body was scattered across the land by his brother and enemy, Set the Destroyer; Tammuz, the lover and son of Ishtar, and Attis, son/lover of the great goddess Cybele, who was incarnated into a new human youth each year and ritually destroyed by his female priestesses who, wailing and mourning, scattered his body across the fields to ensure the fertility of the crops. In northern Europe there is the Green Man who still appears in folklore celebrations and who in Britain often hangs above the door of those temples of Dionysus so beloved by Pagans — pubs!

The neolithic peoples domesticated animals and had greater opportunity to observe their breeding habits than their paleolithic ancestors. They also developed methods of time recording which enabled them to make connections between events in time. These changes led to an understanding of the male role in procreation and the Horned God now became an exaggeratedly phallic figure. Representations of the phallus itself were also made objects of veneration. Patrilinear inheritance was also now possible and increasingly desired by men who wished to ensure that it was their own children and not those of another who inherited the fruits of their labours. The status of women as the owners of the land was thus diminished.

Between about 5500 and 3000 BC there was an invasion of fair-haired Indo-European horse and cattle herders into Europe from Asia Minor. The invaders had no knowledge of agriculture but they had a knowledge which gave them a power over the original inhabitants — the knowledge of metal smelting by which to make metal weapons. The newcomers were warlike and brought with them their concept of a Warrior God, the Lord of Death and War.

On the positive side, the God was also associated with the Sun. A herding community was not concerned with the lunar planting cycle, but its lifestyle was dependent on the seasonal growth of vegetation for grazing and its seasonal disappearance with the advent of winter. This was seen as influenced by the seasonal cycle of the Sun rather than the Moon and the Sun God assumed greater importance. With the advent of the metal bearers the God had therefore assumed a duality, the benign aspect of the Lord of the Light and the equally powerful aspect,

necessary to make war on other tribes but at the same time a very threatening aspect, that of the Lord of Darkness; and so the dark and light twins were given birth in the human psyche.

Although newer Gods emerged, the Horned God remained a dominant force and he was still present at the dawn of the Christian era in the form of Pan and other horned deities. His continued existence 10,000 years after the paleolithic era is a reflection of the power of this archetype in the human psyche. Horns continued to be seen as a sign of divinity and in Babylon the more horns the deity wore, the greater his or her importance. Ishtar had seven. When Alexander the Great took the throne of Egypt and declared himself a God, he had himself painted wearing the horns of the ram-God Amoun. In the Koran, Alexander is called 'Iskander Dh' Karnain', Alexander the two-horned, and this name is preserved in Alexandrian Wicca where the God is called Karnayna.

In Gardnerian Wicca, the name of the God is Cernunnos, the Romanized version of the Horned God whose altar was discovered under the site of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Versions of this name also appear in many place names in Britain, including Cerne Abbas in Dorset, the home of the phallic hill figure known as the Cerne Abbas Giant.

With the advent of Christianity, many aspects of the God were absorbed into the Christian pantheon, but the aspect which the Christian Church could not absorb was that of the phallic Horned God, for at the core of Christianity was a fear of sexuality. Christianity was also devised at a period when humanity was seeking to consolidate the dominance of Apollonian consciousness in the face of the unconscious Dionysian desire to shed the burden and loneliness of individuality and return to the oneness of the group mind. Christianity equated sexuality and darkness, the symbol of the unconscious, with evil and equated the Horned God, the leader of the Dionysian rout, the Lord of the Dance, with the Devil.

Archetypes cannot be destroyed; nor was the Church itself immune to its lure. In 1282 in Inverkeithing in Scotland a priest was brought before the local bishop for leading his flock in a fertility dance around a phallic figure of the God. The bishop's reaction seems to have been rather mild and the priest kept his parish. At more senior levels, the Bishop of Coventry

was accused before the Pope in 1301 (1000 years after Constantine had declared Christianity to be the official religion of the Roman Empire, including Britain) of doing homage to the devil (i.e. paying reverence to an animal-skinned God). The case dragged on for two years and, with the bishop receiving the support of King Edward I, he was acquitted.

Like the Goddess, the Horned God survived openly, but also in other ways. In folklore the Horned God became Robin Goodfellow and Puck, mischievous spirits who could be helpful to humans if propitiated, but would play spiteful tricks if not. Robin Goodfellow is associated with that other figure of folklore, Robin Hood, who like the Goddess Aradia was a saviour and champion of the people against the oppression of the nobility. The worship of the Horned God also secretly continued among families who kept to the Old Pagan faith and it was from these that the modern witch movement and the religion of Wicca sprang. The God had slept but, in the collective unconscious of humanity, he lived:

THE PIPES OF PAN

In caverns deep the Old Gods sleep
But the trees still know their Lord
And its the Pipes of Pan which call the tune
In the twilight in the wood
The leaves they dance to the Goat God's tune
And they whisper his name to the winds
And the oak tree dreams of a God with horns
And knows no other king.¹

THE JOURNEY OF THE GOD

Men coming into Wicca are often attracted by its emphasis on the feminine and on the Goddess; perhaps as a reaction against the male dominance of most of the major established religions around today and of western society as a whole. In seeking out a spiritual path which honours the 'beauty of the green Earth' and the forces of nature and which teaches a fertility of being, men are naturally drawn to a religion which not only has a strong feminine side but which because of this enables them to recognize an unconscious part of themselves: the anima.

With reverence of the Triple Goddess being so paramount and with the very active role played by the priestess, in his early stages in Wicca, a new man may adopt a somewhat subordinate role. In the words of T S Eliot, he appears to be:

...an attendant lord, one that will do to start a progress or swell
a scene or two.²

This stage of learning to play a supporting role to the feminine principle is necessary initially to act as an antidote to the male-dominated Western world and its religions and to provide an opportunity for the man to explore and respond to his own feminine side.

This stage in a man's individual development is that of the son/lover whose role is to revere the Goddess but, although reverence for the feminine principle never lessens, it is important for the man that regard for the feminine within does not become over-emphasized and negate the masculine. Individuation is a process of bringing all qualities into play and not the opposite at the expense of the original. An example of this can be found in society with the experiences of the 'new age father'.

Although many couples have experimented with role-reversal, the father taking a greater responsibility in terms of the caring and nurturing roles traditionally ascribed to the mother, it is not in itself a total solution if, by doing so, the male qualities and instincts are artificially suppressed. Again it is perhaps a necessary stage in 'redressing the balance' to counteract previous behavioural patterns, but following this a new stable balance has to be struck, where both the feminine and the masculine are given their due. In Wicca the aim is that exploration of the feminine mysteries will for a man develop a new, and more enlightened, male role, in which both thinking and feeling are given their place. It is perhaps at this stage that the role of the God in Wiccan ritual comes under closer scrutiny.

The God is presented in many different aspects during the course of the year. At some stages he is 'Pan-like', both in the sense of being mischievous and Puck-like, but also in the sense of creating 'Pan-ic'. He is Lord of the Greenwood; he is the Sun King; he is the Corn King, John Barleycorn who dies; he is Lord of the Underworld; he is the Lord of Light as well as being the Lord of Death; he is the Shepherd; and he is a healer. How

can all these aspects be reconciled and how can they form part of, and fit in with, the feminine symbol of the circle?

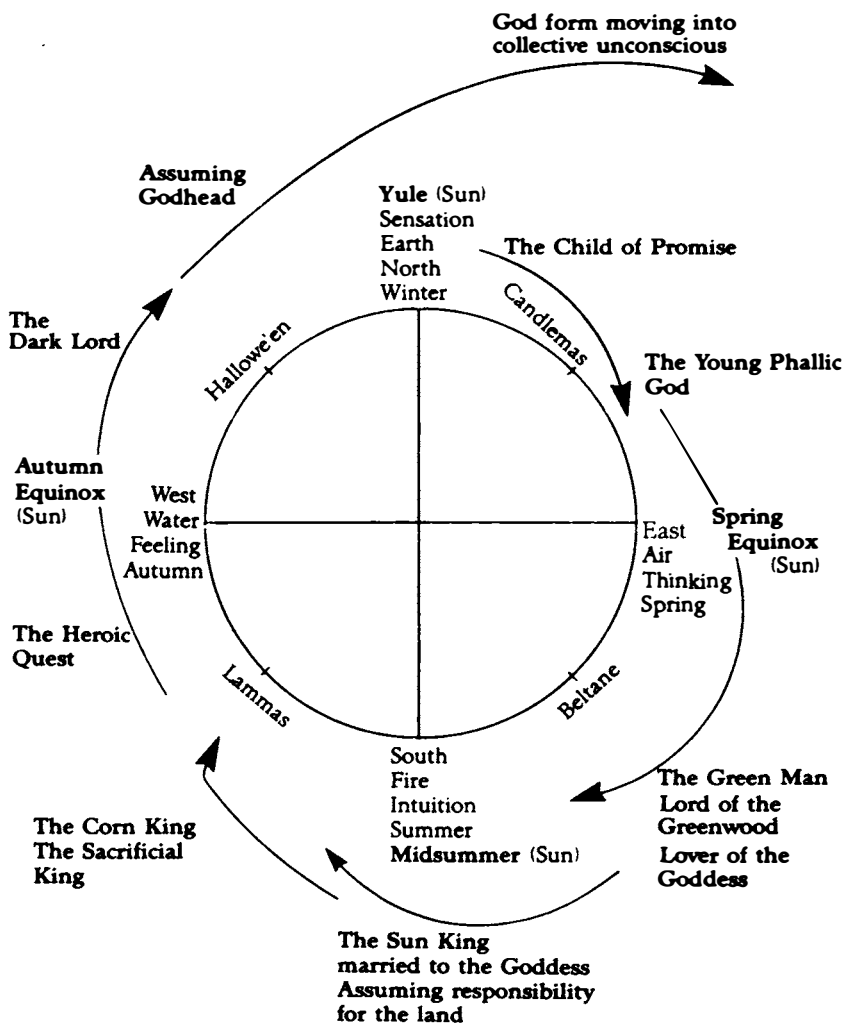
The circle is a symbol of wholeness. With its cyclical nature, the image of the womb, the never-ending, eternal rhythm, it is quite difficult to see how the male principle, which is represented by a straight line or an arrow, can be fitted into this with any degree of harmony. In myth, it is the female which is never ending, while the male is renewed through the birth of a new generation, the creation of the 'Child of Promise'. The God passes this way but once and must leave it to the next generation to build on what he has achieved; embodying nature, the Goddess however is restored and renewed and is eternal.

The symbol of the circle works simultaneously on many different levels. Apart from being the feminine principle, the directions of North, East, South and West and the elements associated with these (earth, air, fire and water respectively) can all be placed around the circle, as can the psychological functions of sensation, thinking, intuition and feeling, which superimpose on the circle the pattern of the balanced personality. Journeying within the circle therefore becomes a journey towards individuation.

We have talked about the Goddess in terms of the lunar cycle and here we will talk about the God in terms of the solar cycle. This is not to say that the Goddess does not partake of the solar cycle or the God of the lunar, but here we have used these as a starting point.

In addition to its other symbolism, the circle can be seen as a symbol of the annual cycle of the sabbats. The four solar Sabbats of the Spring Equinox, Midsummer, Autumn Equinox and Yule are placed at the cardinal points of East, South, West and North. The four Celtic festivals are placed between them, with Imbolc or Candlemas being placed at the North-East; Beltane or May Eve at the South-East; Lughnasad or Lammás Eve at the South-West; and Samhain or Hallowe'en at the North-West.

The sabbats are a journey. In the northern hemisphere, the Spring Equinox celebrates the mating of the Goddess and the God; Beltane the coming of Summer and the marriage of the Goddess and God, and Midsummer the celebration of the Sun, the Lord of Life, and the coming of the God into his maturity and kingship. Lammás celebrates the harvest, the sacrifice of the God, which is necessary to fertilize the land, and his death



which liberates him to the challenge of conquering a new kingdom, that of the Underworld; the Autumn Equinox celebrates the return of the God from the Underworld as a conquering hero who comes to reclaim his Queen and to take her with him to his Underworld kingdom, and Hallowe'en is the feast of the dead when the worlds of matter and spirit draw close to one another and the dead may pass to and fro through the veils. Yule celebrates the birth of the young Sun God and at Candlemas the Goddess renews herself once more and re-emerges into the world as virgin again.

Annual cycle or lifetime round? It operates on both levels. The developing God, although linking in with the Goddess on the annual fertility cycle, is also progressing around the circle on a lifetime quest. Anthropologists tend to see the seasonal and other religious celebrations of Pagan peoples as analogies and imitations of nature. Our Pagan ancestors were not however depicting the cycle of nature, for why did they need to imitate what was happening around them every day? What they did need to express was not the outer world, which was there outside the door of the hut, but the inner world of the psyche, the interior drama arising from the unconscious in dreams and vision.

Jung³ calls myth that which is not objectively true but is psychologically true, '... the bridge to all that is best in humanity'. It was this inner reality which was portrayed in ritual and the method of portrayal was to use allegories found in nature, for it was in part through observation of the cycle of birth, death and rebirth in nature that human beings understood that this too was their own fate — to be born, to die and to live again.

All the mythologized processes of nature, such as summer and winter, the phases of the Moon, the rainy seasons... are symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man's consciousness by way of projection, that is, mirrored in the events of nature.⁴

By examining their perceptions of the world around them, men and women came to an understanding of their own inner beings. The experiences induced by the cycle of the seasonal rituals are that of the 'transcendence of life'. The rites demonstrate:

...perpetual continuation of life through transformation and renewal. In these mystery-dramas the transcendence of life is usually

presented by the fateful transformation — death and rebirth — of a god or or godlike hero. . . . The initiate who ritually enacts the slaying, dismemberment, and scattering of Osiris and afterwards his resurrection in the green wheat, experiences in this the permanence and continuity of life, which outlasts all change of form and phoenix-like, continually rises anew from its own ashes.⁵

Through participating in the seasonal rituals we come to terms with the processes of ageing and death and understand that they are but part of the life process which is eternal. Many of the rituals make this explicit. At our Lammas rite, the Corn King says:

Behold I was tall and straight in my pride
And was cut down
Behold I died willingly for my people
And found rest
Behold I answered the call of the Goddess
And was reborn.

The sabbat round is a wheel which can be entered at any of its spokes, but here we will start at the Spring Equinox where the God is at his most 'Pan-ish'. At Spring he is the Lord of the Greenwood and 'lusting free', he is the Shepherd of Goats and probably rutting everything that moves! He is a symbol of youth, a symbol of instinct in tune with nature. At this stage of his development, he is in tune with animals and is himself at his most animalistic. The image of Pan, with horns but human trunk and goat legs, encapsulates this. He is free, careless of responsibility, the adolescent coming into maturity, roaming the forests and heathlands.

At the Spring Equinox, 'the light equals the darkness' and this can be taken both as a representation of the Goddess meeting the God, but also as an emblem of the God's evolution. He is at the equipoise between unconscious animalism and growing conscious awareness. It is at this festival that he impregnates the Goddess but, although coupling with her, he does not stay with her. He continues roaming the greenwood, as the Horned Hunter.

The next festival is Beltane. It is during this ritual that the God recognizes his responsibilities to the now pregnant Goddess and the ritual is predominantly a celebration of their marriage. Although the God remains very much Lord of the Greenwood, he has begun to evolve from his Pan state, the

purely instinctual, into forming a specific relationship with the ability to love an individual.

The God has begun the evolutionary climb from the sacral chakra — the realm of unbridled sexuality — to the solar plexus chakra which is the realm of personal emotions and love. He has evolved from a predominantly instinctual, unconscious state to a human state where he can form a loving relationship. Although he is still very much Lord of the Greenwood, he is seen now as taking on a much more Shepherd God role. He has begun to feel for others. He has passed from the realm of the son to the realm of the lover and has assumed the role of 'ithyphallic Hermes', the impregnator of the Goddess.

At Midsummer, a great change comes over the God in terms of the role he is required to undertake. At Beltane, he marries but remains relatively free. At Midsummer he has to accept the consequences of his actions and take on the responsibilities that the marriage has occasioned. At Midsummer the Goddess asks him to help her care for her land which is, of course, an aspect of the Goddess he had married. For the Goddess is now pregnant, a mother as well as a queen and she needs the support and love of the God.

Beneath the blossoms of Beltane
You came forth from the woods to claim me
And to own your child
And you pledged yourself to me in life and death
Now the power within me which nourishes the land
Turns inward to protect and grow our son
And I can no longer rule alone
Though it was for myself that I loved thee first
My people too have need of thee. . .
Will you help me now to rule my people
And share with me my kingdom's crown
Will you leave the greenwood of your youth
And bear the burdens of a King and Man.

At this point the God can no longer roam free and, in taking responsibility for the land, he accepts responsibility for the people within that land. It is not from a desire to gain power but from love of the Goddess.

I did not think when first we met
To what end it would lead
But if this is thy will
Then so mote it be

I will take thy people as my people
And lay down my greenwood freedom
To wear a kingly crown
And I will be bound to thy people
Their servant and their king.

The God thus evolves from the ability to form a single relationship with a woman to a wider compassion. He has become the strength on which other people depend and has moved from being Lord of the Greenwood to a Sun King. In becoming the Sun, the God has become energy or fire. The making of fire has always been a sacred act surrounded by taboos and fire itself was considered to belong originally to the Gods, not to men. The Gods were also less than keen to part with it. In the Greek legend, fire had to be stolen from Heaven by Prometheus and he suffered badly for his temerity; for the fire which Prometheus stole was not physical fire but spiritual fire, the fire of consciousness which makes us human and not animal and awakens in us the Godhead.

In Sun and fire there is an ambiguity. In colder climates, the Sun is seen as the nourisher of the physical world which surrounds us, a beneficent force. Here is a Solar God Charge which we use during the Summer:

SUN GOD CHARGE

I am the Sun God
At the height of my power
The noon of my majesty
No shadow I cast
My light at full zenith
Darkness is overcome
Rejoice in the light

Born of the dark was I
In the cold midnight
Sun of that hunting God
Deep in the greenwood
I come forth and put to flight the darkness
Lord of Life, Lord of Light
Golden One and King of Glory
Rejoice in my orb
Now in its splendour
My warmth has restored the earth to its life
About me the planets revolve.

Nearer the equator, in Egypt, for instance, where the Sun played an important part of the pantheon of Gods, the Sun is a mixed blessing. At its zenith, in the full height of its powers, it is a thing to be avoided, a thing which burns, scorches and destroys. This destructive aspect of the Sun is associated with the Goddess Sekhmet, the beloved daughter of the Sun God Ra, who bears his solar disc upon her head and who is his avenger against injustice and his war Goddess. Lucifer as Morning Star too showed this ambiguity, for on the reverse side of the coin he was the Prince of Darkness.

In the Jewish myth of the Garden of Eden, it is Lucifer as the serpent who tempts Adam and Eve to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. By their subsequent actions when they did, the myth shows us that the knowledge which the Tree gave was consciousness, the knowledge of one's own existence. Once Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit of the Tree, they became aware of themselves and, perhaps more importantly, they became aware that they could be seen by one another. They were exposed.

Adam and Eve could not cope with this level of truth and covered themselves with leaves; that is, they hid behind the mask of the persona. When we enter Wicca, we must return once more to that state of nakedness, which existed before Adam and Eve covered themselves, but without losing their hard-won prize of consciousness. We must have the courage to see the truth and not to hide from it. We must see our own bodies as they are and let others see them. We must also see our own souls as they are, our innermost being, and let others see this too; for only when we know ourselves can we progress.

Prometheus too suffered terrible torments for his transgression in gaining consciousness. He was doomed to be forever chained to a rock and his liver torn by an eagle. By awakening into consciousness he saw for the first time the fullness of the human condition. We have consciousness, the power of the Gods, so we can experience joy but also anguish. To be conscious is to see and, just as those who have had their sight restored after being blind from birth have testified, all that we see is not beautiful. At Midsummer when the Goddess asks the God to forsake the woods, she is asking him to forsake the Dionysian aspect of himself which is half animal and half man and to become wholly human, a king. She is asking him to become conscious and to leave the world of the 'Dionysian rout',

the animal world where there is no individuality and no separation of consciousness from nature.

For a woman, the second aspect of the Goddess, Persephone, represents the strengthened ego which is capable of making choices. For a man, it is the Sun King aspect of the God which plays this role. At Midsummer the God is offered kingship and consciousness but the price is to know the anguish of his own physical mortality. No man finds this an easy path:

I fear to take this kingship
For before me I see
Blood upon the corn
The shadow of my death.

Consciousness brings pain because for the first time we see our earthly lives as they truly are, as mortal and finite.

The gaining of consciousness also brings us into the realm of judgement, the moral realm, where it is possible to do both good and evil. With consciousness comes an awareness of alternative courses of action and the possibility of choice. The Sun therefore contains an inherent ambiguity; it brings life but it also brings death. It gives us the power to do good and the power to do evil.

The God responds to the moral challenge of kingship and develops compassion, wisdom, justice and the power to heal. The idea of the king's touch being the healing touch has endured until relatively recently and continues still in our unconscious. In chakra terms the God has moved from the solar plexus to the heart, which enables him to begin experiencing the qualities of a universal compassion and a wider, less selfish love. The taking on of the kingship, the stewardship of the people begins to open up his thinking function for now he will be called upon to administrate and arbitrate, to make decisions involving others, to apply wisdom and justice and to become the figurehead, the representation of the land and also its upholder.

This kingship is gained when the God is at his prime, only half way round the circle and at the half way stage of his life. He is at his most materially successful and at his most dominant. It would appear, both in terms of the God's progress and most men's, that this in itself produces a dilemma. From the vantage of this material high point, there can appear to be no further upward path. Powers at their prime now can only weaken, albeit very gradually, and the view from the top is to

see a continual surging, waves of challenges from younger men, all committed to achieving their destiny and taking his place.

In earlier times it was imperative for a king to be at his peak in terms of both mental and physical strength. Frazer in the *Golden Bough* and Margaret Murray⁶ in relation to King Rufus and other medieval figures have explored the concept of the seven-year king. After seven years on the throne, the king is sacrificed and his blood spilt upon the earth to revitalize and restore the land. Here the blood is seen as the carrier of the solar energy of the life force and by spilling it on the ground the sacred marriage is enacted in another fashion, the solar energy and Earth force are joined as one, 'The Sun has come down upon the Earth'.

This association between the sacrifice of the king and his marriage is one which survived in Christian mythology. That anti-Pagan, Saint Augustine,⁷ in describing the inner meaning of the sacrifice of Christ, likened the Crucifixion to his marriage with the feminine principle of the Church and the cross to a marriage bed. The memory was also preserved in the English folk song 'John Barleycorn' which, although on one level celebrating the making of ale, is on another the story of the seven-year king.

The sacrifice of the king is celebrated at the festival of Lammas. The Sun King, over the seven years of holding stewardship of the land, has developed compassion and an awareness of the greater good beyond personal interests. He accepts the inevitability of the ultimate sacrifice and is cut down by the Goddess, who now appears as Hecate, the wielder of the sickle.

... The god-hero symbolized by the spring zodiac (Aries, Taurus) having passed beyond the summer solstice is himself overcome as if by an unconscious longing for death. Nevertheless, he is divided within himself and his descent and approaching end therefore seem to him like evil designs of the sinister mother who secretly lays a poison snake in his path to undo him. The mysteries however hold out the consoling promise that there is no contradiction and no disharmony when life changes into death: 'The bull is the father of the dragon and the dragon is the father of the bull'.⁸

The God's feelings are mixed, but he accepts what must be, just as in our Beltane rite he placed his ring on the Goddess's finger and said:

This is my fate and this is my will.

There is a message here for us all. For if we can accept the penalty of consciousness and face our own physical mortality, we discover, not death, but life. For after the God has been cut down at Lammas, he rises again; not to rejoin his old life for that is over. He must leave the world of men and journey to another place. His realm is now the realm of Gods. Consciousness takes us on a path which makes us feel separate and alone, but if we climb the lonely mountain and emerge above the cloud layer which obscures our vision, we find that we are not alone, but that others have also arrived at the same place. We have then transcended our separateness and entered the unitive reality where we experience the joy of unity on a higher level, both with one another and with the cosmos itself.

Both for the God and for the individual human being, the willing sacrifice is the most difficult. For men, in modern life, the sacrifice is not normally so dramatic as that of the Corn King, but there is a very strong sense in a man's mid-life crisis of wanting to give things up in order to develop further. Failure to make this sacrifice leads, in mythological terms, not to immediate disaster but to corruption.

We have described the God's progress as that of a hero and charting his development from a natural, animalistic state, a state of innocence, through to forming relationships, becoming a lover of a particular person, the Goddess, and thus, realizing his own maleness, he becomes a man. From this he develops a wider view of humanity, takes on the burden of responsibility and becomes a king. If he accepts his fate at Lammas, he moves on to Godhead, if he refuses it he becomes a dangerous tyrant. Joseph Campbell explores this in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*⁹ in relation to the legend of King Minos, whose shadow side of the tyrant is personified by the Minotaur:

And so the king... became the dangerous tyrant Holdfast — out for himself. Just as the traditional rites of passage used to teach the individual to die to the past and be reborn to the future, so the great ceremonies of investiture divested him of his private character and clothed him in the mantle of his vocation. Such was the ideal, whether the man was a craftsman or a king.

The vocation of a king is to live and then die for the people, but there is always the possibility of 'the sacrilege of his refusal'. The God may choose to keep the power of kingship rather than return it to the Goddess who gave it to him. He may choose

to reject the path ordained by the wider community and become reactive and defensive and, as his attempts become more desperate, so does he become more corrupt, more tyrannical. Campbell continues:

The inflated ego of the tyrant is a curse to himself and his world — no matter how his affairs may seem to prosper. Self-terrorized, fear-haunted, alert at every hand to meet and battle back the anticipated aggressions of his environment, which are primarily reflections of the uncontrollable impulses to acquisition within himself, the giant of self-achieved independence is the world's messenger of disaster, even though, in his mind, he may entertain himself with humane intentions. Wherever he sets his hand there is a cry (if not from the housetops, then — most miserably — within every heart): a cry for the redeeming hero, the carrier of the shining blade, whose blow, whose touch, whose existence, will liberate the land.

The original hero failed and turned into the tyrant Holdfast. So a new hero is needed to vanquish the tyrant.

In Jungian terms, the sacrifice is the sacrifice of the ego. It is the ego which stands in the way of finding the Godhead within us and is the bar to further self-discovery and the journey towards individuation. The ego, the ruler of the conscious mind, suppresses all that it finds displeasing, distasteful and unadmirable and keeps it both firmly and furtively locked away in the unconscious, just as King Minos of Crete locked up the expression of his guilt and failure, the Minotaur, in a specially constructed labyrinth.

The Corn King, however, accepts his fate and makes his sacrifice. By sacrificing his material success and power, he descends into the Underworld; an externalization of the inner process. Until Lammas he had been the Lord of Light and life, developing the male side of himself in the conscious world. Now he becomes the Dark Lord, the dread Lord of Death, as he opens himself to the realm of his unconscious.

For a woman who has a successful career, the mid-life experience may be similar to that of a man. For a woman whose principle energies have gone into the traditional role of raising children, the mid-life crisis may be forced upon her by external events, as her children grow up and no longer need her. The role she has played for the past 20 years or so may be forcibly taken away from her, but there may still be a question of voluntary sacrifice. For the mother may play the role of Holdfast with her children, clinging to them and preventing them

becoming adults, making it impossible for them to go away and lead adult lives. This negative aspect of the mother is that which is personified by the negative Hag images of wicked witch, the evil stepmother, the dragon, devouring animals, the tomb, deep water, death, nightmares and bogies.

In myth, the journey which is undertaken after Lammas is portrayed as a quest which takes the hero into darkness peopled by monsters and dragons. It is a nightmarish world of distortion which parallels the distorting effect that the unconscious can have on our anxieties when we do not face them but push them away out of sight. On the threshold of consciousness they lurk, growing more grotesque and more powerful as they feed on our fear. This is the journey which we commence at initiation.

These demons and dragons all have to be faced, fought and vanquished. In myth there is often a wise person to guide us, a representation of the Self, and magical weapons and charms which bring us appropriate aid. This initiatory quest is to find the Grail, the symbol of the Self. The way is unsurprisingly full of hardship and the hero is often at the very point of failure before finally winning through. The secrets of the unconscious are not easily won.

In some variants on this archetypal myth, the focus of the quest is a woman; even as in the Isis Myth it is her dead husband Osiris. In a male initiatory journey, the quest is often to free a beautiful princess who is imprisoned against her will; a powerful symbol for the male's treatment of his anima! In Wicca the festival after Lammas is the Autumn Equinox where the God returns from his quest but only momentarily, for now his kingdom is not of the Earth but of the Underworld. At this time many groups celebrate the legend of Persephone and Hades where the King of the Underworld runs off with the Goddess, who descends with him beneath the Earth, to share his throne. Without the Goddess to care for the land, all growing plants wither, the land grows cold and barren, and we have Winter.

Here we have an interweaving of different myths. The Legend of Persephone is a re-telling of an older story which helped to explain the season's change; that which was fruitful was now barren. Not dead, but resting before the renewal of the Spring when the annual cycle will begin again. In terms of the God's development, however, it is implicitly recognized that, whether the female is the object of his quest or whether she must be

taken with him to enable him to achieve it, it cannot be achieved without the involvement of the feminine. A man has to recognize the feminine within if he is to be whole.

Hallowe'en follows the Autumn Equinox and, as most will know, this is the night that the spirits of the dead roam free. The God and the Goddess are at this stage happily united in the Underworld as equals and he exhorts us as 'Summer is Dead' to 'Feast with Death'. This, in terms of the God's development is the point where, with the help of the Goddess, his anima, he has been successful in exploring and winning the battles within his own unconscious, he can move to a wider stage and begin to embrace and participate in the whole collective unconscious. It mirrors the earlier part of his life when he evolved from a love of an individual to a broader based compassionate love. In both cases he begins with one and uses the experience to embrace the whole. He is now wholly divine and has evolved beyond animal and beyond man into the realm of spirit, the realm of the transcendent Godhead.

Earlier we talked of the feminine as a circle and the masculine as a straight line, the arrow which flies but once. New hope comes from the next generation. The God will be reborn through his son. At Yule, a solar festival, the son is born. The Sabbat is a celebration of the Child of Promise.

At this festival the old God must come to terms with the implications of parenthood. For each new birth brings us a little nearer to death. At Candlemas the God releases the Goddess. Knowing that with his failing powers he can no longer hold her, he allows her to return to bring fertility to the Earth. For the child, this is a key stage. He has to be separated from the mother at a certain age, which in terms of the God cycle (see diagram) is seven, in order to be initiated into the male mysteries.

Having been taught all the old God knows, then eventually they must meet as men and fight. This is the battle of the dark and the light, the old and the new. The new God has to prove himself the worthy successor and heir in order to come forth into the light of the consciousness. It is the re-enactment of the old bull/young bull tussle and although the old God might still have reserves of power, experience and guile which might defeat the new, it is a fight he has to lose. This is the last great sacrifice which he must make in order to be released into the collective unconscious, freed for ever from the Wheel of Rebirth.

8

THE SECOND INITIATION: THE QUEST PERILOUS

The second and third degree initiations can be taken together or separately, with most Alexandrian covens preferring the former and most Gardnerian the latter. A year and a day must pass between the first and second degree initiations and the witch must be capable of running a circle and of 'raising the cone of power' within the circle and controlling and directing it.

In psychological terms, the second initiation leads to a meeting between the two sides of the personality, the bright ego with the dark unconscious. In one sense these two sides are good and bad. The human psyche is made up of darkness and light, impulses to selfishness and evil and impulses to altruism and good. In another sense the encounter of the second degree is a meeting between the male and female and it is as both male/evil and female/good that they are portrayed in the Legend of the Goddess, the enactment of which is a key feature in the rite.

Paganism differs from many of the monotheisms in its attitude to the darker side of human nature. Christian, Judaic and Islamic theology, together with that of Zoroastrianism, depict dark and light as being in conflict, with light eventually overcoming the darkness. Paganism tends to see darkness and light as being in harmony and necessary counterparts to one another. In Paganism, vices and virtues are not seen as separate classes of entities but as two sides of the same coin. There is no quality which, given unlimited freedom of expression, does not become a vice and the same is true of any qualities which are

suppressed and given no opportunity for expression. Within life we must find a balance between power and compassion, between strength and beauty, between honour and humility, the needs of the self and the needs of others.

Religions which worship the light tend to teach the conscious mind to suppress its negative impulses and to project them onto exterior figures, such as the Devil, the tempter. Paganism encourages people to face their own darkness and to acknowledge and accept it. In the first degree we are taught to face the shadow and to recognize that:

When we hate someone we are hating something that is within ourselves, in his image. We are never stirred up by something which does not already exist within us.¹

Like modern psychologists, Pagans do not believe that the darkness can be overcome by the light. We cannot push the knowledge of our own evil impulses below the threshold of consciousness and pretend that they do not exist. Herman Hesse explores this in his novel *Demian*. The hero Sinclair is addressed by various friends he encounters on his spiritual quest, who are really personifications of aspects of himself, and told:

One should be fearless and . . . treat one's actions and so-called temptations with love and respect. Then they will reveal their meaning — and they all *have* a meaning.²

This final reconciliation with the shadow is symbolized by the symbol of the second degree, the downward pointing pentagram.

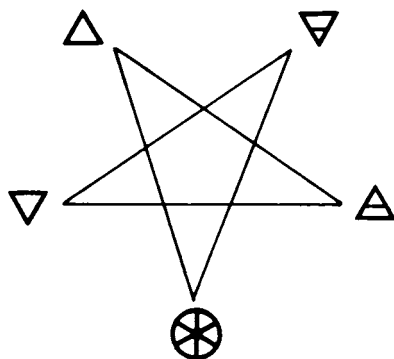
THE SYMBOL

The symbol of the second degree is the downward pointing pentagram, a symbol associated in the popular mind with the Christian Devil. This is not, however, the symbol of the Christian's 'Evil One', but the symbol of the Horned God, the Dark Lord of Death. In the second degree we must encounter the Dark Lord who in the tarot is the card of the Devil who on the Tree of Life lies on one of the paths to the central sun of Tiphareth, the Self.

It is an essential characteristic of psychic figures that they are duplex or at least capable of duplication; at all events they are bipolar and oscillate between their positive and negative meanings. Thus the 'supraordinate' personality can appear in a despicable and distorted form like, for instance, Mephistopheles who is really more positive as a personality than the vapid and unthinking careerist Faust.³

Jung writes that this figure is both positive and negative and the tarot Devil is another form of the card of the Hierophant or High Priest, but whereas the Hierophant is beneficent and his followers turn willingly to hear him, the Devil binds his followers to him with chains so that they cannot break free. He looms over them in mastery so that they cannot grow to human stature. The second degree is often a time of disillusionment in the Craft, a disillusionment with the gurus of the High Priest and Priestess, when the initiate sees them for the first time as the flawed human beings that they are.

The pentagram is a very important symbol in Wicca. In terms of spiritual growth the pentagram is symbolic of the four functions of the personality, together with the fifth or transcendent function, the Self. The five-pointed pentagram which is the symbol of the second degree shows the fifth function to have emerged, but it is not yet transcendent for it lies buried beneath the other four. It is only with the third degree that the pentagram tilts over and attains its rightful upright direction.



The Symbol of the Second Degree

THE RITE

The second degree initiation contains many similarities to the First, but the second degree rite also includes a mystery play called the Legend of the Goddess. In the Gardnerian tradition, only second and third degree initiates can be present at a second degree rite, but Alexandrians allow first degree witches to witness all of the second degree. Our own preference is to retain more of the mystery by excluding first degree initiates from higher initiation rites, but we allow them to be present at the Legend.

The initiate is not blindfolded for the initiation, but he or she is bound with the cords in the same manner as before. The same cords as for the first degree can be used, but we prefer to ask the initiate to buy four new cords for the rite in brown, violet, orange and green. These represent the four lower spheres of the qabalistic Tree of Life over which the initiate should have mastery, and the fifth to which he or she aspires. In humanity the four spheres are associated with the physical body (the sphere of Malkuth), the astral body (the sphere of Yesod), the mental and emotional worlds (Hod and Netzach respectively) and the world of the Self, Tiphareth. We bind the brown cord around the left ankle, the violet around the right knee, and the yellow (from the First Initiation), green and orange are twisted together to tie the hands behind the back and around the neck.

The circle is cast in the usual way and the Goddess and God are invoked. The initiate is then bound and taken to the quarters by the initiatory High Priest or High Priestess who proclaims at each quarter:

Take heed you Mighty Ones of the East/South/West/North that
(name) a duly consecrated priest(ess) and witch is now properly
prepared to be made a High Priest(ess) and Magus (Witch Queen).

The initiate is then placed in the centre of the circle and the coven dances around saying an appropriate rune. The initiate is assisted to kneel at the altar and the initiate's feet are tied together with the brown cord. The initiator reminds that initiate of the First Degree by asking:

Art willing to suffer to learn?

If so, the initiate is symbolically scourged. Initiates may at this point change their names to take on a name which represents new spiritual aspirations. If so the initiator will use the initiate's new name to administer the oath of the second degree. This oath is more binding than that of the First Degree where the initiate says the words 'may my weapons turn against me if I break this my solemn oath'.

The Second Degree initiation is an initiation into the eternal priesthood and wherever we may incarnate again that mark of the initiate will be upon us. This is the mark which Herman Hesse in *Demian*⁴ calls the 'mark of Cain' for with it comes knowledge of good and evil. The initiate is called upon to swear 'by my past lives and my hopes of future ones to come'. Given the binding nature of the oath, this is something which we discuss with initiates beforehand to ensure that if they wish to take the initiation they do so with full understanding.

The initiator then unties the initiate's hand and in our rite we give the initiate a silver ring, a witch's ring, which is usually worn on the third finger of the right hand. Ideally, this should be a ring which had belonged to the initiator for some time but, given the difference in sizes of male and female fingers, this may involve having it re-made at a jewellers. The initiator places the ring on the initiate's finger and says:

I give to thee this my ring of power.

The initiator then kneels and places the left hand under the initiate's knee and the right hand on his or her head forming what is called the 'magical link' and says:

And I will all my power unto thee.

The initiator then wills all the magical power which he or she has so far accrued into the initiate via the base-of-spine and crown chakras. This is not only the initiator's personal power but a cumulative legacy of witch power from all those who have been in the initiatory chain. The old tradition was that the 'willing of the power' was something which a witch or cunning man did on her or his death-bed — a literal legacy. Here the aim is to make the initiate equal in magical power to the initiator. In our rite we may then give a Second Instruction which complements the instruction given in the First Degree and also

spells out the nature of the Second Degree oath. The initiate is told that:

By this initiation, you will be sworn for ever to the Gods, to honour and to serve them, and to make manifest their will upon Earth.

The instruction also speaks of the loneliness of the path, for at this stage the initiate must undertake the final part of the heroic quest, which is always made alone. This is not an exterior quest but an interior one, the quest for the Grail of the Self. It is at this stage that we can feel most alone, for up until now our initiators have been able to help and guide us and, although that help and guidance will continue, at this stage we need other help and guidance which must come from within. This help and guidance may not appear immediately and the effect of the second degree may be to strip the initiate of his or her belief in the High Priest and High Priestess, whom he or she may see for the first time as struggling human beings with failings. This disillusionment is necessary so that the initiate will turn inward for guidance to find firstly the animus/anima, and secondly the Wise Old Woman/Man, the inner High Priest or High Priestess. The instruction therefore reassures the initiate:

For those who have made this oath, there can be no loneliness, for these the Gods love and will ever be with them.

The initiate has said that he or she is 'willing to suffer to learn'. Now we must learn that this is true, for the path which we must walk from the second to the third degree is a path of sacrifice and what we must sacrifice is any impediment which will prevent us entering that last initiatory door which is the way to the Self:

The true ordeal of your initiation cannot therefore be inflicted by woman or by man, but is the sacrifice which you must take to achieve your destiny.

The initiate is now offered the cup:

Will you drink therefore of this Cup, the Cup of the Wine of Life, which is both pain and joy eternal, and thus accept the true priesthood which is binding both in this life and those that are to come.

When the initiate has drunk the initiator kneels to give the five-fold kiss:

I kiss thy feet that have brought thee in these ways.
I kiss thy knees that have knelt at the secret altar.
I kiss thy phallus/womb which in time shall bring thee into unity
with the God-Goddess,
I kiss thy breasts formed in beauty and strength
I kiss thy lips which have drunk of the wine of life

The initiator then consecrates the initiate in the sign of the Second Degree, the downward-pointing pentagram.

I consecrate thee with oil
I consecrate thee with wine
I consecrate thee with my lips
High Priest and Magus/High Priestess and Witch Queen.

The remaining cords are removed and the initiate is presented with the eight magical weapons. This part of the ceremony mirrors that of the first degree, but with one difference. Instead of merely handling the weapons, the initiate is asked to use them.

Taking the sword, the initiate casts a circle; taking the athame, the initiate invokes the watchtowers; using the white handled knife, the initiate makes the second degree symbol on a new candle; with the wand he or she forms the second degree symbol above the altar; the pentacle is presented to the watchtowers; the censer is used to cense the circle; and finally the initiate is given the cords and the scourge.

The teaching given with the scourge in the first degree was one of the most important in the rite, that the initiate should be willing to 'suffer to learn'. The teaching given in the second degree is also very important. This is the 'three-fold law'. In our magical workings we do not merely 'reap what we sow', the effect is cumulative; where we have given good, it shall return to us three-fold; where we have done harm, then we must face the three-fold consequences. It is in the second degree that we enter a realm where we will make moral choices on behalf of others. As second degree initiates we become controllers of the power in the circle and arbiters of what work may or may not be done. Until now, others will have taken the responsibility for these decisions. That responsibility is now ours and, if we make errors, then we make errors not only for ourselves but for others in the group. We must therefore learn to take these decisions wisely and well.

After revealing the three-fold law, the initiator now promises to tell the initiate:

...of a further mystery.

This is the mystery of the Legend of the Goddess.

THE LEGEND OF THE GODDESS

In the Legend of the Goddess, the initiate and others enact the descent of the Goddess into the Underworld, the Land of Death, where she meets with the God as the Dark Lord. For both men and women the initiation is a meeting with their contra-sexual side; for a woman a meeting with her animus and for a man a meeting with his anima. Jung⁵ wrote of the encounter with the shadow as the 'apprentice-piece' in the individual's development, but it is the encounter with the anima/animus which is the 'master-piece'.

In some covens a male initiate will enact a Legend of the God rather than the Legend of the Goddess and will be the encounterer rather than the encountered, taking the role of the hero who descends to meet the Queen of the Underworld. There is a danger here however of losing one of the important lessons of the Legend for a male initiate which is to bring him into right relationship with the feminine. For if a man is to make the quest for the Self, he must learn to let go of the masculine striving for a goal which is 'out there'. The answer is not to be found in books, or in gurus, or in some esoteric group. It is the personification of his unconscious, his anima, which will bring him the answer. The message of the esbat and sabbat rites is that the Goddess cannot be found by the hunter. However fast he pursues her she will always escape. It is only when he stops and asks her to come to him that he can win her.

In Celtic mythology this truth is symbolized by the story of Rhiannon, whose name originally meant Great Queen, Goddess. Rhiannon, who rode a magical horse which never tired, was pursued by a Welsh prince for many days, but however fast he rode she was always ahead of him. At last, exhausted, he can ride no more and stops, calling out to her in desperation to wait. She turns and does so telling him it would have been far better for the horse had he done so before! The man must learn that, paradoxically, to progress he must stop. Instead of pursuing the goal, he must ask the goal to come to him. For

has the Goddess not already told him, 'By the well-spring of your being I await you always. Behold I have been with you from the beginning'.

A female initiate makes this descent, not to become the Dark Lord, but to confront him and solve his mysteries, for he is the keeper of the secret of death. Hers is the journey of Persephone and here Persephone goes willingly. The duty of the priestess is to change and grow and for this she must seek experience. In doing so, she ceases to be Persephone, for after her encounter with the Dark Lord Persephone ceased to be the Virgin and became the Queen of the Underworld, Hecate the all-wise, keeper of the mysteries.

In this journey, a woman must take the opposite role to that which society has conditioned her to play. She must not sit at home awaiting the knight on a white charger who will rescue her from the cares of the mundane world. A woman's animus will not come to save her, she must go and find it, and so the Goddess went on the journey perilous, the quest. In the inner world of the psyche, we enter the looking glass world. That wise man Lewis Carroll described so much about female initiation through the children's books *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice through the Looking-Glass*. Alice takes the equivalent of her first degree when she goes down the rabbit hole into the wonderland of the unconscious. To take her second she must enter that world again, but this time via the looking-glass, where life is reversed.

The male initiate takes on the role of the Dark Lord in the Legend. The Dark Lord is a figure whom many fear and misunderstand, just as many fear to face the unconscious and to see the shadow which lurks there. The Dark Lord in Wicca is not evil. He is the Lord of the Underworld, the kingdom of the unconscious mind and in identifying with him a man discovers the Dark Lord's true nature. For the God is a dual God and the dark aspects of the God and Goddess are but the reverse side of the Wise Old Man and Woman who lead us to the Self. Of the Wise Old Man, Jung says⁷:

If the name 'Lucifer' were not prejudicial, it would be a very suitable one for the archetype of the wise old man. . . . Like all archetypes it has a positive and a negative aspect. . . .

For a man to meet with the Self, he must first encounter

Lucifer as Morning Star; not in his aspect as the light-bearer, the Sun God by another name, but as the Dark, the Devil. However, the Devil in the tarot is but a distorted image of the High Priest/Hierophant, the Wise Old Man which the initiate must become. The Devil is a parody of what the Hierophant should be; but at the same time a clue as to what he can become for both the Devil and the Hierophant are ruled by signs of the element of Earth.

In the looking-glass world of the Second Degree, the God is ruled by the element of the Goddess, even as at this stage a man must pay heed to the anima and doing so will find his true masculinity. This is not the stereotyped masculinity of the suited city dweller but the true power of the masculine which is in touch with its feeling side. Thus the Devil which is ruled by Capricorn the Goat becomes the High Priest/Hierophant ruled by Taurus the Bull, epitome of masculine strength, and one is father to the other.

The Legend is a mystery play and can be staged simply or elaborately as desired. The initiate takes one of the parts, either the Goddess or the God, and other coven members act as narrator and the Guardian of the Portal. In the *Book of Shadows*, the Legend is narrated and enacted in mime, but many covens prefer to adapt it so that the principal characters speak their own parts with the narrator providing linking narrative.

At the beginning of the Legend, the priestess who is to take the part of the Goddess takes off the necklace which female witches always wear in the circle and lays it on the altar. She is then dressed in veils and jewellery. The veils are seven; for the Dance of the Seven Veils, which has now degenerated into an entertainment, was originally the dance which the Babylonian Goddess Ishtar performed when she too descended into the Underworld to learn the mysteries of death. The priestess waits at the edge of the circle. The priest enacting the God puts on a horned crown, takes the sword and scourge and stands in the God position before the altar. The Guardian waits with another sword and some cords by the edge of the circle.

THE LEGEND

In ancient times Our Lord, the Horned One, was as he still is, the consoler, the comforter, but men knew him as the Dread Lord of the

Shadows, lonely, stern, and just. But Our Lady the Goddess would solve all mysteries, even the mystery of death, and so she journeyed to the Nether Lands. The Guardian of the Portal challenged her:

Strip off your garments, lay aside your jewels, for naught may ye bring with ye into this our land.

So she laid down her garments and her jewels, and was bound as all living must be who seek to enter the realms of Death, the Mighty One.

The Guardian of the Portal challenges the Priestess with the sword and she removes her veils and jewellery and lays them down at the edge of the circle. The Guardian of the Portal binds her with the cords and brings her before the God at the altar.

Such was her beauty that Death himself knelt down and laid his sword and crown at her feet saying:

*Blessed Be thy feet that have brought thee in these ways.
Abide with me, but let me place my cold hand on thy heart.*

Here the Priest lays down before the Goddess the symbols of his power and kisses her feet.

And she replied:

*I love thee not. Why dost thou cause all things that I love
and take delight in to fade and die?*

'Lady', replied Death:

*'tis age and fate against which I am powerless. Age causes
all things to wither, but when men die at the end of their
time, I give them rest and peace and strength so that they
may return. But you, you are lovely, return not, abide with
me.*

But she answered: 'I love thee not.' And Death said:

*An you receive not my hand on your heart, you must yield
to Death's scourge.*

'It is fate and better so', she said.

The Goddess kneels before the altar and the God symbolically scourges her.

And Death scourged her tenderly and she cried. 'I know the pangs of love.' And Death raised her and said, 'Blessed Be.' And he gave her the five-fold kiss, saying:

Thus only may you attain to joy and knowledge.

Having shown that in order to progress we must 'suffer to learn', the God raises the Goddess and unties the cords. He then takes the Goddess's necklace from the altar and places it about her neck. She takes up the sword and crown and returns them to the God. They stand side by side with their backs to the altar, he to the East in the God position with the sword and scourge, and she to the West in the Goddess position.

The play ends as the Goddess has won the necklace which contains the secret of the magic circle, the secret of rebirth, and we are shown no more.

And he taught her all his mysteries and gave her the necklace which is the circle of rebirth and she taught him her mystery of the sacred cup which is the cauldron of rebirth and they loved and were one. For there be three great mysteries in the life of man. Magic controls them all. For to fulfil love, you must return again at the same time and at the same place as the loved one and you must meet and know and love them again. But to be reborn, you must die and be made ready for a new body and to die you must be born and without love you may not be born and our Goddess ever inclineth to love and mirth and happiness and guardeth and cherisheth her hidden children in life, and in death she teacheth them the mystery of the magic circle which is placed between the worlds.

We have not yet reached the point where the Goddess and God will enact the Sacred Marriage. We are told that this is what occurs, but it is not yet revealed to us. What is revealed is the mystery of death and rebirth and we are told that death on the physical plane is only a stage in the cycle of reincarnation. We are also taught about the death and rebirth which is not physical, but occurs within the span of a lifetime. In descending to the Underworld the Goddess enters the realm of death, but she

does not die. Although she loves and becomes one with Death, and thus overcomes any fear of him, she is also given back the symbol of life, the necklace of rebirth, for her place is not to remain in the Underworld, but to return to the world above bearing with her the necklace symbolic of knowledge of which she has gained.

THE COMPLETION OF THE RITE

The rite of the Second Degree is complete now except for one last ceremony. The initiator takes an athame in one hand and the initiate by the other and takes the initiate once round the circle, proclaiming at the watchtowers.

Hear ye Mighty Ones (name) hath been duly consecrated High Priest and Magus (High Priestess and Witch Queen).

THE WORK OF THE SECOND DEGREE

The titles of High Priest and High Priestess which we are given at the Second Degree are heady ones fraught with pitfalls. One of the reasons why we prefer to give the second and third degree initiations separately is that there is a danger with the initiation that the ego will succumb to the subtle vanities of these titles and will identify with the persona of the High Priest or High Priestess; a psychic 'falling by the wayside' on the journey to the Self. This leads to the problems of what Jung calls the 'second identification'⁸, that of 'ego inflation'.

...The colossal pretention grows into a conviction that one is something extraordinary...

Where the individual who has been playing a subordinate role in a coven is suddenly endowed with supreme authority and let loose to initiate others, there can be problems for both initiator and initiated. Particularly in Alexandrian Wicca, which tends to be more authoritarian, new High Priests and High Priestesses may suddenly find themselves thrust from a position of total subordination to one of total dominance and surrounded by initiates by whom one's every word and pronouncement on Wicca is treated as a great revelation.

While this phase will wear off as the initiates themselves

develop, it can be a difficult period to negotiate. The persona of a High Priest or High Priestess distances one from the other members of the coven and can be quite forbidding, so it can be very difficult for the rest of the coven to challenge it when it begins to outstrip its usefulness.

Although we favour the Gardnerian practice of giving the second and third degrees separately, this does not mean that people cannot and have not successfully circumvented the problems. However, in our own way of working we prefer to have a second in-between stage which allows the initiates to assume responsibility for such matters as running meetings and training others and at the same time they can be gently guided through some of the pitfalls of their new status.

An equal danger, though one which seems to happen less in Wicca, is what Jung calls a 'negative inflation'; the ego is flattened. We cannot live up to the image which we have of the High Priest and High Priestess:

... the impossibility of the pretension ever being fulfilled only proves one's own inferiority. . . both forms [of ego inflation] are identical because conscious megalomania is balanced by unconscious compensatory inferiority and conscious inferiority by unconscious megalomania (you never get one without the other).⁹

The twin problems of ego inflation and what could be called 'ego deflation' are those symbolized in the *Odyssey* by the monsters Scylla and Charybdis. The Goddess Circe congratulates Odysseus on his venture into the House of Hades, but having emerged successfully from the encounter with the Dark Lord, he must face the perils of the rocks of Scylla and Charybdis. On one stands the monster Scylla who devours what passes beneath her. At the base of Charybdis is a whirlpool which sucks down the voyager and drowns him beneath the sea.

We must find a middle way and it is the inner guide of the anima or animus which will tell us what to do. Circe warns Odysseus that no masculine solution will help him here. It is useless she tells him to put on his armour and gird on his sword, the symbols of his masculinity. He must sail beneath Scylla unarmed and appeal to Crataeis, the mother of Scylla, another aspect of his inner feminine, to help.

A second set of problems which is associated with the Second Degree lies not in ego inflation, but in integrating the animus

and anima. Although in the Second Degree a man has found his anima and a woman her animus, there must be a period of courtship before the Sacred Marriage. The female and male must learn to trust one another and to value this contra-sexual other before they are ready for the marriage bed. If we mate too soon with our contra-sexual side there is the danger that instead of successfully integrating it into our lives, we will be swamped by it.

This is the secret fear which the woman has of the Dark Lord; that he will overcome her, rape her, dominate her, hurt her. It is a realistic fear. If we release our inner maleness too quickly, we can become dominated by the animus. Many women, who in business and politics compete in a masculine environment, succumb to the trap of identifying with the stereotyped behaviour which society advocates for men. They become totally dominated by their thinking function, parodies of society's vision of maleness. They become rigid and authoritarian, totally convinced that they are always right. The ability to love and cherish others which should be the prerogative of the feeling part of both sexes disappears. Women must learn strength and power, but it is with the strength and power of the Goddess we must identify, not with a stereotyped image of the male.

Whereas until recently society has denied women an intellect, it has denied men access to their emotions. For a man the feeling realm is usually associated with the feminine, because it is with the mother that his first and most powerful emotional relationship is made. For a man the secret fear is not of rape but of the devouring vagina which would swallow him whole; for what the mother has given forth she may consume again. For a man the awakening of the feminine within him may bring with it a fear that once he 'lets go' and lets himself feel, he will be swamped by his long pent up emotions.

We must learn to love and trust our contra-sexual sides before we can fully integrate them into our lives and seek the final unification of the Third Degree. This is not done in a day, or a year, or even in a lifetime. In Paganism there is no rush to be perfect, no impetus to leave the world of the material; for the journeying can be just as much fun as the arriving! Once the problems and difficulties of the journey are overcome, or as Jung puts it 'successfully circumnavigated':

This leads to. . . a possible synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements of knowledge and action. This in turn leads to a shifting of the centre of personality from the ego to the self.¹⁰

This 'shifting of the centre' is not easily done. The Second Degree is an initiation into the mystery of death and, from the perspective of the ego, giving up its central position in the psyche to the Self may equate with death. This annihilation of the ego was seen by Jung as a crucial stage in the individuation process, but we are all afraid of change. We are afraid of the heights and the depths, of letting go of the solid ground of consciousness and entering the twilight world of the unconscious. We are even more afraid to let go of that centre which hitherto has always been 'me'. This is the point to which our animus and anima will bring us. The Dark Lord and the Hag aspect of the Goddess, who is also Cybele the destroyer, lead us to death; not the death of the body, but the death of the ego. This is a death which we seek yet flee; desire yet recoil from.

THE CHILDREN OF CERRIDWEN

We came then

The last children of Cerridwen

Daughters of light and darkness

Sons of death

We sought your presence on the wild hills of the North

But in the loneliness

We found you not

We sought your presence in the light of the East

But in the mists of dawn

We discerned you not

We sought your presence beneath the Sun of the South

But where shadows shrink

We could not see your face

We sought your presence where the wind sleeps in the West

But in the silence

We did not hear your voice

O Mother of Mystery,

Child of my vision and daughter of my dream

Long have I sought you my soul's sister

Thou goal of my desire

When passion sleeps

I longed for thee

Where death was near

I pined for thee

And when the hot breath of the hound was upon my heel
I longed for that last consummation
Surrender, death and ecstasy are all thy gifts
And teeth tearing flesh

I am the hare which leaps for thee beneath the Moon
I am the fish which glistens for thee beneath the water
And when at last
In the dark beneath the trees
In a tremor of stillness I felt your hand upon me
I knew no other God nor Goddess too
For all was you.¹¹

In the end it is our unconscious urge to grow, to dare, to be,
which overcomes the fear and leads us to the last unification
with the anima and animus, the Sacred Marriage of the Third
Degree.

9

THE THIRD INITIATION: THE GATEWAY TO THE SELF

The third degree entitles the witch to set up his or her own coven and to initiate others into the first, second and third degrees. The initiation involves the Great Rite which is an act of ritual sex in which the Priest and Priestess take the role of the God and Goddess and join together in union and become one. The Great Rite can be formed as an actual act of ritual sex, the rite 'in true', or symbolically, the rite 'in token', according to the wishes of the participants. The aim of the rite, unlike ordinary sex (if this, one of the greatest of life's mysteries, can ever be called ordinary) is not to produce a physical child but to produce spiritual twins; the two souls of the participants reborn into the light.

Today in Wicca, sexual union with the Goddess or God takes place only privately between couples. After the third degree, couples can enact the Great Rite whenever they wish. The *Book of Shadows* states that at each sabbat the Great Rite should be performed 'in token or truly'. Many High Priests and High Priestesses will perform a 'true' celebration alone before or after the sabbat and in some covens a token Great Rite is celebrated as part of the sabbat rite.

This sexual union with the contra-sexual divinity, the Sacred Marriage, or *hieros gamos* in Greek, performed between two people as the Goddess and God, or between an initiate and the God or Goddess is very old and dates at least as far back as the neolithic era. It was the ultimate religious experience in many

Pagan religions and was part of the Eleusinian Mysteries:

Is not there the dark descent, and is not the solemn communion of hierophant and priestess between him and her alone? Are not the torches doused and does not the great multitude see their salvation in that which is consummated by the two in darkness?¹

The Sacred Marriage was also the core of the third degree initiation of the Mysteries of Isis and there the male initiate had the power of the God Osiris invoked into him.

The outer part of the Rite involves a linking of the male and female, the God and the Goddess. The inner symbolism is a uniting of the initiate with the animus or anima. The sacred marriage is outwardly a marriage of two people but inwardly it is a marriage of the two within one person. The Rite is a recognition of the truth of the Great Mother Charge:

If that which thou seekest thou findest not within thee thou will never find it without thee, for behold I have been with thee from the beginning and I am that which is attained at the end of desire.

The inner marriage is the marriage of soul and spirit, ego and self and leads to individuation. It is the opening of the 'secret way' by the few which will lead to the opening of the way for the many. For the unconscious is like a jungle and the paths must be hacked through with great effort and then kept open by continual use. This is true both on the level of the individual who, once having attained spiritual growth, must endeavour to maintain it until the pathways are fixed open for ever and on the level of the collective mind where those who are in advance of the rest of developing humanity — spiritual leaders, artists, scientists, poets and magicians — must open the paths and byways of the soul and spirit.

On the borders of the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious is the Self. This is the sum total of our conscious and unconscious minds and is often symbolized by the Sun or by a jewel in dreams and mythology. Our life can be considered a quest and it is a quest which may have begun in this lifetime or in many lifetimes before. That quest is to find ourselves; who we really are. To do this we must first cease to pretend to be what we are not. We must cast away our persona or mask; then we must be prepared to confront the Shadow, that which we are and would rather we were not; and then to unify our conscious and unconscious minds and so give birth to the hidden Sun — the Self. The philosopher Karl Joel²,

writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, described this unity as not the old Dionysian unity:

...not the old, mindless unity. . . but a felt reunion; not empty unity but a full unity; not the oneness of indifference, but the oneness attained through differentiation.

The stages by which we reach this unity can be aligned to the first, second and third degrees of Wicca. In Wicca the third degree is the gateway to individuation. The Sacred Marriage is only the first part of the individuation process, for only part of what the self represents can be expressed in anthropomorphic symbols such as the Goddess and God. At the third degree we become impregnated with the seed of our own inner selves and the third degree initiation can be considered to have three stages: the marriage, which is the ceremony itself; the pregnancy, which is usually a period of many years rather than months; and then the birth, which may occur amid greater inner turmoil and pain and also turmoil in our outer lives for, in giving birth to the Self, we are like Prometheus stealing fire from Heaven and such fire is not easily stolen.

The later stages of the process are represented by that first entry point into Wicca, the circle and the quartered circle cross. It is as though we come round on ourselves in a spiral to the point of entry and we begin in effect another series of initiations, but initiations which are given this time on the inner planes and not by an outward teacher.

Giving birth to the Self represents a transition in the focus of our consciousness away from the ego to a new vantage point. This is accompanied by a great influx of creativity, for the Self lies on the borders of the collective unconscious and with birth it is as though the child, the Self, is brought up from the depths of the well of the unconscious to the surface of the waters where it can float between air and water, conscious and unconscious, half in each.

To use another analogy, it is as though a birth passage has been made for the Self which afterwards leaves a tunnel from the collective unconscious through which information can flow. The process of finding the Self is akin to digging the tunnel downwards to the cave deep underground where the jewel of the Self awaits us shining in the dark on the central altar. Until this tunnel is wide enough, the Self cannot come to the sur-

face and the work of self-development is making that channel sufficiently wide for the Self to rise to the surface.

This centring of consciousness in a new place which is not the ego has been called by many different names. Magicians call encounters with the Self encounters with the Holy Guardian Angel or finding the True Will. Jung called this process *individuation*, a process which made a person a true individual, truly unique. He saw the self as the 'wholeness that transcends consciousness'³, and the goal of the individuation process as the 'synthesis of the self'.

I usually describe the supraordinate personality as the 'self', thus making a sharp distinction between the ego, which, as is well-known, extends only as far as the conscious mind, and the *whole* of the personality, which includes the unconscious as well as the conscious component. The ego is thus related to the self as part to whole.⁴

The journey towards individuation involves meeting and absorbing into our own psyches three very powerful archetypes and hence initiation into the mysteries has always been seen as a three-fold process. These archetypes are the shadow, the anima/animus and the Wise Old Woman/Man. In the first degree, the shadow is activated and we confront our own darkness; in the second degree we first meet the anima/animus and in the third degree a second encounter takes place and this time we are united with our anima/animus. The Sacred Marriage leads directly to the activation of the third archetype, the person of wisdom. This wise person is our true Self and at this stage we must make the final break with all our gurus and all our teachers and cleave only to the wisdom within. This does not mean that we should no longer go and seek new knowledge from others, but in Wicca we no longer have any higher authority, we must make our own decisions, right or wrong.

Coming to terms with the whole of ourselves, with what we really are, which is the sum total of the accumulated wisdom of this life and our previous lives, is a formidable task. Jung describes the Self as:

...that larger and greater personality maturing within us, whom we have already met as the inner friend and companion depicted in a ritual. . . The transformation processes strive to approximate them to one another, but our consciousness is aware of resistances, because the other person seems strange and uncanny, and because

we cannot get accustomed to the idea that we are not absolute master in our own house.⁵

These 'transformation processes' of which Jung speaks are in Wicca the rites and ceremonies of initiation, of the sabbats and of the circle. This is not to say that all those who take the third degree will individuate. Individuation can be seen as a final goal and we are not all aiming to become inner planes adepts just yet. The initiations of Wicca do not give us the experiences which lead to our development on a plate but rather, to quote a phrase from Dion Fortune's invocation to the Horned God,⁶ they:

Open the door, the door that has no key, the door of dreams whereby men come to thee.

In the world of the psyche and the world of Wicca, magic and the mysteries, there are many paradoxes. What is divided within the initiate will become whole and the individuation process is a synthesis of all the different aspects of our consciousness. When the process has been completed, when we stand at the turning point, the centre of the circle, we find a new vantage point and the ego gives birth to the Self:

When a summit of life is reached, when the bud unfolds and from the lesser the greater emerges, then, as Nietzsche says, 'One becomes Two', and the greater figure, which one always was but which remained invisible, appears to the lesser personality with the force of a revelation.⁷

It is this which is the vision of the Holy Guardian Angel. From the Sacred Marriage comes forth a sacred birth, the birth of the Self. Having taken the third degree, we must resolve to take control of our destinies and to enact the will of the One which is our True Will.

THE PRAYER OF THE THIRD DEGREE

O my Lady and my Lord
Thou Two who art One made manifest
And through whose Act of Creation
The One is made whole
And all opposites reconciled:

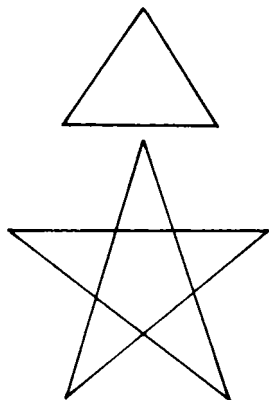
Let your Will be my Will
And let my Will be your Will
Let your desire be my desire
And my desire be your desire
Let there be no separation between us
For in you I have found myself
The source of my being
And to you I will return
The beginning and the end

The third degree initiation is usually given to a couple who are initiated together. How this is done varies between covens. In our rite, the High Priest gives the third degree to the female initiate in token and she then gives the third degree to her partner in true. Most working partnerships are likely to be spouses or lovers and will want to consummate the rite but if not, or if an initiate is to receive the initiation without a partner, then the whole of the rite can be performed in token with the initiator.

Some groups prefer all aspects of the rite to be given in true and this is a matter for the judgement of the initiators and the initiates. What is essential is that the initiation is given not by men and women to other men and women but by the God and Goddess and both initiates and initiated must be able to set aside the human element.

THE SYMBOL OF THE THIRD DEGREE

The symbol of the third degree is an upright pentacle surmounted by an upward pointing triangle.



Whereas the triangle of the first degree was downward-

pointing, the symbol of water, the unconscious, the triangle of the third degree is upward-pointing, the symbol of the element of fire. The symbolic meaning of fire is conveyed by the Sanskrit word for fire, 'tejas'. Tejas also means light, spiritual and magical power, strength, beauty, energy, influence, dignity and semen; it was the life force itself. The star and fire triangle together symbolize starfire, which in magical and mystical terms is sacred semen, but this is the semen which impregnates the soul with spirituality as opposed to the semen which impregnates the body with child. The tarot trump which is associated with the element of fire is Judgement, a card of rebirth, whereby the newborn arise out of the coffin of death. The Star is one of the tarot trumps associated with the anima and for a man the third degree symbol indicates his marriage with the anima. For a woman the Star symbolizes the Star Goddess within her. In both cases the Star is surmounted by the fire triangle which is also the triangle of inspiration, the divine light which we receive into the crown chakra.

The third degree pentagram is in the reverse position from that of the downward pointing pentagram of the second degree. Here, the upward-pointing pentagram symbolizes the upraised phallus of the Sun God reaching upwards to the outspread thighs of the Goddess. This is the true marriage which gives birth to a third thing which is neither male nor female, but the sun child, the Self.

The star and its crowning triangle are not depicted as united but separated, one above the other. The gap is the abyss which separates the world of the divine from the world of humanity. After the third degree the gap will still be there, but now it can be leapt and it is leapt by the unification of opposites, the unification of male and female. In the qabalistic Tree of Life the tarot trump which crosses the abyss between the Sun and the ultimate expression of divinity in Kether is the card of the High Priestess. It is the High Priestess who provides the vehicle for both herself and her male partner to rise to the heights of the Godhead, united as One, and for this reason the woman must always be initiated first in any magical partnership. For a woman, the part which the man will play in the rite is that of the solar hero, the rider in the chariot and it is the chariot of her own body which she will offer in order for him to assail the heights.

PREPARATION FOR THE RITE

The amount of pre-ritual preparation should at this stage be a matter for the discretion of the initiates, but since the initiation will be the last which they will receive in Wicca, we encourage people to make as much of an occasion of it as possible. The transition of the third degree can be seen as a transition from the realm of the soul, the realm of the Moon, to the realm of the spirit, the realm of the Sun. This can be symbolized in many ways. One way to mark the transition between Moon and Sun consciousness is for a period before the rite to drink and eat only white coloured food, symbolic of the Moon, and for the feast following the initiation and for a period afterwards, to eat and drink gold coloured food and drink, symbolic of the Sun.

As with the second degree, we ask initiates to buy new cords for the rite. The white cord of the first degree is re-used to tie the arms and thus takes its place at the top as the divine light to which the initiate aspires. For the qabalistically-minded, the other cords can be grey and black, symbolic of the spheres of Chokmah and Binah which as yet have no cords. Alternatively, a gold cord and a silver cord can be used for the knee and foot respectively, symbolic of the relationship which will now exist between the macrocosm and the microcosm, 'As above so below'.

THE RITE

The circle is set up as usual and before commencing the initiation all those who are not third degree initiates leave the circle. The initiators seek purification at the hands of the initiators for they must invoke the highest God forces which they can summon. The Goddess and the God are first invoked into the initiators and in the first part of the rite, the initiates are in a relationship of human beings to Gods. In the second half of the rite, they themselves have the divine forces invoked into them so that the Sacred Marriage may be performed between the Goddess and the God.

In our third degree rite, we have expanded the beginning of the rite to emphasize the internal Sacred Marriage. In our Third

Instruction, the emphasis is on the unity of the Goddess and the God and their ultimate reconciliation as One.

Ere time began the One who is all looked inward on itself and beheld itself as though through a reflection in a pool and so came to self-awareness. And in that coming to self-awareness, the One was made Two, subject and object; that which looks and that which is looked upon; and it divided from itself. And as the One was made Two, so the male and the female were made separate.

And it came to pass that the Two who had come from the One sought to be joined together and made whole again. And so shall the male and the female be joined as One and from that union with the other who is in truth but part of the Self, the doubt and the fear which are the product of the delusion of solitude shall be banished.

And as without there are God and Goddess, male and female, so within the soul is a duality of darkness and light; and so that the soul may be made whole, the Two within must be reunited.

So it is the lesson of this degree that you seek within yourself that unity which comes from embracing the darkness of your being, the male and female within. You must face all your contradictions and come to self-knowledge, and in knowing yourself and becoming at-one with yourself you will come to peace and unity.

Here Jung⁸ says:

...we enter the realm of syzgies, the paired opposites, where the One is never separated from the Other, its antithesis. It is a field of experience which leads directly to the experience of individuation, the attainment of self.

The initiates are asked to affirm that they truly seek this unity, then asked to accept ritual purification at the hands of the Goddess and the God in the quarter of the West 'whence purification comes'. There are then bound and scourged even as they were in the first degree but then, having been 'purified according to the Law', are taken 'to the East whence enlightenment dawns' and released 'from the bonds of matter'. The fetters of the material world must hold no more power over the initiate who must now belong to the world of Gods, not the world of men.

THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE GOD

The Sacred Marriage of the third degree happens on three levels. On the physical level it takes place with a priest or priestess;

on the psychological level it takes place with the animus or anima; on the metaphysical level it takes place with the Goddess or the God. On the psychological level, the anima and animus can be considered as our initiators into the world of the True Self. Just as it a priest or priestess of the opposite sex who will perform the rite for us, so too it is our unconscious minds symbolized by the contra-sexual animus or anima who will initiate within us the psychic change which leads to individuation.

It is the female initiate to whom the Gods speak first, for in Wicca it is always the female who must take the initiation first, even as in Jewish mythology it was Eve who first ate the apple of the Tree of Knowledge. The God asks the initiate:

Will you pass now through the veil and the gates of night and day?
Will you be at one with me who am both death and life? Will you
kneel before me and worship me?

The female initiate affirms and the God continues:

Then I take thee by the hand and lead thee to the altar of the Sun.

For a woman her own inner masculinity is personified by the animus, who may appear in a number of forms. The animus is the Sun, the Lord of Light, but he is also the Lord of Darkness. Having taken the initiate to the altar, the God goes to the West, the quarter of death, and walks widdershins back to the initiate dressed in a black cloak to address her:

Before the altar of the Sun I say: look upon me. I am darkness and the Lord of Night. To know me is terror, but also rebirth. Without thee I am divided, the light turns its face from me. Will you come to me O Lady of Glorious Light and heal me though it is death to thee?

To gain our life we must be willing to lose it. For, in gaining wholeness and the new and higher centre of consciousness which is the Self, the ego lets go of its grip on us; in a sense it dies. Here, the initiator, the God, is perceived as Lord of Darkness for, from the perspective of the ego, he is a bringer of death. We have a legend where the Dark Lord comes by day: the dual symbolism of Lucifer as Morning Star:

The High Priestess of the White Goddess, the pure Moon, stood one day in the centre of a magic circle in the desert. It was noon,

the time of the Sun and there was no power of the Moon to protect her. And as the shadows shrunk, the Dark Lord came to her and stood outside the boundary of the circle which barred his entry and begged her to let him in. But the High Priestess feared him, for he was large and powerful, his strength much greater than hers. He would rape her and hurt her; he would seek to dominate her and to subject her to his will. She was light and he was darkness. He would swamp her; his evil would overcome her good. She feared him and she would not permit him to enter in. Then he entreated, 'I seem large and threatening,' he said, 'only because you ignore me.' He only sought to be with her and to love and protect her; he was her strength. She needed him, even as he needed her love. Then the Dark Lord who was so full of pride knelt down before her and wept. His weakness melted the cold heart of the High Priestess of the Goddess of the Moon, who sails above the Earth caring for the plight of no man. She felt a stab of pain and she knew pity and love. So it was through pity that she let him in and at his entry they were joined as one. As the power of the Dark Lord flowed within her, the High Priestess of the Moon knew a bliss such as she had not known before. The core of her being expanded and flowed into the four corners of the universe and gave birth to planets and stars. The High Priestess of the White Goddess became the Mother of All Living. And it was love that had made her so, the love of another who suffered for her.

The God therefore entreats the initiate:

Will thou let me come unto thee and be reconciled so that I may find reconciliation in myself of darkness to light?

What we have not done for ourselves we will sometimes do for another and so the initiate assents to the union with the God. If the initiate is willing to accept the Dark Lord, to face the forces of the unconscious, to accept what to the ego appears to be death without fear, then the God can show himself as he truly is. Changing to a gold cloak, the colour of the Sun, the God this time approaches the initiate deosil from the East, the quarter of morning, the place of birth.

I come to thee then as Lord of Light, Sun God and King, look upon me. I am glorious before all the Gods yet am I divided and lost for the shadows flee from me and there is no darkness and peace where I am. Will you heal me O Lady of the Moon, Mother of Mystery, Daughter of Night in whom all find their rest?

From the perspective of the Self, the animus is Lord of Light, the bright and shining one, the hero who will descend into the Underworld of the unconscious to rescue Euridyce, the Self in

a woman who would be born into the light. Now the initiate is ready for the first stage of the transformation, the power of the Goddess will be drawn into her and her consciousness expanded so that she and the divine force of the female deity are one. Until now she had known the power of the Goddess as the Moon; now she must become not only the Moon of the ego, but the hidden Sun of the Self, the Goddess Ishtar, the Midnight Sun. The God continues:

I shall call into thy body the power of the Moon and the Sun and thou shalt be Goddess and all things to me.

THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE GODDESS

The male initiate must now also assent to union with the Goddess and she addresses him:

I am light and thou the darkness, I am darkness and thou the light, and there must be no separation between us. Will you love me beyond all things and be the instrument of my desire? Will you love the darkness that is within thee and open your arms to it? Will you flee not from shadows and the fears, but embrace them and so make yourself whole?

The initiate affirms his willingness to seek the union, but first he must see an aspect of the Goddess which may be new to him, not Isis Urania, but the Hag, the spider woman, the widow, Isis the Black.

Will you pass now through the veil and the gates of night and day?
Will you be at one with me who am both death and life? Will you kneel before me and worship me?

Taking the initiate by the hand, she leads him widdershins around the circle to the altar of the Moon. Here it is the initiate who asks for healing, not the God, for in Wicca on the inner planes it is the woman who initiates and gives and the man who receives:

Before thy altar I say: without thee I am divided, the light turns its face from me. Will you come to me O Lady of Glorious Light and heal me? Will you come to me and let me be reconciled unto thee that I may find reconciliation in myself of darkness to light?

To seek this healing and wholeness the man must make the journey of the hero. Now we have the reverse of the second

degree. Having learned the way of the feminine within him, having ceased his pursuit of Rhiannon of the White Mare and called her to come to him, he can assume a new and integrated masculine role. He must go forth on the Quest into his own darkness and face the dragon, the Hag aspect of the Goddess, who guards the treasure of jewels which is the symbol of the Self. The Goddess warns him:

What you seek is perilous to you, for you must journey to my hidden temple. Through danger and difficulty you must make your way and falter not and only then can I reveal myself unto to you. Is it truly your will to seek my inner sanctuary?

The initiate must affirm his willingness and then the Goddess will continue:

Then I shall awaken the Godhead within thee and call into thee the power of the Dark Lord who opens the way to the light.

The God force is invoked on the initiate and it is as the God that the Goddess now reveals to him the changing pattern of the yin and yang, the darkness and the light, the duality within her. Walking widdershins around the circle to the West and putting on a black cloak and veil, she returns widdershins to face the initiate:

Behold I come before you Isis the Black
Look upon me
Secret am I and none may penetrate my mystery
No force of man will make me open to you
The gates of my temple
Yet will I come to him who woos me
To him who seeks me with love
Who calls to me with desire
Who awaits me with longing
Yet am I fierce and terrible to behold
Dark is my countenance and stern my words
Yet fear me not
For dark and terrible, I am yet thy Goddess
Approach me with love
And I will reveal myself unto you
Do you love and worship me?

If the initiate accepts the Black Isis, then the Goddess reveals herself in her glory. She goes to the East and discards the black cloak and veil for a long white veil and walking deosil approaches the initiate:

Behold I come before you Isis the Bride
Look upon me
Joyous am I and rejoicing
For you I have looked upon my face of fear and fled not
You have looked upon my face of death and wavered not
Therefore I shall reveal myself unto you (removes veil)

I am the beauty of the green Earth
And the white Moon among the stars
I am the mystery of the waters
And the desire of the heart of man
And I call unto thy soul
Arise and come unto me
For I am the soul of nature
Who giveth life to the universe
And to know his Godhead a man must wed with me
But I, Isis the Bride, am the formless fire
And to mate with me unveiled
Would consume your body to ashes
And you would make a journey
Whence no man returns

But I may be found in many forms
And there is a secret known to the ancients
And at the heart of all the mysteries
For the body of woman is my temple
And the body of the priestess its inner shrine
And there within my sacred precincts
Goddess and man
Woman and God
May be joined as One

Would you seek me now in my hidden sanctuary?

Once the initiate has affirmed the Goddess continues:

Then I shall prepare you for the journey to the sacred altar and lead you to that holy place.

The bell is rung six times and the sword and broomstick laid crossed on the ground at the north east of the circle. The Great Rite should ideally be performed on the altar as it is an act of worship, but most modern altars are too small and the floor generally has to do. The female initiate kneels in the centre of the altar or circle and six unlit candles are placed around her in the shape of a hexagram, the symbol of the Sun.

The High Priestess clothes the male initiate in a black cloak and he girds on a sword and stands behind the crossed sword and broomstick. He is then challenged by the High Priestess:

Thou art a mortal man, by what right do you enter this, the sanctuary of the inner Sun, the Temple of Ishtar the bright, the Temple of Aradia, the Daughter of the Moon and Sun?

The initiate must then 'ask for entry on three counts':

By the power of the God within me
Which the Goddess herself drew to me
As I stood by the well of mystery
By the sword I bear which overcomes the sword which bars my way
And by the love of Tammuz for Ishtar
Which caused him to undertake the journey perilous
And there is a fourth which I can give
I am a seeker of the Grail
And in this temple is the goal of my Quest
The end of desire.

If these are correctly given he must then answer a question which the Goddess will pose and if the answer is correct, the High Priestess will say:

The seeker of the Grail is welcome
But first you must lay down your sword
For here a man must come in perfect love, unarmed
And then you must lay down your cloak
For here both God and man must come in perfect trust
And undisguised.

Returning to the passwords which gave us entry to the circle of the first initiation, the initiate now lays down the sword, his last defence, the symbol of his phallic mastery which kills love and trust, and having cast away his last disguise, he is finally admitted into the sanctuary and the marriage can begin.

THE SACRED MARRIAGE IN TOKEN

The female initiate now lies in the pentacle position with her head to the North, the direction of the altar. The High Priest lights the six candles deosil from the north east in preparation for the invoking of the Sun power and places an athame by the initiate's right hand and a cup of wine by her left. He then stands between her thighs in the Osiris position, holding the spear or wand and says:

Assist me to erect the ancient altar
At which in days past all worshipped

The Great Altar of all things
 For in old times woman was the altar
 Thus was the altar made and placed
 And the sacred place
 Was the point within the centre of the circle.

The 'point within the centre of the circle' is a symbol of the Self and it is also the astrological symbol of the Sun. The Priestess is now symbolizing the Self both for herself and for the male initiate.

As we have of old been taught
 That the point within the centre
 Is the origin of all things
 Therefore should we adore it.

The High Priest kneels and kisses the Priestess's womb and then, making a fire invoking pentagram with the spear or wand invokes the power of the Star Goddess into her. Here she is all aspects of the Goddess met as one, but most of all she is now Ishtar, the Midnight Sun, the symbol of the Self hidden in the darkness of the unconscious. Bending over her body, with kisses, the Priest makes the symbol of the third degree in token upon her body, 'Marvel beyond imagination',⁹ he invokes:

Soul of infinite space
 Before whom Time is ashamed
 The mind bewildered and the understanding dark
 Not unto Thee may we attain
 Unless Thine image be of Love.

O Queen of Space
 O Dew of Light
 Continuous One of Heaven
 Let it be ever thus
 That men speak of Thee not as One but as None
 And let them not speak of thee at all
 Since thou art continuous
 For thou art the point within the circle which we adore
 The point of life without which we would not be.

The body of the Priestess now symbolizes the temple:

And in this way truly are erected the holy twin pillars
 In beauty and strength were they erected
 To the wonder and glory of all men.

And within the temple, the altar:

Altar of Mysteries manifold
The Sacred Circle's secret point
Thus do I sign thee as of old
With kisses of my lips anoint
Open for me the Secret Way
The pathway of intelligence
Between the Gates of Night and Day
Beyond the bounds of time and sense

The token Sacred Marriage is now consummated by the initiate and the High Priest performing the blessing of the wine. The High Priest then draws the Priestess into a kneeling position and offers her the cup:

Know then and remember
In this and in all lives to come
That I thy God have known thee and loved thee
And have taken thee for mine own
Drink now and remember
And with this wine salute my name

The High Priest gives the secret name of the God and the initiate drinks and salutes. The secret names of the God and Goddess may be used when working in private or with other third degree witches. In some covens, since the second degree is a God mystery, the initiate will be given the secret name of the God at that stage.

THE SACRED MARRIAGE IN TRUE

If the Priestess is taking the third degree with her partner, she will now give the third degree to him. The male initiate is at this point at a halfway stage. He has had the power of the God invoked into him and he has encountered the Goddess in her dark and light aspects. Unable in his mortal form to unite in marriage with the formless Goddess, he will now unite with her Priestess who acts in her stead with the power of the Goddess within her.

In a sense this is the end of man's youth, for he is turned away by the unattainable Isis Urania of the Goddess, and commanded instead to seek his true feminine counterpart, Aradia the Earth, the Daughter of the Moon and the Sun, but who is also the watcher over and protector of mankind, the Goddess come down to Earth and immanent in nature, the saviour.

A woman is the Earth. For her the vision of the Goddess is immanent and the last is the transcendent symbolized by the solar Goddess. For a man it is the opposite. The first aspect of the divine is the transcendent Isis of the heavens and the second is the immanent Isis of nature who is truly his bride. He must marry Earth and not fire, the real and not the dream.

The Priestess lies again in the pentacle position. The High Priestess rings the bell six times and the High Priest once more invokes the power upon her with the spear or wand, but this time using the symbol of the third degree. The initiate Priest stands between her thighs in the Osiris position. The Sun has come down upon the body of the female initiate in the form of the High Priest; now the Priest must become the Phallic Lord, the Earth aspect of the God which will be united with the Priestess. The Priestess is one but the Priests are two, for the Goddess is the circle, ever changing but ever the same, and the God is two — light and dark, death and life.

The High Priest now speaks as the initiate Priest kneels between the Priestesses' thighs:

Assist them to build
As the Mighty Ones willed
An Altar of Praise
From the beginning of days
Thus does it lie
Twixt the points of the sky.

And the High Priestess continues:

For thus was it placed
When the Goddess embraced
The Horned One, her Lord
Who taught her the word
Which quickened the womb
And conquered the tomb.

The High Priest and the High Priestess open the circle and all except the initiates leave the room or, if the ritual is outside, they retire to a discreet distance. The High Priestess closes the circle from outside. They remain outside until summoned by the initiates. The male initiate then continues kissing the Priestess in the pattern of the third degree symbol now given in true; the upright pentagram and triangle joined, the former ascending into the latter:

Be thus as of yore
The shrine we adore
The feast without fail
The life-giving Grail
Before it uprear
The Miraculous Spear
And invoke in this sign
The Goddess divine

Thou who at the noon of night doth reign
Queen of the starry realm above
Not unto thee may we attain
Unless thine image be of love. . .

Again the Priestess becomes the temple and then the altar, the hidden sanctuary within, but this time the rite is consummated in reality rather than symbol and the Goddess and the God are united as One:

Behold the mystery aright
The five true points of fellowship
Here where lance and grail unite
And feet and knees, and breasts and lips.

Afterwards it is the Priestess as the Goddess who offers the cup:

Know then and remember
In this and in all lives to come
That I thy Goddess have known thee and loved thee
And I have taken thee for my own
Drink now and remember
And with this wine salute my name.

The male initiate salutes the Priestess in the secret name of the Goddess and drinks. She then salutes him in the secret name of the God.

When all is done, the initiates summon the coven and admit them into the circle with a kiss. The initiates are now anointed with the symbol of the third degree:

I anoint thee with oil
I anoint thee with wine
I anoint thee with my lips
Twice consecrated and holy
High Priestess and Witch Queen/
High Priest and Magus

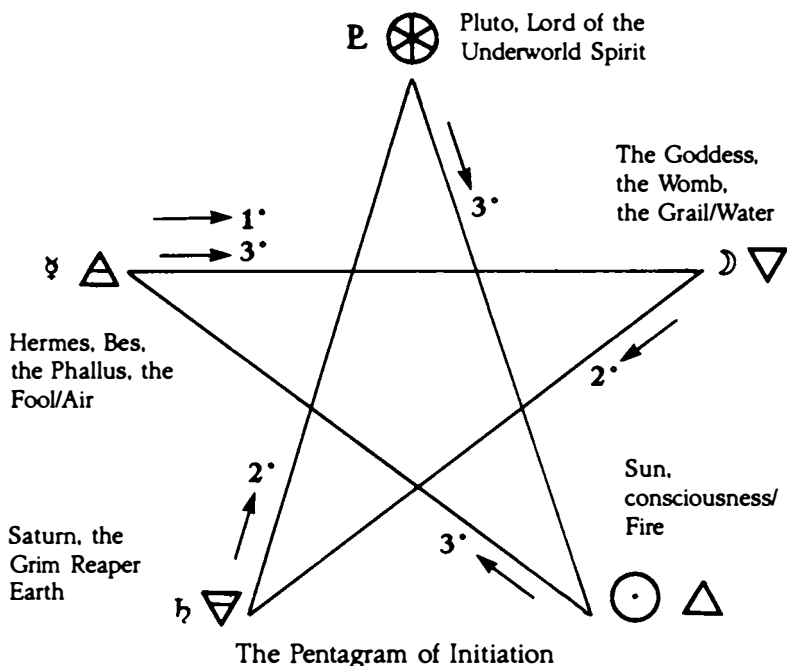
The initiates are now of equal status to their initiators. They are responsible for their own development and spiritual progress

and the measures, which were taken in the first degree initiation, can be returned to symbolize this. To complete the ceremony, the High Priest and Priestess present the initiates to the watchtowers.

Take heed ye Lords of the East, South, West, North that (name)
has been made a twice consecrated and holy High Priestess and
Witch Queen (High Priest and Magus).

The feast then follows and here we have completed the Wiccan journey of initiation. No more ceremonies can follow and what we achieve now will be built on the foundation blocks of the rest, but before leaving initiation behind, let us look at the initiatory meaning of that principal religious symbol of Wicca, the pentagram.

THE PENTAGRAM



The pentagram is the friend who travels with us, for its five lines symbolize the Wiccan journey of initiation. With the first

degree we journey one line, with the second degree two lines and with the third degree the final three. The first degree is the entry point and there we stand at the East, the point of the youngest of the watchtowers, the virgin youth Eurios, and we make a journey across the pentagram to the point of the first degree initiation, the element of water.

With the second degree we leave the element of water and journey into the realm of Earth, the realm of Saturn, Dark Lord of Death, the Grim Reaper. With death comes burial and we descend beneath the Earth and enter the Underworld, the realm of the Dead. This is the realm of the spirits, the element of ether; for the death of the earthly body releases the spirit. This is the realm of Pluto, Lord of the Underworld and this is the realm from which spirit must be redeemed. This is the task in which the Greek musician-hero Orpheus failed when he sought to bring his dead wife Euridyce back from Hades.

The work of the third degree is to bring spirit above ground, in other words to bring into consciousness the newly discovered power of the Self, and from the darkness into the element of fire, the sunlight of the conscious mind. Having entered the realm of fire, we must become integrated with it and this requires a return to the entry point, the point of air; for air is the element of Hermes/Mercury, in magic the phallic nature God, whom Jung calls by his Egyptian name 'ithyphallic Bes'. Hermes/Mercury/'ithyphallic Bes' in the tarot is the card of the Fool, which is ruled by the element of air. It was as Fools we set off blithely at the first degree into the journey of the spirit, the journey to the unknown, and it is via the Fool we return; for he is numbered zero, the completed circle, the end.

To integrate the Sun of the Self, we must perform the Sacred Marriage, the union of the phallus with the womb. Here the two are made one and we complete the sixth and sealing line of the pentagram which returns us once more to the Goddess, the point of water. Here we find, not the cauldron of rebirth with which we entered the circle at the first degree, but the Holy Grail of immortality, the Spirit eternal. Now the six lines can reveal their hidden meaning and the rose-flower of the sealed pentagram can open to reveal the six-sided hexagram, the symbol of the Self. This is the meaning of the rose-ankh of Alexandrian Wicca with its centre of gold; the symbol of the Self on the key of initiation.

This is the last part of our journey and what happens henceforth in an individual quest which each one of us, uniquely reborn, must make. At the end we always turn once more to the future and we find ourselves at another beginning, another round of the Goddess's spiral dance, but before leaving the journey of initiation, let us first scry a little in the glass.

10

SCRYING IN THE GLASS: THE FUTURE OF WICCA

Since 1939 when Gerald was initiated and the early 1960s when Alex Sanders launched the Alexandrian branch of the Craft, thousands of people have been initiated into Wicca all over the world. As well as the UK, there are thriving Wicca movements in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and also in Germany and the Netherlands. People often ask me how large Wicca is and I have to reply that I have no idea! Wicca has no central organization which can do a headcount, but it is certainly large and growing.

Some of the most interesting developments in recent years have been in Wicca's newer branches. The Pagan movement as a whole is larger in the United States with its larger population and willingness to try anything new and different. Paganism, like other religious groups in the US, tends to have many more sects than in the UK and as well as the Gardnerian and Alexandrian branches there are traditional groups and countless others. In fact, new ones appear all the time as people start their own covens and decide to call their particular interpretation of Gardnerian, Alexandrian or other Wicca by a new name! Margot Adler, a Wiccan priestess and the grand-daughter of the founder of Adlerian psychology, has published a book *Drawing Down the Moon* which gives a very comprehensive account of Wicca and Paganism in the US. In Canada there are many mainstream Gardnerian and Alexandrian covens, and in eastern Canada there is an interesting organization called the Wiccan

Church of Canada which runs a much more structured and organized form of Wicca than any we are accustomed to in the UK.

In the southern hemisphere, there are covens in New Zealand and Australia. Australia has the wider selection of groups with Gardnerian and Alexandrian covens and a number of covens with traditional origins. In both Australia and New Zealand there is the problem that the apparent motion of the Sun in the southern hemisphere is anti-clockwise; which is widdershins in the northern hemisphere. Magical groups in Australia and New Zealand tend to follow the northern hemisphere practice and to work clockwise but in Wicca, where attuning ourselves to the forces of nature is more important, the issue is more problematic. Different groups have come to different solutions, but I found it impossible to cast a clockwise Wiccan circle in Australia and, to me, the flow of the power seemed to be definitely anti-clockwise, the southern hemisphere direction of the Sun.

Otherwise, practising Wicca in New Zealand seems to be relatively straightforward in that the seasonal cycle is not unlike those of its country or origin. The Australian climate, however, particularly in the tropical zone, makes following the sabbat cycle developed in northern Europe rather difficult. Do you celebrate Yule when everyone else in the country is celebrating Christmas or do you celebrate at the shortest date in June? Considerable thought has to be put into making a sensible interpretation of the sabbat round.

In Europe, there are thriving covens in the Netherlands which has its own Wiccan newsletter written in Dutch and English. In Germany in recent years the Craft has been given a boost by seminars and lectures given by Alex Sanders in the last years before his death and by the translation of the American priestess Starhawk's books on the worship of the Goddess into German. There are representatives of Alexandrian, Gardnerian, and most of the other large branches of Wicca in Germany. In Ireland, Wicca has been stimulated by the Wiccan authors Janet and Stewart Farrar who settled there some years ago.

Wicca appears to be thriving, but its long-term future will depend, like all other religious movements in the world today, on whether there is a place for religion in the Aquarian Age. I believe that there is for, while over the last few hundred years

the practice of large-scale organized religion in the West has gradually declined, at the same time other faiths and spiritual paths have blossomed and in particular there has been a surge of interest in the systems of the East. Religion and that newer science of the spirit, psychology, have met and are beginning to find common ground as we search for and find the answers to what it means to be human. From these two sciences of the spirit is emerging an Aquarian vision of humanity and human potential which shows the spiritual aspect of humanity is fundamental to human existence and happiness.

People have turned to other systems in a desire to find meaning in their lives which, in accordance with the theme of the Aquarian Age, seems to be that of finding the divine within humanity, not outside; in finding the priesthood within oneself and not in some all-powerful mediatory figure. Here I believe there is a need and place for a religious framework which through ritual and celebration can reveal to us the place of humanity in the cosmos and give us a sense of time and place and the role which as individuals and as a species we are to play in the scheme of things.

Wicca can serve the religious needs of many in the Aquarian Age. For women, Wicca is especially important because it is the only religion of the West which worships the Goddess. The images provide ideals to which we aspire and if we are to realize the fullness of our human potential we must make Gods in our own image and that image is both male and female. Many women today are hearing the spiritual summons within them and seeking to enter the Christian priesthood, but what part can a woman play in a patriarchal religion which even denies her the title of priestess? The Goddess orientation of Wicca is also important for men. If men are to find their own inner wholeness they must practise a religion which recognizes the inner feminine which leads a man to his spiritual destiny.

This is not to diminish the importance of the Horned God, for in this image is the key to the understanding of human nature. This archetype, which is animal, human and God, is that to which humanity must aspire; the three aspects of our nature integrated in harmony. It is to fulfil this need that the old archetypal forms of the Pagan Goddesses and Gods have re-awoken in the psyche of humanity and many individuals now feel their call. Wicca is not an evangelical religion and has no

need to seek converts, for we do not enter Wicca in response to any human call but in response to the Horn of Herne the Hunter which echoes in the deep caverns of our unconscious minds, and in response to the Goddess whose voice, like a silver harp whisper, calls us to come to her altar; it is the inner voice of the Gods which calls us.

Deep in the recesses of the human psyche, Our Lord the Horned One waited through the centuries until his time should come again. Then he took down from the oak in the centre of the forest his hunting horn, not blown for many a thousand year, and sounded three times upon it. He awoke the Goddess from her dreaming sleep and she spoke in a voice like a silver harp whisper 'The Charge of Arianrhod' and said:

I am Arianrhod
Of the spiral castle by the silver sea
I am the last of my race
I am without beginning and without ending
For before ever time and change began
My mother the Star Goddess
Lay upon the Lord of Darkness
And brought me forth

I am beyond sound and sight
I cannot be touched
I am She who dwells behind the veil of matter
They ask if I exist
And I answer that I do
And I do not
But at the end of cycles and seasons
Which some name Death
But those who have lifted my veil name Life

On the shores of the Sea of Time you will find me
My head turned to the wind
Walking by the waves of the aeons and waiting
For your coming and your going

In truth I was
I am and I will be
When all else has faded from your memory
I am something which you possess
And something which you seek
I am the question that is also the answer
I am that which binds and that which sets free
I am the beginning of things
I am the ending
Seek me and know me
I am She.¹

The Goddess and the Horned God have risen from their sleep and call their worshippers, from East and South and West and North, and whisper in the dreams of those who love them:

Seek us, find us, know us; walk the way which lies between the worlds.

NOTES

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- 2 *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* p559.
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- 4 J J Bachofen (see Joseph Campbell's introduction to *Myth, Religion and Mother Right* pxxvii).
- 5 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p14, para 26.
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1 THE ROOTS OF MODERN WICCA

- 1 Livy, *Ab urbe condite*, lib XXXIX, cap viii-xix.
- 2 Saint Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*.
- 3 *Liber Poenitentialis* of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury.
- 4 *Confessionale and Poenitentiale* of Ecgbert, Archbishop of York.
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- 22 Pierre de Lancre, *Tableau de l'Inconstance des Mauvais Anges* p408.
- 23 Margaret Murray, *The God of the Witches* p121.
- 24 *The Cauldron* is £3 or \$10 for 4 issues and obtainable from Caemorgan Cottage, Caemorgan Road, Cardigan, Dyfed, SA43 1QV, UK.
- 25 Janet and Stewart Farrar, *The Witches Way*, pp3-4.

2 THE FIRST INITIATION

- 1 Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* p23 (originally published in 1584).
- 2 Margaret Murray, *The God of the Witches* p66.
- 3 Carl Jung *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* pp113-5, paras 200-205.
- 4 Ibid. pp27-28, para 58.
- 5 Ibid. p21, para 44.
- 6 Michael Harrison, *The Roots of Witchcraft*, pp157-164, translates this as something like:

Without a sieve to wash the plates and dishes
 The work (which must be done) with sand
 Ready for the drinking cup with full stomach if they
 were to go
 With a full measure in the goblet
 Sons of the family. (Possibly here the Family of
 True Followers of the Old Faith)
 Hurahya! (Ritual cry)

His translation would be disputed by many etymologists.

- 7 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p23, para 49.
- 8 Ibid. pp21-22, para 45.
- 9 Ibid. p23, para 49.
- 10 Ibid. p39, para 82.
- 11 Carl Jung *Symbols of Transformation* p301, para 459.
- 12 Ibid. p308, para 466.

3 THE CIRCLE OF BEING

- 1 David Conway, *Magic: An Occult Primer* p118.
- 2 Carl Jung, *Psychological Types* p518, para 900.

4 THE MAKING OF MAGIC

- 1 Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* pxii.
- 2 Carl Jung, *Psychological Types*, p137, para 227.
- 3 Michel Gauquelin, *The Cosmic Clocks* pp130-147.
- 4 Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* pxiv.
- 5 Lawrence Le Shan, *The Science of the Paranormal* pp136-137.
- 6 Maxwell Cade and Nona Coxhead, *The Awakened Mind*.
- 7 Lawrence Le Shan, *The Science of the Paranormal* p165.
- 8 B Thorpe, *Diplomatium Anglicum aevi Saxonici* pp229-30.
- 9 Nineteenth book of the Collectarium of Burchard, Bishop of Worms, see p66 Fournier, *Etudes Critiques sur le Decret de Burchard de Worms* pp217-221.
- 10 Carl Jung, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle in Collected Works*, volume 8.

- 11 John of Ruysbrock, *Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage* etc.
- 12 Further details may be obtained by sending a sae to the address on page 269.

5 INVOKING THE GODS

- 1 Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales* (see Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* p86).
- 2 Carl Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* pp86-87, para 130.
- 3 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* pp113-5, paras 200-205.
- 4 Ibid. pp284-5, para 513.
- 5 Ibid. p43, para 90.
- 6 Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* p291.
- 7 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p68, para 138.
- 8 Ibid. pp39-41, paras 82-85.
- 9 Alice Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology* Part II, pp67-76.
- 10 Maxwell Cade and Nona Coxhead, *The Awakened Mind*, p7.
- 11 Carl Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* pp77-8, para 114.
- 12 Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales* (see Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* pp73-4).
- 13 Vivianne Crowley 1988.

6 THE GODDESS

- 1 Nineteenth book of the Collectarium of Burchard, Bishop of Worms, Ch. 5, para 70 in Fournier pp217-221 and Cohn pp 212-213.
- 2 Cohn, p212.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Charles Leland, *Aradia: the Gospel of the Witches*.
- 5 Lucius Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*.
- 6 R E Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World*, p67.
- 7 W Peek, *Isishymnus von Andros und verwandete Texte*, Berlin 1930, Cyme 22-4, Ios 19-21 (see Witt p59).
- 8 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p175, para 294.
- 9 Emma Jung, *Animus and Anima* p20.

- 10 Vivianne Crowley, *Beltane* 1982.
- 11 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p106, para 193.
- 12 Vivianne Crowley 1968.
- 13 Merlin Stone, *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood*, pp67-69.
- 14 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p106, para 193.
- 15 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p188, para 316.
- 16 Demaris, Wehr, *Jung and Feminism*, pp101-103.
- 17 Vivianne Crowley 1982.
- 18 *Chants: Ritual Music* (tape), Reclaiming Chants, PO Box 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114, USA.
- 19 Vivianne Crowley Autumn 1984.

7 THE GOD

- 1 Vivianne Crowley 1969.
- 2 T S Eliot, *The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock*.
- 3 Carl Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* p231, para 343.
- 4 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p6, para 7.
- 5 Ibid. p117, para 208.
- 6 Margaret Murray, *The God of the Witches* pp162-171.
- 7 Saint Augustine, *Sermo Suppositus*, 120, 8 (See Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* p433).
- 8 Carl Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* p384, para 596.
- 9 Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p15.

8 THE SECOND INITIATION

- 1 Herman Hesse, *Demian*, p106.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p183, para 310.
- 4 Herman Hesse, *Demian*, p126.
- 5 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p29, para 61.
- 6 Merlin Stone, *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood*, pp69-71.
- 7 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p37, para 79.
- 8 Ibid. p180, para 304.

- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid. pp180-181, para 304.
- 11 Vivianne Crowley Autumn 1984.

9 THE THIRD INITIATION

- 1 Asterius, Bishop of Amasea, *Homilia X, Sanctos Martyres* in Migne, Greek Series, vol 40, pp323-324.
- 2 Karl Joel, *Seele und Welt*, p153.
- 3 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p164, para 278.
- 4 Ibid. p187, para 315.
- 5 Ibid. p131, para 235.
- 6 Dion Fortune, *Moon Magic*, p176.
- 7 Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* p121, para 217.
- 8 Ibid. p106, para 194.
- 9 Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* p350.

10 SCRYING IN THE GLASS

- 1 Vivianne Crowley 1986.

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GLOSSARY

Alexandrian — Wiccans whose lineage derives from Alex and Maxine Sanders.

Alpha rhythm — A brain rhythm which is associated with relaxation.

Anima — The personification of the feminine aspect of a man's unconscious.

Animus — The personification of the masculine aspect of a woman's unconscious.

Ankh — The looped cross used by the Egyptians as a symbol of initiation and everlasting life, also known as the Crux Ansata, Widely used in Wicca as a symbol of initiation.

Antahkarana — The bridge between the ego and the Self.

Apollonian — In religion, those solar-oriented religions which emphasize mastery of the instincts by the conscious mind. Named after Apollo the Greek God of light and the Sun.

Aquarian Age — A period of about 2000 years during which the sun rises in the astrological sign of Aquarius at the Spring Equinox. Occultists disagree about the exact starting date. Aleister Crowley believed that it started at the beginning of the twentieth century and others believe it will not start until shortly after the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Archetypes — Figurative symbols present in the collective unconscious of all humanity.

Athame — Known as the 'true witch's weapon'. A black-handled

knife used to cast circles etc. The handle is often carved with symbols.

Autumn Equinox — September 20/21 in the northern hemisphere — one of the four Lesser Sabbats. The date can vary slightly in different years, but the Equinox occurs when the Sun is above the equator and day and night are of equal length.

Aura — The force-field around the human body. This can be seen by clairvoyants and takes on different colours according to the personality, level of spiritual development and physical health of the individual.

Beltane — May Eve (April 30) — Walpurgisnacht in German. One of the four Greater Sabbats of Wicca. Originally a Celtic fire festival dedicated to the God Bel or Belenus.

Beta rhythm — The fastest rhythm of the brain which is associated with ordinary waking conscious.

Black magic — Magic with evil intentions; also ritual magic used to contact Jewish fallen angels. (The former is against Wiccan ethics and the latter does not accord with Wiccan theology.)

Book of Shadows — The book of rituals, spells etc which each Wiccan initiate copies from his or her initiator.

Candlemas — February 1/2 — Another of the four Greater Sabbats held at about the point when the winter mornings begin to lengthen. Originally a Celtic festival known as Imbolc meaning 'in the belly' when the first flowers appear from the womb of the Great Earth Mother.

Cernunnos — The name for the Horned God used in Gardnerian Wicca.

Charge — A speech given by an individual on whom the Goddess or God has been invoked.

Clairvoyance — The power of second sight — seeing into the future.

Clairvoyant reality — A term used by the psychologist Lawrence le Shan to describe the sense of oneness with the universe which is achieved through certain contemplative states. (See also samadhi and the unitive reality.)

Cone of power — A force of etheric energy produced by witches.

Coven — Traditionally a group of 13 witches, but can be anything from four upwards, who meet regularly.

Craft — A term frequently used by Wiccans to describe Wicca.

(Also used by Masons to describe Freemasonry).

Crux Ansata — See Ankh.

Delta rhythm — A very slow brain rhythm associated with healing and paranormal phenomena.

Deosil — Clockwise — the direction of the Sun in the northern hemisphere.

Dionysian — Ecstatic and emotional aspects of religion which free the psyche from the control of the conscious mind and submerge the individuality in the group mind. Named after Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and ecstasy.

Divination — Using symbol systems such as the tarot and runes or aids to clairvoyance such as crystal balls and black mirrors to look into the future and to discover hidden aspects to the present.

Drawing down the Moon — Invoking the full Moon aspect of the Goddess into a Priestess.

Ego — The conscious self — that part of the human psyche which people normally think of as 'I'.

Ego inflation — A Jungian term implying a form of megalomania.

Elementals — Conscious beings who inhabit the etheric energy fields of the four elements — Earth, Air, Fire and Water. Also entities created by magically breaking off part of the human etheric energy field and imbuing it with a particular magical intent.

Elements — (Also known as The Elements of the Wise.) In Wicca and magic the elements are earth, air, fire and water, plus a fifth known as ether, akasha or spirit. They represent energy in different states.

Eleusinian Mysteries — The Greek mystery religion of Demeter and Persephone which was centred on the town of Eleusis, north-west of Athens.

Eros — The Greek god of love, the son of Aphrodite. Used to represent the emotional side of human nature.

Esbat — Any coven meeting that is not one of the eight Sabbats.

Esoteric — The hidden side of religion and magic which is secret and reserved for initiates.

Functions — A Jungian term used for the four different ways in which the mind can operate — thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition.

Gardnerian — Wiccans whose lineage derives from Gerald Gard-

- ner, one of the first witches to publicize the Craft and author of many early books on Wicca (see Bibliography).
- Gnome — An Earth elemental.
- Great Rite — A symbolic or actual act of ritual sex performed between a High Priest and Priestess. This forms part of the final Wiccan initiation.
- Hallowe'en — October 31 — One of the four Greater Sabbats — the Feast of the Dead. Originally called Samhain by the Celts.
- Hereditary Witches — Witches born into witch families.
- Hieros Gamos* — Ancient Greek term for the Great Rite.
- High Priest — Any male witch who has received the second degree of initiation. Within a coven the chief male priest will be referred to as *the* High Priest.
- High Priestess — Any female witch who has received the second degree of initiation. Within a coven the chief female priestess will be referred to as *the* High Priestess.
- Imbolc — See Candlemas.
- Immanent — (Literally — indwelling.) The divine seen as being present within the material universe as an essential sustaining spiritual force.
- Incarnation — (Literally — in the flesh.) One lifetime on Earth.
- Individuality — The eternal and divine part of us which endures after the body's death and which then incarnates in another body. (See also the Self.)
- Individuation — A Jungian term for the achievement of unity of the conscious and unconscious mind, the realization of the individuality and oneness with the true self.
- Initiation — In Wicca, a ritual designed to precipitate permanent changes in consciousness and spiritual growth.
- Invocation — A process by which the presence of the Goddess or the God is drawn into a Wiccan circle, usually into the body of a Priestess or Priest.
- Isis Urania — The Heavenly Virgin aspect of the Goddess.
- Jungian — Psychological terms and theories devised by the Swiss-German psychologist, Carl Jung.
- Karnayna — The Alexandrian name for the Horned God.
- Lammas — August Eve (July 31) — one of the four Greater Sabbats. Originally called by the Celts Lughnasadh or Lughnasadh.
- Left brain — That side of our brain which controls the right-

- hand side of the body and which is usually responsible for processing language and logical, linear thought.
- Left-Hand Path** — Generally used to mean the practice of black magic (see Black magic). This is a mis-use of what was originally a term from Indian tantric magic referring to use of the lunar/feminine energies and which had no moral implications.
- Lughnasath/Lughnasadh** — See Lammas.
- Macrocosm** — The greater cosmos or the universe as a whole.
- Magus/Magister** — The second title given to second and third degree High Priests in Wicca.
- Maleficium** — Magical acts with evil intentions.
- Matriarchy** — Religions and societies where women are the dominant sex. Such societies are frequently also matrilinear; i.e. inheritance of property is from mother to daughter and not from father to son.
- Microcosm** — The human being. In esoteric thought, the human being is seen as a miniature of the macrocosm. The universe as a whole is reflected in each human being.
- Midsummer** — June 21/22 in the northern hemisphere — the Summer Solstice or Longest Day. One of the four Lesser Sabbats.
- Monotheism** — The doctrine that there is only one God.
- Neoplatonists** — A group of Greek and Greek-influenced philosophers who believed in a transcendent Godhead from whom all existence derived and whose thinking has influenced magical and Wiccan thought.
- Occult** — (Literally — hidden.) A term used for magic and other esoteric arts and sciences. Despite modern mis-use, occult does not mean evil.
- Paganism** — The worship of pre-Christian deities.
- Pantheism** — (Literally — all gods.) The doctrine that the divine can manifest in many different forms and can be worshipped as a multitude of Goddesses and Gods. Pantheism is usually associated with the idea that God is everything and everything God (see Immanent).
- Persona** — (Literally — the mask.) The image we present of ourselves to others.
- Priest** — In Wicca all male initiates are Priests.
- Projection** — Used, as in astral projection, when the astral body separates temporarily from the physical body. Also used

in psychology to mean when we see in others our own positive and negative qualities which we are not aware we possess.

Psyche — (Literally — breath, life, soul.) A Greek-derived term used to represent the human mind and emotions, the non-physical aspect of the human being.

Qabalah/Cabala — A Judaic magical system widely used by Western occultists of all religious faiths.

Reincarnation — The belief that we live a number of times on Earth in order to gain life experience and achieve spiritual growth, and that our individuality therefore continues after death.

Renovatio — A Latin word meaning renewal and used to mean spiritual transformation.

Right brain — That side of our brain which controls the left-hand side of the body and which is usually responsible for processing images and creative, lateral thought.

Right-hand path — Generally used to mean the practice of white magic (see White Magic), although in tantric magic it refers instead to use of the solar/masculine energies as opposed to the left-hand path lunar/feminine energies.

Ritual — A ceremony designed to produce certain spiritual and magical effects.

Rune — A spell or chant used for magical purposes. Also a divinatory system using the letters of the Norse alphabet.

Sabbat — One of the eight festivals of Wicca.

Sacred Marriage — See Great Rite.

Salamander — The name given to fire elementals.

Samadhi — An expanded and enhanced state of consciousness achieved through contemplation and other spiritual practices whereby the individual experiences a sense of oneness with the universe.

Samhain — See Hallowe'en.

Scrying — A form of divination which uses a crystal ball, black mirror or bowl of clouded water to aid clairvoyance.

Self — The individuality which endures beyond death. Our true essence which is hidden beneath the cloak of the personality.

Sensory reality — A term used by Lawrence le Shan to mean the world which we perceive through our everyday senses.

Sephiroth — The spheres of the qabalistic Tree of Life.

Shadow — The part of ourselves which we do not wish to own

and which, in psychological terms, we frequently project onto others.

Shaman — A priest or priestess of Dionysian-oriented religions who communicates with the inner planes through trance.

Skyclad — Ritual nudity.

Spring Equinox — March 20/21 in the northern hemisphere — one of the four Lesser Sabbats. This date can vary slightly in different years, but occurs when the Sun is above the equator and day and night are of equal length.

Stoics — A group of Greek and Greek-influenced philosophers who believed in an immanent concept of the deity and whose thinking has influenced magical and Wiccan thought.

Summer Solstice — See Midsummer.

Sylph — An air elemental.

Synchronicity — A Jungian term for meaningful coincidences.

Theta rhythm — A brain rhythm associated with the production of dreams and visual imagery.

Traditionals — Witches whose initiation derives from witch families other than those who gave rise to Gardnerian and Alexandrian Wicca. Their rites and practices differ somewhat from Gardnerian and Alexandrian Wicca, but the aims are similar.

Transcendent — (Literally — to rise above, to pass beyond.) The concept that the divine forces exist outside the material universe and separate from it.

Transpsychic reality — A name given by Lawrence le Shan to the level of consciousness we achieve when we are in psychic contact with others but we retain our sense of separateness and individuality.

Tree of Life — A qabalistic symbol representing the 10 aspects of the divine and creation.

Undine — A water elemental.

Unitive reality — The experience achieved in samadhi (see Samadhi).

Watchtowers — The four cardinal points which are associated with the four elements and act as guardians of the circle.

White magic — A term used for magic with good intentions, or by magicians to mean magic which contacts angels rather than demons.

Wicca — A Pagan mystery religion.

Wiccan — An initiate of Wicca.

Widdershins — (Literally — against the Sun.) In the northern hemisphere this is anti-clockwise.

Winter Solstice — See Yule.

Witch — A practitioner of witchcraft. Some witches are initiates of Wicca, but others do not practise the religious side of witchcraft.

Witch Queen — A title given to second and third degree High Priestesses of Wicca. The title is not formally used until the High Priestess' coven has given rise to two daughter covens.

Yang — A Chinese word for the masculine spiritual force in the universe.

Yin — A Chinese word for the feminine spiritual force in the universe.

Yule — December 20/21 in the northern hemisphere. One of the four Lesser Sabbats which celebrates the birth of the young God, the Sun Child.

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