

Occult Science and the Science of the Occult:
Astral Projection and the Disenchantment of Fin-de-Siècle Britain

by
Johnstone Metzger

A graduating thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
in
The Faculty of Arts
History Department

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard.

University of British Columbia

20 April 2012

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter One: The Occult Science	15
Chapter Two: Science and the Occult	38
Conclusion	67
Bibliography	72

Introduction

In Theosophical and kindred circles, the rumours of an Occult Order making great pretences were abroad in those days. Obscure persons were placing cryptic sigils after their names in unexpected communications, as if to test whether I was already a member. Dark hints were conveyed in breathless murmurs. ... It transpired presently that MacGregor Mathers ... was something to do with this darkly glittering business. The name of Wynn Westcott also loomed remotely. Mathers was like a comic Blackstone of occult lore and Westcott like a dull owl, hooting dolefully among cypresses over tombs of false adepts.¹

– A. E. Waite, 1938.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the occult in Britain experienced a sudden growth in popularity and public exposure. During the 1850s and 60s, the Spiritualist movement brought séances, spirit mediums, and contact with the ghosts of the dead into the public consciousness. The Theosophical Society introduced a new faith to Britain in the 1870s, and its leader herself, Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891) came to live in London the following decade, claiming to dispense true spiritual wisdom with a blend of Eastern and Western religion with science and magic. Meanwhile, hypnotists had been amazing crowds all over Europe for decades and continued to do so. Within this occult revival, there was a fourth practice that did not announce itself to the public, but stayed private, the domain of secret societies: ritual magic. As it achieved some small amount of notoriety, especially with the French publications of the occultist Éliphas Lévi (1810-1875), those interested in ritual magic began to form organized groups, and one in particular proved highly influential.

Formed in London in 1888, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was a private club dedicated to the study and practice of ritual magic. Originally the brainchild of William Wynn Westcott (1848-1923), a London coroner, the Order's true leader, until the

¹ A. E. Waite, *Shadows of Life and Thought: A Retrospective Review in the Form of Memoirs* (London: Selwyn and Blount, 1938), 45.

turn of the century, was co-founder Samuel Liddell "MacGregor" Mathers (1854-1918). Mathers synthesized existing practices of ritual magic into a unified curriculum to be studied by Golden Dawn adepts.² The chief aim of this curriculum was the practice of astral projection, a type of meditation that produced vivid, interactive visions of the astral planes. Named after the Latin word for "star," the astral planes are those realms of existence that lie between the Earth and Heaven, where the stars dwell. Magicians learned to induce and control these visions, and their interactions with what they believed to be the astral planes, through the use of magical rituals and techniques. The Golden Dawn had temples in London, Weston-super-Mare, Bradford, Edinburgh, and Paris, and over the course of the 1890s, over a hundred people joined the Second, or Inner Order, which was entirely devoted to practicing, and not just studying, magic.³ R. A. Gilbert estimates that probably just under four hundred people in total joined the Golden Dawn before a schism in 1903 broke them apart.⁴ Still, this group was but a small part of the occult revival, a private society that did not engage in the publicity-seeking seen amongst hypnotists, spirit mediums, and Theosophists. The Golden Dawn were, for the most part, dedicated to practicing their magic in private.

On 10 November 1892, actress and author Florence Farr (1860-1917), accompanied by fellow Golden Dawn member Elaine Simpson, used these magical rituals to meet with the Egyptian goddess Isis on the astral plane. When the two women gathered together, probably, though they do not specify, in one of the Order's temples,

² Most of the extant Golden Dawn curriculum can be found in Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 6th ed. (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1989).

³ Ellic Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order, 1887-1923* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 94-99, 292-293.

⁴ R. A. Gilbert, *The Golden Dawn: Twilight of the Magicians* (Northamptonshire, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983), 46. On the schism, see Howe, 203-251, Gilbert, 40-44.

they would have been dressed in special clothing and insignia, with ritual implements, including an altar, all around them.⁵ Once gathered, after "perform[ing] the Qabalistic Cross and prayer," they proceeded to begin their meditations by contemplating a single tarot card. In this case, "the Empress was taken; placed before the persons and contemplated upon, spiritualised, heightened in colouring, purified in design and idealised."⁶ Tarot cards were one of several collections of symbols the Golden Dawn used to induce astral visions. Whichever symbol was used, Mathers had the same instructions for his students:

With the utmost concentration, gaze at it, comprehend it, formulate its meaning and relations. When the mind is steady upon it: close the eyes and continue the meditation, and let the conception still remain before you, keep up the design, form, and colour [in the imagination]. ... Then, maintaining your abstraction from your surroundings, and still concentrating upon the symbol and its correlated ideas, you are to seek a perception of a scene, panorama, or view of a place.⁷

This moment of entering the vision is the only time the Golden Dawn's curriculum advised less than total control, and even at this point, the body's natural inclinations were still to be resisted. As Farr and Simpson described it:

The vision may begin by the concentration passing into a state of reverie; or with a distinct sense of change, something allied in sensation to a faint, with a feeling urging you to resist, but if you are highly inspired, fear not, do not resist, let yourself go; and then the vision may pass over you.⁸

This would have been accompanied "by a sense of tearing open, as a curtain is drawn aside and seeing the 'within' of the symbol before you,"⁹ or the feeling "as though one

⁵ Mary K. Greer, *Women of the Golden Dawn: Rebels and Priestesses* (Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 1995), 109.

⁶ Florence Farr [Sapientia Sapienti Dono Data] and Elaine Simpson [Fidelis], "Flying Roll No. IV: an Example of Mode of Attaining to Spirit Vision and What was Seen by Two Adepts," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 71-73 (Rochester, Ver.: Destiny Books, 1997), 71-72.

⁷ Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers [Deo Duce Comite Ferro], "Flying Roll No. XI: Clairvoyance," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 75-83 (Rochester, Ver.: Destiny Books, 1997), 77-78.

⁸ Farr and Simpson, 71.

⁹ Mathers, "Flying Roll no. XI," 78.

stepped out through a window into a new world."¹⁰ The sensations experienced were also linked to the particular symbol used, as described by another prominent Golden Dawn member, John William Brodie-Innes (1848-1923):

On taking any symbol whereof I know the meaning, such as a Tattva [card]—or tarot card, the abstract idea of the meaning of the symbol comes first—as fire, or water in the abstract—and ... gradually the feeling of the physical effects of the element—as of warmth—moisture—etc.—and especially the sound as of the roaring or crackling of fire, the rush—or patter, or ripple of water. Gradually the attention is withdrawn from all surrounding sights and sounds, a grey mist seems to swathe everything, on which, as though thrown from a magic lantern on steam, the form of the symbol is projected. ... The Consciousness then seems to pass through the symbol to realms beyond.¹¹

So while the magician had to surrender some control at the point of transition, he or she had already selected the nature of the vision—what the elemental environment of the plane to be viewed was—by selecting the symbol or object for initial contemplation. More skilled and experienced magicians could manipulate their visions even further.

Farr and Simpson had selected a tarot card, the Empress, instead of an elemental symbol, and by this time, were upon the astral plane themselves:

Then, in spirit, saw a greenish blue distant landscape, suggestive of mediaeval tapestry. Effort to ascend was made; rising on the planes; seemed to pass up through clouds and then appeared a pale green landscape and in its midst a Gothic Temple of ghostly outlines marked with light. Approached it and found the temple gained in definiteness and was concrete, and seemed a solid structure. Giving the signs of the Netzach Grade (because of Venus) was able to enter; giving also Portal signs and 5°=6° signs in thought form.¹²

These signs were part of the Golden Dawn's techniques for controlling astral visions, which were not meant to be passively experienced. Visions were meant to be explored, as if they were experiences of real places. The magician might be only travelling mentally, and not physically, although these astral environments often felt like physical places, but the signs allowed them to manipulate their visions in ways the physical world could not

¹⁰ John William Brodie-Innes [Sub Spe], "Flying Roll No. XXV: Essay on Clairvoyance and Travelling in the Spirit Vision," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 85-89 (Rochester, Ver.: Destiny Books, 1997), 87.

¹¹ Brodie-Innes, 87-88.

¹² Farr and Simpson, 72.

be manipulated. By giving the proper signs, Farr and Simpson were able to enter the temple, where they could apparently move about as in the physical world. Once inside, they encountered a person who had not been with them at their journey's beginning:

Here, there appeared a woman of heroic proportions, clothed in green with a jewelled girdle, a crown of stars on her head, in her hand a sceptre of gold, having at one apex a lustrously white closed lotus flower; in her left hand an orb bearing a cross.

She smiled proudly, and as the human spirit sought her name, replied:

I am the mighty Mother Isis; most powerful of all the world, I am she who fights not, but is always victorious, I am that Sleeping Beauty who men have sought, for all time; and the paths which lead to my castle are beset with dangers and illusions.¹³

Leaving their physical bodies behind in the temple, or whatever room they had gathered in, Farr and Simpson had the experience of sending their minds to another plane of existence and meeting with a mythological person, whom they could see, hear, and converse with. The point of magical visions was not merely to travel to the astral planes and witness their landscapes, but also to meet their inhabitants and converse with them, to learn from them and gain their wisdom. This is exactly what the two women did, as Isis led them around her temple and dispensed her spiritual wisdom to them:

Then 'Lady Venus' [i.e. Isis] said 'This is love, I have plucked out my heart and have given it to the world; that is my strength. Love is the mother of the Man. ... Christ is the heart of love, the heart of the Great Mother Isis—the Isis of Nature. He is the expression of her power—she is the Holy Grail, and He is the life blood of spirit, that is found in this cup.'

After this, being told that man's hopes lay in following her example, we solemnly gave our hearts to the keeping of the Grail; then, instead of feeling death, as our human imagination led us to expect, we felt an influx of the highest courage and power, for our own hearts were to be henceforth in touch with hers—the strongest force in all the world.¹⁴

For both women, this was a highly affecting spiritual journey, an affirmation of their Christianity and of at least Farr's interest in ancient Egypt.¹⁵ Both continued to practice magic, even after the turn of the century when the Golden Dawn was no more.¹⁶ Farr

¹³ Farr and Simpson, 72.

¹⁴ Farr and Simpson, 73.

¹⁵ Farr published her *Egyptian Magic* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1896), only four years after this vision.

¹⁶ Very little information about Elaine Simpson is available, outside of her later involvement with Aleister Crowley.

would go on to seek out various other astral beings in her many visionary experiences, but from this time onwards, the symbols of Isis, the heart and cup, remained important to her.¹⁷

Scholarship on astral projection and ritual magic has grown slowly over the course of the twentieth century, as information about the Golden Dawn has become more available. Historians of the occult seem to be as diverse as their subjects.¹⁸ While most are, to quote R. A. Gilbert, simply "airmchair students of 'rejected knowledge'"¹⁹ there are also scholars of William Butler Yeats, drawn to magic because of his writing; and there are those who practice magic of one sort or another, such as Israel Regardie, who was a member of one of the Golden Dawn's successor groups, and Mary Greer, who includes astrological readings in her collective biography of several female magicians. At the opposite end of some kind of spectrum there is Ellic Howe, who is openly scornful of magic and the occult.²⁰ Only in the last decade or so have scholars attempted to leave all traces of antiquarianism behind and fit astral projection into larger historical discussions and a broader historical context—spiritualism, Theosophy, and hypnotism have all been

¹⁷ Greer, 119.

¹⁸ A selection of notable works would include Israel Regardie, *What You Should Know About the Golden Dawn*, 3rd ed. (1936; reprint, Phoenix: Falcon Press, 1983); Ellic Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order, 1887-1923* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1972); Christopher McIntosh, *Eliphas Levi and the French Occult Revival* (1972; reprint, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2011); George Mills Harper, *Yeats's Golden Dawn* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1974); James Webb, *The Occult Underground* (La Salle, IL: Library Press, 1974); James Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (La Salle, IL: Library Press, 1976); R. A. Gilbert, *The Golden Dawn: Twilight of the Magicians* (Northamptonshire, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983); R. A. Gilbert, *The Golden Dawn Companion: A Guide to the History, Structure, and Workings of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn* (Northamptonshire, UK: Aquarian Press, 1986); Joscelyn Godwin, Christian Chanel, and John P. Deveney, *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor: Initiatic and Historical Documents of an Order of Practical Occultism* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1995); Mary K. Greer, *Women of the Golden Dawn: Rebels and Priestesses* (Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 1995); Alan Pert, *Red Cactus: The Life of Anna Kingsford* (Watsons Bay, Australia: Books & Writers, 2006); Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Nevill Drury, *Stealing Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Modern Western Magic* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁹ Gilbert, *Twilight of the Magicians*, 11. He is quoting Webb, *The Occult Underground*, 191.

²⁰ See Howe, xxi. Ironically, his *Documentary History* is probably the most useful antiquarian history, as it reprints copious amounts of original documents and letters.

examined in much greater detail. Alex Owen's *The Place of Enchantment* is the most extensive examination of astral projection and ritual magic to date.²¹ Owen argues that new conceptions of the self within the occult community at the end of the nineteenth century, and occultists' explorations of subjectivity, paralleled those in the sciences, and are integral to an understanding of modernity. The occult, she writes, was "committed to a rationalized understanding of the irrational, involved with elaboration of a worldview that claimed allegiance to much older religious and magical traditions."²² Most other recent historians of the occult also work to situate the occult revival within the historical metanarrative of the "disenchantment of modernity," most eloquently expressed by Max Weber (1864-1920) in 1918,²³ and some, like Alex Owen, see the occult as a way to challenge it, and argue that there are still forms of enchantment in the world.²⁴ This is also my position. I do not feel, however, that the existing challenges to disenchantment go far enough. I would argue, instead, that astral projection was actually a scientific inquiry into altered mental states that behaved mostly in accord with pre-nineteenth

²¹ Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

²² Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 257.

²³ Speech delivered 1918 at Munich University, published 1919. Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, by Max Weber, ed. trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 129-156 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 129.

²⁴ Other works examining the occult and modernity or disenchantment include Gauri Viswanathan, "The Ordinary Business of Occultism," *Critical Inquiry* 27 (2000): 1-20; Corrina Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Peter Lamont, "Spiritualism and a Mid-Victorian Crisis of Evidence," *The Historical Journal* 74, no. 4 (2004): 897-920; Thomas Laqueur, "Why the Margins Matter: Occultism and the Making of Modernity," *Modern Intellectual History* 3, no. 1 (2006): 111-135; Mark S. Morrisson, *Modern Alchemy: The Occult and the Emergence of Atomic Theory* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); John Warne Monroe, *Laboratories of Faith: Mesmerism, Spiritism, and Occultism in Modern France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Mark S. Morrisson, "The Periodical Culture of the Occult Revival: Esoteric Wisdom, Modernity and Counter-Public Spheres," *Journal of Modern Literature* 31, no. 2 (2008): 1-22; J. Barton Scott, "Miracle Publics: Theosophy, Christianity, and the Coulomb Affair," *History of Religions* 49, no. 2 (2009): 172-196; and Michael Saler, "Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (2006): 692-716, which is also an excellent historiographic review of modernity and enchantment, hence the title.

century notions of empiricism, while espousing a magical philosophy and interpreting the actual content of their visions through a magical model of the universe.

This perspective on astral projection has complicated implications in the context of the idea disenchantment. Weber spoke of the rationalization of society caused by the growth of science, and how this, combined with bureaucratization of society, resulted in secularism and a loss of meaning.²⁵ Of all the various words used to describe the metanarrative of disenchantment, I have chosen those three—rationalization, bureaucratization, and secularism—along with a fourth term, materialism, to describe four different ways in which astral projection interacts with and undermines the metanarrative of disenchantment. Linked to early forms of science and following their rules, at least in practice, astral projection still managed to produce enchantment, even though it helped rationalization. As well, it was easily at home in a secularized and compartmentalized social world. Gauri Viswanathan has argued that the bureaucratization of the occult in organizations like the Theosophical society "dispersed nonrational, nonempiricist modes of cognition into branches of official study," such as evolutionary history, comparative religion, and Eastern philosophy.²⁶ Instead of seeing rationalization pushing religion into private life, she presents occult knowledge as "a site for revising the notion that secularization is a break with religion" through the creation of "an alternative culture of governance ... which would draw upon the insights of spiritual teachers."²⁷ But astral projection went further even than this. Instead of simply promoting spiritual teachers and their insights, when faced with bureaucracy, astral projection

²⁵ Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 138-155, Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, by Max Weber, ed. trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 196-244 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 196-244.

²⁶ Viswanathan, 7, 20.

²⁷ Viswanathan, 20.

became a form of resistance, providing individual practitioners access to spiritual guidance and validation, undermining bureaucratic structures by instilling in magicians the confidence to create their own rules. Faced with nineteenth-century materialism, however, astral projection could not win. The concept of the universe as wholly physical, that all things can be measured and calculated, because all things are made of matter and energy, was able to discredit the occult and relegate it to the realms of alternative religion and the New Age movement, where scholars only find new concepts of enchantment if they look for them.

Michael Saler in particular has proposed that this "emergent view that modernity is as enchanted as it is disenchanting may conjure alternative vistas to the historical imagination."²⁸ He argues that Weber's idea of enchantment "was associated not only with transcendental meaning and purpose, but also with wonder and surprise; these were the qualities that modernity, with its emphasis on inviolable natural laws, threatened to extirpate."²⁹ On these grounds he has proposed strategies for producing enchantment that are embedded in mass culture: "showmen such as P. T. Barnum or modern [stage] magicians" or "avant-garde art, literature, the cinema, and 'show business' in general."³⁰ These disenchantments, when "enjoyed with a certain ironic distance," can still be made to yield up a sense of enchantment.³¹ As Saler himself notes, however, these strategies depend on "enchantment" being the creation of mystery, and the emotions of wonder and amazement. This is not an altogether accurate reading of Weber, for while he does mention wonder and mystery, his enchantment is emphatically more than a mere

²⁸ Saler, "Modernity and Enchantment," 692.

²⁹ Saler, "Modernity and Enchantment," 695.

³⁰ Saler, "Modernity and Enchantment," 711, 713.

³¹ Saler, "Modernity and Enchantment," 711.

emotion. The thing that is missing from science, Weber argued, really is that transcendental meaning and purpose, that part of the imagination that makes life worth living. To illustrate the fundamental limitation of science, Weber turned to Tolstoy:

'Science is meaningless because it gives no answer to our question, the only question that is important for us: "What shall we do and how shall we live?"' That science does not give an answer is indisputable ... All scientific work presupposes that the rules of logic and method are valid; these are the general foundations of our orientation in the world; and, at least for our special question, these presuppositions are the least problematic aspect of science. Science further presupposes that what is yielded by scientific work is important in the sense that it is 'worth being known.' In this, obviously, are contained all our problems. For this presupposition cannot be proved by scientific means. It can only be interpreted with reference to its ultimate meaning, which we must reject or accept according to our ultimate position towards life.³²

It was not loss of the emotions of wonder and amazement that Weber was lamenting, it was some kind of fundamental meaning, such as that provided by religion, that science and rationalism were destroying. This becomes most clear when he turns to theology:

All theology represents an intellectual *rationalization* of the possession of sacred values. No science is absolutely free from presuppositions, and no science can prove its fundamental value to the man who rejects these presuppositions. ... Every theology, including for instance Hinduist theology, presupposes that the world must have a *meaning*, and the question is how to interpret this meaning so that it is intellectually conceivable. ... Theologies, however, do not content themselves with this (essentially religious and philosophical) presupposition, ... these revelations must be believed in. ... Whoever does not 'possess' faith, or the other holy states, cannot have theology as a substitute for them, least of all any other science.³³

The loss of this meaning by the secularization of society, itself a product of this rationalization, is what Weber meant when he called the world "disenchanted." A world built solely through science lacks meaning, and so "the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life" and "such miserable monstrosities are produced as the many monuments of the last twenty years [i.e. 1898-1918]. If one tries intellectually to construct new religions without a new and genuine prophecy, then, in an inner sense,

³² Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, by Max Weber, ed. trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 129-156 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 143. This is not a direct quote of Tolstoy; Weber was paraphrasing, probably from "What Should We Do Then?" See Max Weber, *The Vocational Lectures*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2004), 17 n20.

³³ Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 154-155. Emphasis in the original.

something similar will result, but with still worse effects."³⁴ Saler notes that this "concept of disenchantment focused on the absence of overarching meanings in the modern world, leaving its inhabitants vulnerable to the more irrational enchantments of charismatic authorities promising to restore spiritual significance to existence."³⁵ Astral projection did more than instill a temporary sense of wonder. For the magicians of the Golden Dawn, it provided real overarching meanings and purpose.

In Chapter One, I argue that astral projection was a form of scientific inquiry with a long history. The Golden Dawn used sensory observation, direct experience, and experimentation to explore their visions empirically, according to the empiricism of an earlier century. Three key aspects set magicians apart from scientific practices of the late nineteenth century: their Hermetic philosophy, their self-experimentation, and the fact that astral projection was an experiential and non-demonstrative activity. In an earlier age, like the sixteenth century, it had been possible to pursue both science and magic. By the end of the nineteenth century, the principles of ritual magic were no longer compatible with mainstream scientific culture. Astral projection was part of the rationalization of Western society, but when scientific disciplines became professionalized, it was excluded. In Chapter Two, I discuss the Hodgson Report on astral projection, and how the rise to prominence of the physical sciences influenced even the inquiries of non-physicists into occult phenomena. Having already explained the principles of astral projection, this chapter shows the materialism of mainstream science that made the two incompatible, in spite of the many prominent scientists who wanted to believe in the occult. Physics needed outside validation, either through instruments or

³⁴ Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 155.

³⁵ Saler, "Modernity and Enchantment," 714.

through patronage by the state. Astral projection, on the other hand, was self-validating and did not require social or financial capital.

I have chosen to concentrate, rather narrowly, on the writings of the Golden Dawn as it existed between 1888 and 1903, and primarily on the Flying Rolls, a collection of administrative decrees and explanatory essays, mostly issued in and around 1893-1894, that were an extension to the normal curriculum. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the Golden Dawn was an entirely private organization. Until Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) began publishing the periodical *Equinox* in 1909, no members of the Golden Dawn expressed any interest in publicizing the details of their secret rituals. These texts were created by and for those who were practicing astral projection, and there is no attempt in them to convince or appeal to a sceptical public. The Flying Rolls regarding astral projection were intended as a way to share the wisdom of senior magicians with those who had less experience, so they could more easily achieve and control their own visions. As such, they are an explanation of an activity that was actually practiced, and not of an ideology, philosophy, or fictional narrative. Astral projection was not just a way of thinking, of interpreting ideas and experiences, it was an actual practice, and the altered states of consciousness and visions the magicians of the Golden Dawn recorded were real, at least within their minds. The fact that so many people recorded their astral activities for, and offered advice to, an audience that consisted only of prospective magicians eager to experience their own visions, or kept diaries of their astral travels with no intended audience at all, should be proof enough that the reported visionary experiences were actual experiences and not some form of deceit or fraud.

Secondly, the Golden Dawn was solely intended as a way to share practical knowledge. There was no particular religious or spiritual ideology attached to it, nor did it represent a new religion like Theosophy. All that the Golden Dawn asked of its members was to be monotheistic, to treat men and women as equals, and not to use magic for evil.³⁶ Otherwise, members were free to subscribe to whatever beliefs they liked. Mathers was quite insistent on this point, as for example in a letter to Annie Horniman (1860-1937) from 1896:

What I discountenance and will check and punish whenever I find it in the Order is any attempt to criticise and interfere with the private life of Members of the Order; neither will I give the Wisdom of the Gods to those who endeavour to use it as a means of justifying intolerance, intermeddling, and malicious self conceit. The private life of a Person is a matter between himself or herself, and his, or her God.³⁷

This means the Flying Rolls are also free of any efforts to promote a specific ideology, and instead focus on promoting techniques that make astral projection easier, and interpretations of visionary experiences. Interpretations might follow standard occult cosmological models, but they are presented as possible theories for consideration, and not as absolute religious truths.

What kind of truth there is to be found in the Golden Dawn, in ritual magic, and in astral projection, is not an easy question to answer. The truth, religious or otherwise, is often an elusive prey, especially with subjects that fall outside the audience's range of normative experiences. While discussing history in a disenchanted world, Dipesh Chakrabarty cites the example of "peasant revolts in India in which the peasants claimed to have been inspired to rebellion by the exhortations of their gods," and posits that "for a historian, this statement would never do as an explanation, and one would feel obliged to

³⁶ Drury, 44, "Ceremony of the 5°=6° Grade of Adeptus Minor," in *The Golden Dawn*, by Israel Regardie, 221-247 (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn, 1989), 230.

³⁷ S. L. MacGregor Mathers, letter to Annie Horniman 29 October 1896, quoted in Howe, 132.

translate the peasants' claim into some kind of context of understandable (that is, secular) causes animating the rebellion."³⁸ He is, of course, correct that foreign and bizarre material must be "translated" and made explicable for its audience. This does not mean, however, that one is limited to accepting the peasants' stated motivations as fact or rejecting it wholesale and searching for an explanation that would be understandable in another time, place, and culture. I do not have to accept Farr's and Simpson's vision of Isis as evidence that such a being exists, that the astral planes are tangible locations outside of the human mind, or even that thought transference is a possibility. A century and a half of research has produced no reliably repeatable evidence of telepathic, clairvoyant, or psychokinetic phenomena, and it would be irresponsible to ignore that. At the same time, I can accept that they really did experience this vision and that it was honestly and truthfully related. This is not the same as accepting it as divine revelation. Whether the ultimate source of these visions is divine or the subconscious mind is, I feel, irrelevant. Proof of divine intelligence would first require proof of telepathy, of which there is none, and so the choice to accept or deny someone else's experience remains. I have taken the magicians of the Golden Dawn at their word that these experiences happened, that they happened the way they have been portrayed, and that they happened in a way that felt real, that was validating, and that they returned to, again and again, and then I have tried to put those experiences into some kind of historical context. No more, no less.

³⁸ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 89.

Chapter One: The Occult Science

Formed pyramid over me. Went through it, looked for pyramid of the plane and saw it immediately with its yellow face towards me, and a large glowing white brilliance on the top. Approached and saw [the ruler of this plane] in the centre of the brilliance, and himself light and white. On calling on him he turned his head and in answer to $5^{\circ}=6^{\circ}$ Signs he inclined it. I said I wanted to interview the Sphynx [sic] of the pyramid, he consented to my doing and I descended thereunto. ... Later on he said ... In Man's figure you have a type with round face and full lower parts and legs, with active and strong, but perhaps less clumsy, back and arms; the type of mind, however, is a very good one, it will be meditative, and its meditation will be accompanied by subtle and keen reasoning and energetic thinking. It will lead him to compare the lower with the higher and the higher with the lower. Just the sort of mind to find out for itself that 'as above so below' is a great truth in nature. Because he directs his attention to the upper and to the lower equally he is hence a philosopher combining religion and science into a sublime union. ... Furthermore the use of Tau did not alter the vision.³⁹

– Henry Pullen Burry, 1894.

The occult revival has variously been described as a "flight from reason,"⁴⁰ as a "reaction to empire's materialist excesses, its scientization of the globe, and its participation in the disenchantment of our world,"⁴¹ and a "reaction against the modern, against the view that the universe is devoid of meaning, without a guiding principle, without a God."⁴² While these explanations may well account for the popularity of the occult revival as a whole, they do not account for the origins of astral projection. The actual practice of inducing astral visions cannot be a "response to the scientific materialism of the nineteenth century,"⁴³ considering it stretches back to at least the sixteenth century, when John Dee (1527-1608) developed some of the techniques used later by the Golden Dawn. Dee considered astral projection part of his scientific inquiries, and the Golden Dawn

³⁹ "Flying Roll No. XXXIII: Visions of Squares upon the Enochian Tablets," in *Ritual Magic of the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 95-101 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997), 98-99.

⁴⁰ James Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (La Salle, IL: Library Press, 1976), 7-19.

⁴¹ Sumathi Ramaswamy, *The Lost Land of Lemuria: Fabulous Geographies, Catastrophic Histories* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 54.

⁴² Thomas Laqueur, "Why the Margins Matter: Occultism and the Making of Modernity," *Modern Intellectual History* 3, no. 1 (2006), 135.

⁴³ Mark S. Morrisson, *Modern Alchemy: The Occult and the Emergence of Atomic Theory* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 20.

followed similarly empirical procedures, relying on personal observations and experiments to gather knowledge about the practice of astral visions. They were, essentially, practicing a seventeenth-century science in the nineteenth century. If the Golden Dawn had picked up where John Dee left off, after his final attempts at astral communication with angels in 1607, they would not have been completely outside the bounds of science, as they were later on. They departed from contemporary definitions of science in three particular areas: in maintaining a magical cosmological ideology, in self-experimenting, and in their inability to employ scientific instruments.

The Hermetic tradition of magic—and thus the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn—takes its name from the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a collection of second or third century CE works in Greek and attributed to the god Hermes that became popular again in the fifteenth century,⁴⁴ although MacGregor Mathers built the Order's curriculum out of any and all occult writings that were available to him, whether they originated in the Renaissance or the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ In order to experience the vision quoted above, for example, Henry Pullen Burry (c. 1850s-1926) used a version of the so-called Enochian system of magic, first developed in the late sixteenth century by John Dee, in order to converse with angels.⁴⁶ A mathematician and astronomer who combined an interest in science with the pursuit of magic and alchemy, Dee was regarded as England's

⁴⁴ James Hankins and Ada Palmer, *The Recovery of Ancient Philosophy in the Renaissance: A Brief Guide* (Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 2008), 68-69.

⁴⁵ Concerning magical influences, see Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 58, 149-150; Ellic Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order, 1887-1923* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 22-23; R. A. Gilbert, *The Golden Dawn: Twilight of the Magicians* (Northamptonshire, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983), 25-26; Mary K. Greer, *Women of the Golden Dawn: Rebels and Priestesses* (Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 1995), 55, 108, 110, 152-155.

⁴⁶ The Golden Dawn's version of Enochian magic is reprinted in Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 6th ed. (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1989), 624-682.

greatest natural philosopher during his own lifetime⁴⁷ and even late into the seventeenth century, when John Webster described him as "the greatest and ablest Philosopher, Mathematician, and Chymist."⁴⁸ John Dee's conversations with angels suggest a long history of vision-inducing magical practices. This history has yet to be seriously considered by historians, but makes clear that ritual magic and astral visions are intimately entangled with the early history of the physical sciences.⁴⁹ After John Dee, the practice made its way to the Golden Dawn and the end of the nineteenth century, still retaining its old title as an occult science. The Golden Dawn's curriculum of rituals repeatedly referred to magic as the "occult science,"⁵⁰ but there is no indication that this was anything other than an anachronistic tradition inherited from antique sources and magical grimoires. Theosophy claimed to have the answers nineteenth century scientists were looking for, being a "synthesis of science, religion, and philosophy,"⁵¹ but the Golden Dawn's writings give no indication that they thought their practice of astral projection was far different from what John Dee had been doing, or gave any consideration to contemporary scientific practices.

John Dee was older than the British Empiricists, but not by much, and they were not all opposed to his occultism, in spite of Francis Bacon's new empiricism. Isaac

⁴⁷ Deborah E. Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.

⁴⁸ John Webster, *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (London: J.M., 1677), 7, quoted in R. A. Gilbert, introduction to *John Dee: 1527-1608*, by Charlotte Fell Smith (1909; reprint Berwick, ME: Ibis Press, 2004), xvii.

⁴⁹ Although Deborah Harkness has noted some attempts to copy Dee's technique for angel conversations in the 17th century. Deborah E. Harkness, "Alchemy and Eschatology: Exploring the Connection Between John Dee and Isaac Newton," in *Newton and Religion: Context, Nature, and Influence*, ed. James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin, 1-15 (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 12.

⁵⁰ For usage of the terms "divine science," "Hermetic science," and "occult science" in Golden Dawn rituals, see Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 33, 45, 123, 144, 164, 168, 183, 338, 385, 453, 613.

⁵¹ This claim was made the same year the Golden Dawn was formed. See Helena Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy* (London: Theosophical Publishing Company, 1888).

Newton (1642-1727) was a key figure in the formulation of a mechanistic and mathematical conception of the universe.⁵² Like Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and John Locke (1632-1704) before him, he insisted that genuine knowledge came from sensory observation, direct experience, and experimentation.⁵³ In his 1690 *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke built upon Bacon's empiricism by maintaining that humans possess no knowledge that does not come from experience, and rejected in particular the Platonic philosophy that Dee had been familiar with. For Locke, knowledge was not something resting inside the human mind, waiting to be discovered. Instead, true understanding and knowledge comes only through experience, and from either using the senses directly or by reflecting on past experiences.⁵⁴ But Newton was also, like Dee, an occultist, with a keen interest in Christian millenarianism and alchemy.⁵⁵ Both men studied the connection between comets and the coming end of the world,⁵⁶ and Michael Murrin has placed Newton within "a conservative movement to maintain the old Protestant readings of Revelation."⁵⁷ It is unknown whether Newton had read Dee's published conversations with angels, but his contemporaries were certainly aware of them. Another empiricist, Robert Boyle (1627-1691), even considered attempting similar conversations himself.⁵⁸ Newton's ideas were not all the same as Dee's, and he rejected

⁵² Laurence Carlin, *The Empiricists: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London and New York: Continuum, 2009), 115-116.

⁵³ Carlin, 24-28, 110-111, 126.

⁵⁴ Carlin, 82-88, Robert C. Bolles, *The Story of Psychology: A Thematic History* (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1993), 57-59.

⁵⁵ See Michael White, *Isaac Newton: The Last Sorcerer* (London: Fourth Estate, 1997), and Michael Murrin, "Newton's Apocalypse," in *Newton and Religion: Context, Nature, and Influence*, ed. James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin, 203-220 (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic, 1999).

⁵⁶ Harkness, "Alchemy and Eschatology," 2.

⁵⁷ Murrin, 209.

⁵⁸ Harkness, "Alchemy and Eschatology," 13-14.

the metaphysics of Gnosticism and the Kabbalah,⁵⁹ but his interest in alchemy and the apocalypse shows that his empirical ideas of science could co-exist with occult and religious ideas that would later, in the nineteenth century, have no place in science. Even though Hermeticism is an innately Neo-Platonic tradition, the Golden Dawn nevertheless practiced a form of empiricism. It was not enough for them to rely on the authority of old grimoires—all methods of astral projection had to be put to use and tested. As strange as these visions were, magicians weighed their experiences rationally and continued to experiment with techniques, observing their effects, and modifying their practice to eliminate unwanted effects. They recorded their experiences and shared them with each other, reflecting on them after the fact, in order to enhance the meditative techniques that induced the vision, to replicate the transition between different forms of astral projection, and to perfect methods of controlling these visions and the astral beings they encountered during them.

Through observation and experimentation, the Golden Dawn identified three different types of astral projection: clairvoyance, also called "skrying in the spirit-vision," astral projection proper, or "travelling in the spirit-vision," and "rising in the planes."⁶⁰ Reiterating the desire for control over the visionary experience, Mathers defined the skryer, as opposed to the seer, as "one who describes what he *seeks*, not only the impassive receiver of visions beyond control or definition."⁶¹ Still, clairvoyance was the easiest of the three, because it involved only witnessing visions, and not interacting with them. As

⁵⁹ Allison P. Coudert, "Newton and the Rosicrucian Enlightenment," in *Newton and Religion: Context, Nature, and Influence*, ed. James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin, 17-43 (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic, 1999), 41.

⁶⁰ Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers [Deo Duce Comite Ferro], "Flying Roll No. XI: Clairvoyance," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 75-83 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997), 76.

⁶¹ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 75-76. Emphasis in the original.

such, it was the kind of astral projection that students were told they should attempt first.⁶² A magician would typically "commence this form of practical occultism by means of a Symbol, such as a drawing, or coloured diagram, related in design, form and colour to the subject chosen for study."⁶³ John Dee's Enochian system provided a complicated set of cards resembling pyramids with elemental symbols on them, but the Golden Dawn experimented with several types of symbols, including tarot cards, as in Farr's and Simpson's example,⁶⁴ and South Asian tattva cards, which, like Enochian cards, also sported elemental symbols.⁶⁵ In the commentary on their vision of Isis, Florence Farr and Elaine Simpson suggested the card could be pressed against the forehead,⁶⁶ but Mathers warned against this. Instead, he maintained this method was "not wholly good; it is more liable to derange the Brain circulation and cause mental illusion and disturbance, headaches, and nervous exhaustion."⁶⁷ Promoting self-control as much as other Golden Dawn authors, J. W. Brodie-Innes noted that astral visions "may be produced in other ways, such as by Hypnotism or self-induced Trance, by Obsession, Disease, etc.—but the method by symbol seems to remain the surest and the best."⁶⁸ These instructions indicate that the Golden Dawn were experimenting with different techniques and recording their

⁶² Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 76.

⁶³ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 76.

⁶⁴ For an example of tarot cards, see Florence Farr [Sapientia Sapienti Dono Data] and Elaine Simpson [Fidelis], "Flying Roll No. IV: an Example of Mode of Attaining to Spirit Vision and What was Seen by Two Adepti," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 71-73 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997).

⁶⁵ See examples of tattva cards in Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 82-83, and also Flying Roll No. XXXVI, reprinted as Moira Mathers [Vestigia Nulla Retrorsum], "Of Skrying and Travelling in the Spirit-Vision," in *The Golden Dawn*, 6th ed., by Israel Regardie, 467-478 (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn, 1989). The proper use of tattva cards is outlined in Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers [Deo Duce Comite Ferro], "Flying Roll No. XXIX," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 281-282 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997).

⁶⁶ Farr and Simpson, 71.

⁶⁷ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 79.

⁶⁸ John William Brodie-Innes [Sub Spe], "Flying Roll No. XXV: Essay on Clairvoyance and Travelling in the Spirit Vision," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 85-89 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997), 86.

observations. In order to perfect their rituals, they shared these observations and modified their behaviours accordingly.

Clairvoyant skryings were only precursors to true astral projection, in which the magician emitted a "perceptible ray of his identity, and by cultured and instructed Will, sends it to travel to the place desired, focuses it there, sees there—directly and not by reflection—perceives its bodily home, and re-enters it."⁶⁹ The visions produced by clairvoyance were, to Brodie-Innes, "no more solid than the pictures of a Kinetoscope or the sound of a phonograph." But when he was travelling through the planes, the visions were more intense and realized. During this type of astral projection he had the experience "of actually going to the scenes so visionary and seeing them as solid, indeed, of actually *doing things* and producing effects there"⁷⁰ Magicians recorded the distinct sensation of movement away from the physical body, of leaping or flying, or of the mind becoming a beam or ray: "If the ray be emitted, and you succeed in ... travelling to the place—you perceive a different result to that of the clairvoyant, mirror-like vision—scenes and things instead of being like a picture, have the third dimension, solidity, they stand out first like bas relief"⁷¹ The magician was no longer an observer, but now could "feel free to go to the place, to descend upon it, to step out upon the scene, and to be an actor there."⁷² When simply viewing another plane, there was still some sense of interaction, but with astral projection, the magician could experience all the sensations of being in some other place, of interacting with it, and with the beings that dwelled there. The third type, "Rising in the Planes," was a way for the magician to travel between these

⁶⁹ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 79.

⁷⁰ Brodie-Innes, 88. Emphasis in the original.

⁷¹ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 79.

⁷² Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 80.

visionary environments.⁷³ Not only was the magician taught this level of control by the Golden Dawn's curriculum, but he or she was further equipped with an arsenal of occult knowledge that could be used to avoid false visions and delusions.

The purpose of astral projection was not just to explore new worlds, but also to meet the inhabitants: "Seek then the forms and persons of the place or of the Plane you reach to, seek converse with them, by voice, word, letter and symbol and claim admission etc. by signs, and by invocation."⁷⁴ However, a very real danger the magician might encounter was the realization "that your travel is not real, and that you are wandering in your own environment, and are misled by memory etc.; hence you might be self-deceiving by your own reminiscences."⁷⁵ Mathers warned that both memories and imagination could create false visions,⁷⁶ while Brodie-Innes warned that "the Perception of the Astral plane seems to be peculiarly liable to delusions."⁷⁷ Magicians were advised to test all visions with the magical formulae learned earlier in the curriculum, including "appropriate signs and symbols, such as the signs of the Grades, Pentagrams, etc." and when encountering beings, to "test them with divine and angelic names."⁷⁸ Those visions that could withstand these magical procedures were thought to be real manifestations of the astral plane, while those that were easily changeable or could be banished with a gesture were creations of the magician's memories, imagination, or desire. Beings that could be influenced and persuaded by occult signs, but not forcibly manipulated, were seen as true denizens of another world, who could impart great spiritual knowledge.

⁷³ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 80-81, Farr and Simpson, 72.

⁷⁴ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 80.

⁷⁵ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 80.

⁷⁶ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 81.

⁷⁷ Brodie-Innes, 89.

⁷⁸ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 78.

Far from being a rejection of science, in the hands of the Golden Dawn, astral projection functioned as an empirical mode of inquiry into altered states of consciousness, in practice similar to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sciences. This does not mean it can be easily separated from non-rational modes of thinking, as it was also attended by a non-rational, magical philosophy. Magicians interpreted their visionary experiences through a Hermetic cosmological model that made their practice seem more like a religion than a science. Even though Mathers and Brodie-Innes both described the feeling of astral projection as one in which the consciousness moved out of the body, Brodie-Innes reframed this experience to correspond with occult ideas about the divinity of the human being, particularly the idea that the individual is a microcosm reflecting the macrocosm of the universe, first made popular by the French occultist Éliphas Lévi earlier in the nineteenth century.⁷⁹ For Brodie-Innes, the mind did not actually travel outside the body, but instead looked inward. What was perceived as the outer spiritual world and the astral planes was merely reflected onto the individual's "sphere of sensation," or full range of sensory perception, just "as in a grass field full of dewdrops each drop might present a perfect tiny image of trees and mountains, the sky, clouds, the sun and the stars."⁸⁰ Because the physical brain, he felt, was weak, it could not perceive that "the full and complete knowledge of all that is reflected in our sphere of sensation includes all knowledge past, present and future," but since "all knowledge lies *within* each man's own sphere, it is by looking within, or *intuition*, that such knowledge is made

⁷⁹ Geurt Imanse, "Occult Literature in France," in *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*, ed. Maurice Tuchman and Judi Freeman, 355-360 (Los Angeles and New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Abbeville Press, 1986), 356.

⁸⁰ Brodie-Innes, 85.

available."⁸¹ Anna Kingsford (1846-1888), whose own short-lived Hermetic Society was a major influence on Westcott and Mathers,⁸² also used this explanatory framework, and it set her apart from the spiritualists she looked down on. She experienced visionary dreams as well as trances and spontaneous visions while awake, and found these occurrences disturbingly similar to passive mediumship. She was assured by astral beings—one in particular, which she called her "angel-genius"—that her visions were not the work of outside forces, but originated from within.⁸³ While Alex Owen has argued at length that this conception of the astral vision as an exploration of the inner microcosm was a treatment of the self and subjectivity similar in nature to contemporary ideas of the subconscious,⁸⁴ it was nevertheless a rare and magical perspective, and one that did not fit easily into the nineteenth century's scientific landscape.

In Dee's own time, the possibility of conversing with angels through the use of magic was not always seen as desirable or useful, but it was rarely doubted.⁸⁵ Later historians, however, in promoting the teleological metanarrative of the Scientific Revolution, began to see these conversations, and Renaissance occultism as a whole, either "as a body of errors and misperceptions subsequently to be overcome, or as a world view containing the grain that would later germinate into 'real science.'"⁸⁶ Dee's occultism was dismissed as early as 1707, in Thomas Smith's *The Life of John Dee*, and later, for example, in both William Godwin's *Lives of the Necromancers* (1834) and Edward

⁸¹ Brodie-Innes, 85. Emphasis in the original.

⁸² Howe, 39, Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 42, Greer, 47-48, 55.

⁸³ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 161-164.

⁸⁴ See chapters 4-6 especially. Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 114-220.

⁸⁵ Håkan Håkansson, *Seeing the Word: John Dee and Renaissance Occultism* (Lund: Lunds Universitet, 2001), 18-19, Harkness, *Conversations with Angels*, 4, 51-59.

⁸⁶ Håkansson, 36.

Smedley's *The Occult Sciences* (1855).⁸⁷ Until recently, twentieth-century historians have tended to view all magical practices as a single form of primitive thought, what Keith Thomas described as "the employment of ineffective techniques to allay anxiety when effective ones are not available."⁸⁸ Wayne Shumaker similarly described magic as "a primeval tendency, still operative in savage cultures and among very young children, to imagine everywhere a consciousness very like our own,"⁸⁹ a tendency that persisted until it was banished by empirical science, with its "exact instruments for making observations, controlled conditions, and, not least important, a refusal to let wishes interfere with perception."⁹⁰ I. R. F. Calder's unpublished 1952 thesis "John Dee Studied as an English Neoplatonist" was the first work to consider all of Dee's work equally, from astrology and alchemy to Pythagorean mysticism and angel conversations.⁹¹ Since then, scholars have taken a more open-minded approach to Renaissance occultism and Dee's magical pursuits, but they are still more concerned with exploring the intellectual culture of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than with situating magical visions into the history of science.⁹² Deborah Harkness, for example, has stated that "there is no doubt that Dee's strategy for expanding human knowledge through conversations with angels was unique,"⁹³ but the Golden Dawn's continuation of this same strategy shows that in fact, it was not. While a lack of scientific instruments, along with an ethos of self-

⁸⁷ R. A. Gilbert, introduction, xviii.

⁸⁸ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 800.

⁸⁹ Wayne Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 157.

⁹⁰ Shumaker, 258.

⁹¹ Stephen Clucas, "Introduction: Intellectual History and the Identity of John Dee," in *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, ed. Stephen Clucas, 1-22 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 3.

⁹² For more detailed discussions on the historiography of magic, the occult, and John Dee, see Håkansson, 35-72, and Nicholas H. Clulee, "John Dee's Natural Philosophy Revisited," in *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, ed. Stephen Clucas, 23-37 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006).

⁹³ Harkness, "Alchemy and Eschatology," 11.

experimentation, certainly marked astral projection as something apart from the physical sciences of the late nineteenth century, there was no lack of concern over empiricism, controlled conditions, or the dangers of wish fulfillment in the Golden Dawn's curriculum. On the contrary, control over the visionary experience, as obtained through discipline, observation, and experimentation, as a means of dividing true revelations from false illusions, defined the ideal practice of astral projection.

The cornerstones of the Golden Dawn's magical curriculum were imagination and will. Simply put, astral projection began with a visualization, an image held in the magician's imagination, which was then energized by his or her will. William Wynn Westcott used as an example the "ancient Hermetic dogma that any idea can be made to manifest externally if ... concentration be obtained; just similarly is an external result produced by a current of Will Force."⁹⁴ Florence Farr described the process of visualization in her instructions for cultivating the will as follows:

Get a distinct image of the thing you desire placed, as it were, in your heart, concentrate all your wandering rays of thought upon this image until you feel it to be one glowing ball of compacted force. Then project this concentrated force on the subject you wish to affect.⁹⁵

As simple as it might be in theory, in practice magic was no easy process. It required rigorous discipline and self-control on the part of the magician. What was meant by "imagination" was something more than daydreams or creativity—it was a level of concentration that "must be distinguished from Fancy—from mere roving thoughts, or empty visions: By it now we mean an orderly and intentional mental process."⁹⁶ Unlike

⁹⁴ William Wynn Westcott [Non Omnis Moriar], "Supplementary Remarks" (to Flying Roll No. V), in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 51-52 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997), 51.

⁹⁵ Florence Farr [Sapientia Sapienti Dono Data], "Flying Roll No. II, Part III: Three Suggestions on Will Power," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997), 59-60.

⁹⁶ Westcott, "Supplementary Remarks," 51.

those "roving thoughts," effective imaginings had to be sustained over time. A magician might be required to meditate upon an image for an hour or more, visualizing it and contemplating its spiritual relationships and significance, before entering an astral vision.⁹⁷ The Golden Dawn's curriculum required self-mastery and focus, and its rituals required the magician's full attention—that this took a great deal of willpower is a point often stressed in the Flying Rolls. Although Farr stated that "to want or desire a thing is the first step in the exercise of Will," she made it clear that desire, unlike will, requires little or no concentration.⁹⁸ Westcott gave the following advice: "Let there be no confusion between will and desire ... do not attempt to will two things at once, and while willing one thing do not desire others."⁹⁹ This process of imagination and will was not one that simply happened—according to the Golden Dawn, it had to be controlled and sustained at every moment. The effects of "the Will unaided ... are vague and indefinite," while imagination alone "can do nothing of importance, unless vitalised and directed by the Will."¹⁰⁰ It was this combination of the two, the application of the will to a product of the imagination, that began the magical procedure. Once the imagination produced a visionary effect, a strong will allowed the magician to observe, to experiment, and finally to control the visionary experience.

At first glance, these descriptions of magical workings seem to confirm Brian Vickers' idea that the occult does not distinguish between literal and metaphorical language: "Words are treated as if they are equivalent to things and can be substituted for

⁹⁷ Farr and Simpson, 71.

⁹⁸ Farr, "Flying Roll No. II, Part III," 59.

⁹⁹ William Wynn Westcott [Non Omnis Moriar], "Flying Roll No. I, Part II: A Subject for Contemplation," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 53 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997), 53.

¹⁰⁰ Edward Berridge [Resurgam], "Flying Roll No. V: Some Thoughts on the Imagination," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 47-51 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997), 47.

them. Manipulate one and you manipulate the other."¹⁰¹ The magician affects the symbol, but the real thing itself is affected. This produces the phenomenon of psychokinesis—the very real influence of some external force, object, or person by the application of will upon a symbol that represents the subject to be influenced. Within the Golden Dawn there was a range of magical ideas, and the extent of belief in actual psychokinetic magic varied. All effects discussed in Golden Dawn writings on astral visions are restricted to the astral planes themselves, or the mental and emotional states of the participants, but at least some members of the Order believed they could affect others from afar. The imagination, according to Edward Berridge (1844-1920), "actually creates a form on the Astral or even on some higher plane; and this form is as real and objective to intelligent beings on that plane, as our earthly surroundings are to us."¹⁰² Berridge also believed that these imaginary forms, motivated by the will, could affect others, with or without their knowledge. He gave five examples from his own practice in his *Flying Roll*, two of which are nearly identical cases of Berridge magically severing a relationship between a woman client of his and a man she was acquainted with but would rather not see again.¹⁰³

W. B. Yeats (1865-1939), on the other hand, did not seem to really trust in ideas of magical influence or even telepathy. Instead, he believed in a kind of collective imagination, a "great mind" deeper than subconscious memory.¹⁰⁴ He wrote of Mathers: "He, like all that I have known who have given themselves up to images, and to the speech of images, thought that when he had proved that an image could act independently

¹⁰¹ Brian Vickers, "Analogy Versus Identity: The Rejection of Occult Symbolism, 1580-1680," in *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, ed. Brian Vickers, 95-103 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 95.

¹⁰² Berridge, 47.

¹⁰³ Berridge, 49-50.

¹⁰⁴ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 168-170, W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (1926), 227, as cited in Howe, xxvi.

of his mind, he had proved also that neither it, nor what it had spoken, had originated there."¹⁰⁵ Yeats instead believed that the borders of the human mind were ever-shifting, between each other and the "great mind," and that this process could be accessed and manipulated through the use of symbols.¹⁰⁶ Placing herself in a more moderate position between the beliefs of Yeats and Berridge, Farr noted the apparently addictive quality of magical influence, "a noticeable feature in the cases of those who have been cured by faith healers; or professional hypnotists," where patients seemed "to only live in your [i.e. the healer's or hypnotist's] presence," and did not actually find their conditions improving.¹⁰⁷ Or, as Mathers put it, "a strong person can galvanise a weak one, but its effect is only a temporary folly, doing good neither to the strong nor to the weak."¹⁰⁸ Farr and Mathers do not describe examples like those of Berridge, but they obviously subscribed to at least some kind of magical influence, even if it does not seem far removed from hypnotism. Still, hypnotism, especially self-hypnotism, was not regarded highly—the Golden Dawn allowed no substitute for an individual's strength of will, and outside influences were something to be avoided. These attitudes did not always reflect an organization devoted to empirical study. But then, the Golden Dawn had its own magical methodology. They followed empirical rules because those rules allowed them to produce results, but they still had magical models of the universe into which they placed their visionary experiences.

Although the magicians of the Golden Dawn practiced magic, they were emphatically not mystics. Before the Order's dissolution, William James (1842-1910) had

¹⁰⁵ W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (1926), 416-417, as quoted in Howe, 130 n1.

¹⁰⁶ W. B. Yeats, "Magic," *The Monthly Review* (September 1901) and in *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1903), as cited in Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 167.

¹⁰⁷ Farr, "Flying Roll No. II, Part III," 59.

¹⁰⁸ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI," 81.

defined the mystical state as one that, "once [it] has set in, the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance, and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power," a characteristic which connected mysticism with "prophetic speech, automatic writing, [and] the mediumistic trance."¹⁰⁹ The Golden Dawn's curriculum was directly opposed to this passivity. As Joy Dixon has noted, "occultism" and "mysticism" were differentiated by the use of willpower—where the occult science of ritual magic espoused strict discipline and the cultivation of the will, mysticism was associated with passivity, worship, and union with the divine.¹¹⁰ Like Theosophy, the Golden Dawn denigrated the passivity of hypnosis and spirit mediums, following A. P. Sinnett's description of séances and other spiritualist techniques as "manifestations which mediums can neither control nor understand," while the occult arts were "achievements of a conscious, living operator comprehending the laws with which he works."¹¹¹ Or, as fellow psychological researcher H. J. Strutton put it more concisely in 1911: "Power predominates in the Occultist, Self-surrender characterizes the Mystic."¹¹² Being unable to induce astral visions in himself, John Dee had used a series of mediums in order to converse with angels.¹¹³ The Golden Dawn rejected even this as too passive. They experienced a vast spiritual universe that could be wondrous and elevating with the proper knowledge and effort, but could also be quite harmful to the uninitiated and those lacking discipline and self-control. Mathers' instructions included admonitions "to avoid Self hypnotisation, for this occurrence would dispose you to mediumship, and to be the playground of forces you must control, and not

¹⁰⁹ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (London and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), 381.

¹¹⁰ Joy Dixon, *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 86.

¹¹¹ A. P. Sinnett, *The Occult World* (London: Trubner & Co., 1881), 12.

¹¹² H. J. Strutton, "Mysticism or Occultism? A Review of Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*," *Occult Review*, June 1911, 330-333, as quoted in Dixon, 86.

¹¹³ Håkansson, 15, Harkness, "Alchemy and Eschatology," 3.

permit to control you."¹¹⁴ Elsewhere he warned that "self-hypnotisation ... will simply lead to foolish and hysterical visions."¹¹⁵ Likewise, one of Berridge's least successful examples of magic at work is that of a woman who "had allowed herself to become passively mediumistic, and her health began to fail."¹¹⁶ She asked him to effect a cure by way of hypnotism, but he instead "occultly surrounded her with a protective aura," using the process of imagination and will described above. The woman improved in the short term, but when "she again drifted back into her former condition of passive mediumship, her health broke down, and after a lingering illness, she died."¹¹⁷ While Berridge admitted that this occurred before he had joined the Golden Dawn, when his magical knowledge was inferior, ultimately he blamed the woman's passivity for making her vulnerable to a "vampirising spirit."¹¹⁸ His example was more of a warning against succumbing to passive tendencies and suffering malign influence than it was a warning that magic might be detrimental to other people.

Once a member of the Golden Dawn was fully trained and forewarned, he or she could move on to the visionary experience of astral travel. Before exercising the will, however, a magician needed to obtain a "condition of equipoise,"¹¹⁹ and "have purity of body, mind, intellect and of emotion."¹²⁰ Ideally, a magician would exercise rigorous

¹¹⁴ Mathers, "Flying Roll No. XI: Clairvoyance," 75.

¹¹⁵ Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers [Deo Duce Comite Ferro], "Flying Roll No. XXX: Tattva Cards and Tattvic Clairvoyance and Hierophant Rising 0° = 0° Signs," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 91-92 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997), 92.

¹¹⁶ Berridge, 48-49.

¹¹⁷ Berridge, 49.

¹¹⁸ Berridge, 49.

¹¹⁹ Percy W. Bullock [Levavi Oculos], "Flying Roll No. II, Part II: Remarks upon Subject for Contemplation," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 57-58 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997), 57.

¹²⁰ William Wynn Westcott [Non Omnis Moriar], "Flying Roll No. II, Part I: A Subject for Contemplation," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 55 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997), 55.

self-discipline at all times, not just when practicing magic, but Westcott advocated against more drastic forms of social isolation and physical abstinence, for "who is a slave to his animal soul, will practice vice even in a Forest; while he who restrains himself among the crowds of a city, and passes through a busy life—unpolluted, shows more resistance and suffers a severer discipline, and shall obtain a greater reward."¹²¹ The desirable mental state was achieved with the help of a room dedicated only to magical rituals, which outsiders were not permitted to see. The five Golden Dawn temples could serve this purpose, though some members had private rooms in their own houses devoted to magic, such as the one Henry Pullen Burry described to Arthur Conan Doyle in 1898.¹²² Once inside this room, the magician was able to, as Farr instructed, "secure for an hour or for longer absolute freedom from interruption. Then alone, or with one or two other [magicians] ... remain in silence and contemplation" before inducing visions.¹²³ These strict conditions show the Golden Dawn's concern for maintaining a controlled environment while undertaking visionary experiences, not just in terms of their physical surroundings, but also in terms of their own emotional states. When Mathers stated that "the Temples of the Order are places for the performance of Sacred Ceremonies, and the petty criticisms and uncharitableness of social clubs and drawing rooms, should be rigidly banished from them,"¹²⁴ he was advising just such an environment—one that would be the same for each experiment in astral projection. This applied both to the external space around the magician, as well as the inner mental and emotional states that would be used to begin the astral projection. Golden Dawn members had noticed the

¹²¹ Westcott, "Flying Roll No. II, Part I," 55.

¹²² Arthur Conan Doyle, "Early Psychic Experiences," *Pearson's Magazine* (March 1924), as quoted in Howe, 199.

¹²³ Farr and Simpson, 71.

¹²⁴ S. L. MacGregor Mathers, letter to Annie Horniman 29 October 1896, as quoted in Howe, 132.

tendency of astral visions to amplify emotions, especially negative emotions, and worked out systems to avoid such undesirable results. One key to controlling visions was a controlled physical environment, the other a controlled mental and emotional environment. Astral visions, wrote Mathers,

will only be possible if the mind is steady, clear and undisturbed and the will powerful. It cannot lead to success if you are in an unsuitable state of anxiety, fear, indignation, trouble or anticipation. You must produce peace, solitude and leisure and you must banish all disturbing influences.

But, above all, never attempt these Magic Arts if there be any resentment in the mind, anger, or any evil passion; for if you do, the more you succeed, the greater will be the evil that will follow—for yourself.¹²⁵

After all, they believed that all imaginings became real on other planes of existence. If a magician's mind and perceptions were sent to that plane, all the negative imaginings he or she had brought would become real in the vision, and the magician would be forced to deal with them as such, instead of simply as emotions, as in the physical world. Thus, the environment their astral experiments took place in needed to be controlled as much as possible, just as in laboratory experiments.

Due to the intense curriculum, magicians of the Golden Dawn literally had years of training in the practice of rituals designed to heighten their imagination and strengthen their willpower in order to finally control their astral visions. Nor did they approach these visions in a careless manner even after being initiated into the Inner Order—they recorded their experiences and circulated them for others to read, as well as attempting visions in small groups, instead of always singly. As well, they were careful to proceed slowly—such as attempting clairvoyance before astral projection—and perhaps most importantly, to be aware of their own skill at magic and advise others out of their own personal experience. Farr advised other magicians to be cautious:

¹²⁵ Mathers, "Flying Roll XI," 78.

Until we know we must refrain from doing. This sounds as if the case was pretty hopeless; but we have each in our own persons all the materials for experiment, and as long as we desire light, and do all we know to obtain it, we are not likely to do ourselves permanent harm; but at the same time we cannot be too careful in applying the very superficial magical knowledge we have at present to others, especially to those who are uninitiated.¹²⁶

While they had the tools to control their visionary experiences, and felt confidence in them—and while there are no records of insanity or mental disorder preventing any member of the Inner Order from functioning properly in British or French society—as Farr points out, they were also self-experimenters.

The only way to study the astral plane was to experience it, and the only way to safely experience it was by learning the proper magical rituals, which Farr felt the Golden Dawn was only beginning to explore. It was this experiential nature that, above all else, set ritual magic and astral projection apart from the physical sciences of the nineteenth century. Astral visions could not be demonstrated to observers or measured by scientific instruments; they could only be experienced by magicians. While self-experimentation had also fallen out of favour, it was less alien to mainstream science. Practicing a non-demonstrative science does not allow a scientist, or magician, many opportunities to present his or her work. Self-experimentation, on the other hand, was, at one point, a viable way to make a name for oneself in the sciences—even Isaac Newton used himself as a subject, poking his eyes with pieces of brass in the 1660s.¹²⁷ Before the second half of the nineteenth century, physicists and natural philosophers had to make do with the limits of their own perceptions. Johann Wilhelm Ritter (1776-1810), for example, lacked the necessary instruments to measure electricity, so he trained his own body as an instrument instead. He was not the first experimenter to do so, but he was one of the most

¹²⁶ Farr, "Flying Roll No. II, Part III," 59.

¹²⁷ Simon Schaffer, "Self Evidence," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 2 (1992), 329.

extreme examples.¹²⁸ By systematically applying electricity to every part of his body, including each of his sense organs, he not only investigated his own responses, he trained those responses to take better measurements of his electrical devices. In effect, he calibrated his body to perceive changes in the amount of electricity produced by a battery with more precision than was available to other experimenters.¹²⁹ This self-experimentation also gave him access to experiences and knowledge that eluded other, less brave or reckless experimenters, such as the experience of staring into the sun for twenty minutes and of the subsequent optical effects, which lasted for twenty-six days.¹³⁰ By the time of his death at the age of thirty-three, Ritter had destroyed his body through a combination of self-experimentation that regularly pushed the boundaries of his physical constitution and the alcohol and opium he needed in order to stand the pain.¹³¹ Even in his own lifetime, the scientific community in Germany was turning away from the subjective nature of individual expertise towards a more objective idea of science, partly as a way to overcome political tensions between the German states and France.¹³² With the rise of physics, self-experimenters like Ritter became even less common, and the ideologies of physics, with its objectivity, precision measurement, and need for tangible results came to dominate science.

That lack of objective measurements supplied by instruments set astral projection apart from the science of the nineteenth century more than anything else, even the off-putting Hermetic philosophy and self-experimentation. As the writings of the Golden

¹²⁸ Stuart Walker Strickland, "The Ideology of Self-Knowledge and the Practice of Self-Experimentation," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31, no. 4 (1998), 457.

¹²⁹ Strickland, 457-458.

¹³⁰ Strickland, 459.

¹³¹ Strickland, 456, 460.

¹³² Strickland, 463-464.

Dawn show, they could record their observations and share them with each other, but there was no way to make those observations except by astral projection. Even when their experiences accorded with each other—the difference between the three types of astral visions, for example—there was no way to test this and quantify it using anything other than the human senses of the magician experiencing the astral plane. Even magicians experiencing the same astral vision together, even those encountering the same astral being, could have slightly differing accounts.¹³³

In practice, the magicians of the Golden Dawn followed the same basic tenets of empiricism as Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton did, but characterized themselves as more enthusiastic about magic than even John Dee. Magical thinking might not be able to tell the difference between literal and metaphorical language, but this is not a fault only of magic. Because it was couched in a language replete with religious symbolism and magical thinking, astral projection has been taken literally by outsiders, at face value, and judged irrational. Because it is a purely experiential, non-demonstrative activity, that activity itself has been almost overlooked. There can be no presentation of these astral visions for those who are unwilling to experience them, and there are no instruments capable of measuring them. With these barriers in place, the physical sciences paid no attention to the experience of astral projection during the nineteenth century, and historians have, for the most part, followed suit, as the lineage of magical investigations into altered states of consciousness and visionary experiences has still not been studied thoroughly or integrated into the history of science in any meaningful way. James Webb

¹³³ For an example, see Kate R. Moffat [Servio Liberaliter], "Astral Travelling No. 2: The Sword," in *The Golden Dawn: Twilight of the Magicians*, by R. A. Gilbert, 132-134 (Northamptonshire, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983), 133.

has referred to the occult as "rejected knowledge"¹³⁴ and certainly the occult was the main part of Renaissance science that was, for so long, rejected by scholars, just as the occult revival was rejected in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Astral projection was relegated to the social margins of alternate religious practices, even though it was, for all intents and purposes, a form of empirical science. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, that empiricism was no longer good enough for scientists.

¹³⁴ James Webb, *The Occult Underground* (La Salle, IL: Library Press, 1974), 191.

Chapter Two: Science and the Occult

There has been a long-standing controversy in optics, nearly as old as the century. ... This point has indeed by the exertion of extraordinary power been almost settled already, through the consideration of common optical experiments; but now that we are able electrically to produce radiation with a full knowledge of what we are doing, of its directions of vibration and all about it, the complete solution of this and of many another recondite optical problem may be expected during the next decade to drop simply and easily into our hands.

We have now a real undulatory theory of light, no longer based on analogy with sound, and its inception and early development are among the most tremendous of the many achievements of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

In 1865, [James Clerk] Maxwell stated his theory of light. Before the close of 1888 it is utterly and completely verified. Its full development is only a question of time, and labour, and skill. The whole domain of Optics is now annexed to Electricity, which has thus become an imperial science.¹³⁵

– Oliver Lodge, 1889.

In 1888, the same year the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was formed, Oliver Lodge (1851-1940), a professor of physics at University College in Liverpool, demonstrated the existence of electrical waves in Bath, England, at a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. This discovery opened up exciting and profitable new opportunities. Conceptualizing electricity as a kind of wave introduced, in the words of William Crookes (1832-1919), a chemist, physicist, and early pioneer of cathode ray tubes, "the bewildering possibility of telegraphy without wires, posts, cables, or any of our present costly appliances."¹³⁶ The British Post Office was certainly not slow to see the usefulness of wireless communications technologies,¹³⁷ but for Victorians, they also conjured up ideas of ghosts and spirit mediums, and the phenomenon by then already known as telepathy—a term coined in 1882 by Frederick

¹³⁵ Oliver Lodge, *Modern Views of Electricity* (London and New York: Macmillan and Co., 1889), 306-307.

¹³⁶ William Crookes, "Some Possibilities of Electricity," *Fortnightly Review* 302 (1892), 175.

¹³⁷ Iwan Rhys Morus, *When Physics Became King* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 173.

W. H. Myers (1843-1901) to describe direct mental communication.¹³⁸ Crookes made no secret of his belief that new discoveries in the field of physics would not stop with electrical waves, radiation, and X-rays, but would continue on into the human brain itself:

In some part of the human brain may lurk an organ capable of transmitting and receiving other electrical rays of wave-lengths hitherto undetected by instrumental means. These may be instrumental in transmitting thought from one brain to another. In such a way the recognised cases of thought transference, and the many instances of "coincidence" would be explicable.¹³⁹

By the end of the nineteenth century, physics had become the pre-eminent scientific discipline, a true "imperial science" providing the secrets of matter and energy to both industry and the state. Every university of merit required a laboratory for experimental physics, and some were more important for advancing the nation's technological development than for teaching.¹⁴⁰ But the attempts by physicists to annex the world of occult phenomena the way they conquered the worlds of heat, light, and electricity were not nearly so successful. Other disciplines, notably psychology, were able to incorporate ideas from the occult revival, but occult practices themselves remained outside the boundaries of professional science.

The physical sciences became professionalized and "imperial" because they required outside validation. Physics was expensive, but patronage from industry and the state required tangible results for patrons. Professional science also required outside validation in the form of instruments, not only in order to create better tools for industry, but to bolster the self-image of professional scientists. In sharp contrast, astral projection was a self-validating, non-professional endeavour. It took time and effort, but not money, and the spiritual guidance granted by the denizens of the astral planes was validation

¹³⁸ Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 14.

¹³⁹ Crookes, 177.

¹⁴⁰ See Chapter 8 "Places of Precision," in Morus, 226-260.

enough. Mainstream science at the end of the nineteenth century had adopted four particular ideologies that made it impossible to acknowledge astral projection: objectivity, materialism, the role of the expert observer, and the pathologizing of altered mental states. Any one of these on their own could have been overcome. All four of them led to a fundamental incompatibility between astral projection and what science had become.

Ultimately, the culture clash between the materialism of the physical sciences and the magic of astral projection in the late nineteenth century was something of a non-event. While there were numerous investigations by physicists into the affairs of spirit mediums, the only systematic investigation of astral projection conducted by those who did not experience it was the one made by Richard Hodgson (1855-1905), on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research. Hodgson undertook this task on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, which had formed a committee in 1884 to examine the extraordinary phenomena described by members of the Theosophical Society. Hodgson's report was published the following year.¹⁴¹ The committee had charged him with investigating the claims that Helena Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society, was in supernatural contact with spiritual masters living in Tibet, which she called

Mahatmas:

They are said to be able to cause apparitions of themselves in places where their bodies are not, and not only to appear, but to communicate intelligently with those whom they thus visit, and themselves to perceive what is going on where their phantasm appears. This phantasmal appearance has been called by Theosophists the projection of the "astral form." The evidence before the Committee includes several cases of such alleged appearances of two Mahatmas, Koot Hoomi and Morya.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Richard Hodgson, "Account of Personal Investigations in India, and Discussion of the Authorship of the 'Koot Hoomi' Letters," *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 3 (1885): 207-380.

¹⁴² "Statement and Conclusions of the Committee," *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 3 (1885), 202.

On the one hand, the Society for Psychical Research's committee was only interested in the physical phenomena of the claims made by Blavatsky and other Theosophists, and not how she, or others, actually practiced or experienced astral projection. On the other hand they were investigating the Theosophical Society, not the Golden Dawn. Blavatsky and her Theosophists did not share Mathers' magical curriculum, and it is difficult to determine exactly how different methods of reaching that visionary state affected the visions themselves. Still, the attitudes revealed by Hodgson and the committee in their conclusions help to illustrate the aspects of physical science that made it incompatible with astral projection. Those attitudes include the position of the scientist as expert observer, the objectivity of scientific knowledge, a strictly materialistic focus, and a pathological definition of altered mental states.

The Society for Psychical Research was born when physicist William F. Barrett expressed his regret at the lack of scientific investigations into thought transference to journalist Edmund Dawson Rogers. On Rogers' suggestion, Barrett began organizing meetings in January 1882 that also included Frederic Myers, Charles Darwin's brother-in-law Hensleigh Wedgwood, and the medium William Stainton Moses.¹⁴³ The Society's members were diverse but well-educated and socially well-connected, including physicists, writers, politicians, aristocrats, and philosophers. Presidents included the philosopher Henry Sidgwick and the physics professor Balfour Stewart, who both served terms in the 1880s, as well as Oliver Lodge, American psychologist William James, fairy-tale collector Andrew Lang, and MacGregor Mathers' brother-in-law, French

¹⁴³ Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 137, Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 51.

philosopher Henri Bergson, in the 1890s and later.¹⁴⁴ The Society operated with the aim of performing "an organised and systematic attempt to investigate the large group of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as mesmeric, psychical and Spiritualistic."¹⁴⁵ Although the Society's members were not all physical scientists, they nevertheless aspired to maintained the same standards in their investigations, and made sure to state, as part of their mandate, that membership in the Society did not require "belief as to the operation, in the physical world, of forces other than those recognised by Physical Science," a statement that also appeared in the Society's constitution.¹⁴⁶ The committee formed to investigate Theosophy made it clear that their concerns were entirely mechanistic. They had no interest in the actual substance of Blavatsky's astral communications, and whether they revealed spiritual truths or not. They were only interested in the functional workings of their transmission.¹⁴⁷ The Society for Psychical Research felt they had the expertise necessary to uncover those workings, where others did not. This attitude is evident throughout Hodgson's report.

Hodgson began his report by presenting himself as favourably disposed towards Blavatsky's supposed supernatural abilities. He was initially eager to believe her claims, because of their similarity to, in his own words, "the phenomena of Telepathy—of which, moreover, I have had instances in my own experience, both spontaneous and experimental, and both as agent and percipient."¹⁴⁸ This desire to confirm past supernatural experiences and the need to situate them into a rational world view that

¹⁴⁴ Oppenheim, 135-136, John D. Root, "Science, Religion, and Psychical Research: The Monastic Thought of Sir Oliver Lodge," *Harvard Theological Review* 71, no. 3/4 (1978), 247.

¹⁴⁵ "Objectives of the Society," *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 1 (1882-1883), 3.

¹⁴⁶ "Objectives of the Society," 5.

¹⁴⁷ "Statements and Conclusions," 202.

¹⁴⁸ Hodgson, 208.

included both wonders and a scientific method that could reveal all mysteries was common amongst psychical researchers. James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879), Cambridge's first professor of experimental physics, insisted that molecules, as uniform as if made in a Victorian factory, were proof of the existence of an intelligent designer,¹⁴⁹ while Frederick Myers, an outspoken critic of orthodox Christianity, nevertheless maintained that occult phenomena were proof of the literal truth of New Testament miracles.¹⁵⁰ Oliver Lodge, who was able to serve as president of both the Physical Society and the Society for Psychical Research, as well as chairman of the Synthetic Society, which served as a place for philosophical discussion of science and religion,¹⁵¹ nevertheless lamented that the "orthodox science" of his time was "not the comprehensive grasp of a Newton, but science as now interpreted by its recognised official exponents." Those "exponents" included "the average Fellow of the Royal Society," but did not include himself.¹⁵² Lodge was probably referring to Newton's reputation as a genius, but over the course of the nineteenth century, aspects of this reputation that did not relate directly to science, such as Newton's morals and religious ideas, were removed by his biographers.¹⁵³ Lodge, unable to separate science and religion in his own thinking, could have been objecting to this secularization of Newton. In his later years, he managed to combine his practice of physics, his faith in Christianity, and his belief in the existence of spirits into a coherent, unified philosophy.¹⁵⁴ Hodgson prepared his report for a group of

¹⁴⁹ Morus, 226, 263.

¹⁵⁰ Root, 250.

¹⁵¹ Root, 247, Samuel Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1968), 143.

¹⁵² Quoted in Oppenheim, 392-393.

¹⁵³ See Rebekah Higgitt, *Recreating Newton: Newtonian Biography and the Making of Nineteenth-Century History of Science* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007).

¹⁵⁴ Root, 259-263.

people who shared his willingness to believe in the possibility of occult phenomena, and were willing to investigate.

However, there was also a strong current of scepticism within psychical research. The desire to believe in the claims of the occult was not as strong as the desire for physical proof. Many of the Society's investigators, like its first president Henry Sidgwick, struggled with religious doubt. Sidgwick wanted to believe in religion and life after death, but found it very difficult without proof.¹⁵⁵ The physical workings of Blavatsky's astral projection, in particular "the transportation, even through solid matter, of ponderable objects, including letters ... together with what is called 'precipitation' of handwriting and drawings on previously blank paper"¹⁵⁶ presented an opportunity to obtain proof of telepathy and the existence of spirits. Blavatsky was able to produce, seemingly out of thin air, letters written by the Mahatmas. In some cases, these were responses to letters written by others, which Blavatsky claimed not to have read.¹⁵⁷ But however much Hodgson wanted to believe, and however sympathetic he was to Theosophy, after examining the evidence, his conclusion was wholly negative:

But acting in accordance with the principles upon which our Society has proceeded, I must express my unqualified opinion that no genuine psychical phenomena whatever will be found among the pseudo-mysteries of the Russian lady ... Madame Blavatsky.¹⁵⁸

The committee agreed with Hodgson's assessment. To them, Blavatsky was "one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history."¹⁵⁹ Joy Dixon has argued that the weight of class snobbery, gender bias, and racial prejudice in the Society for Psychical Research contributed more to their ultimate verdict on Blavatsky than

¹⁵⁵ Oppenheim, 111-123.

¹⁵⁶ "Statement and Conclusions," 203.

¹⁵⁷ "Statement and Conclusions," 202-203.

¹⁵⁸ Hodgson, 317.

¹⁵⁹ "Statement and Conclusions," 207.

Hodgson's evidence did.¹⁶⁰ Even if Hodgson was fully conscious of these influences on his report, he did not acknowledge them. Instead he used the twin positions of expert observer and objective judgement to erase whatever flaws or doubts might exist in his argument. Theosophists complained that Hodgson, ignorant of South Indian culture, had misjudged his evidence and ignored Indian witnesses who had knowledge of both science and prestidigitation,¹⁶¹ but Hodgson's report had no room for witnesses at his level of expertise unless they could corroborate his own work.

Hodgson rested the legitimacy of his conclusions primarily on expertise, not only his own, but the expertise of others. Part of Hodgson's report included the analysis of letters alleged to have been transmitted via astral projection, by "the well-known expert in handwriting, Mr. Netherclift, and also [by] Mr. Sims, of the British Museum."¹⁶² In response to Hodgson's report, and the analysis of these two experts, the committee produced several conclusions, the first of which concerned the written evidence:

(1) That of the letters put forward ... [all] are undoubtedly written by Madame Blavatsky; and suffice to prove that she has been engaged in a long-continued combination with other persons to produce by ordinary means a series of apparent marvels for the support of the Theosophic movement.¹⁶³

Instead of relying solely on Netherclift and Sims, Hodgson also used their credentials to support his own detailed analysis of the handwriting, spelling, and grammar in the writings of Blavatsky and her two Mahatmas. He laid his analysis out in clear detail, as if inviting the reader to examine his work, but only after he had interpreted the evidence. He presented excerpts of testimonies and summaries of his interpretation of evidence, instead of untampered evidence. It was Hodgson's judgement that determined whether

¹⁶⁰ Dixon, 26-40.

¹⁶¹ Dixon, 35, 39.

¹⁶² "Statement and Conclusions," 204.

¹⁶³ "Statement and Conclusions," 204.

this or that letter was in Blavatsky's hand or Koot Hoomi's, and whether the curls, loops, and downstrokes he enumerated and categorized actually fit the labels he assigned to them.¹⁶⁴ As if to indicate the kind of skill that went into his efforts of discernment, Hodgson picked out one particular sentence of Blavatsky's: "You have either to show me as a champion liar, but *cunning, logical* and with a most *phenomenal memory* ... or admit the theory of the [Mahatmas]."¹⁶⁵ If she required intelligence to create these forgeries, fooling so many, it also required intelligence on Hodgson's part to expose her. "I have no doubt," he wrote in response to this passage, "that she was fully aware of the importance of convincing adherents ... that she was unable to produce the [Mahatma] writings, and that one of her devices to this end was the speaking and writing of purposely deteriorated English."¹⁶⁶ Where others failed to observe properly, Hodgson had succeeded, and his conclusions were corroborated by other experts, and thus undoubtedly correct.

The fallibility of witnesses is another position Hodgson used to support his own position as expert observer. He was not at all satisfied with the testimony he considered during his investigation, considering his witnesses to be "as a body, excessively credulous, excessively deficient in the powers of common observation,—and too many of them prone to supplement that deficiency with culpable exaggeration."¹⁶⁷ He wrote that the primary witnesses to, and practitioners of, astral projection in the Theosophical Society had "in other matters deliberately made statements which they must have known to be false" to such a degree that he was unwilling to credit their statements unless they

¹⁶⁴ Hodgson, 283-308.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Hodgson, 304. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁶⁶ Hodgson, 304.

¹⁶⁷ Hodgson, 210.

were corroborated by physical realities.¹⁶⁸ Some witnesses' statements were so "fundamentally at variance"—a phrase he used more than once—with either fact or each other, in Hodgson's judgement, that he routinely classified their testimonies as without evidential or scientific value.¹⁶⁹ Hodgson proved himself to be the ideal candidate for the investigation by revealing his own expertise, backed up by other experts, while at the same time showing the deficiencies of all other observers of the phenomena he was revealing to be fraudulent. He did not address the fact that he never witnessed any of these phenomena in any fashion, and did not seem to consider that a detrimental aspect of his investigation.

Hodgson also made attempts at the nineteenth century idea of objectivity, what Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison have called "knowledge that bears no trace of the knower."¹⁷⁰ Gradually since the 1830s, scientists had begun to show more and more concern over the role of the observer, expert or not. They began to develop techniques to erase their own tendencies to "prettify, idealize, and ... regularize observations to fit theoretical expectations," which culminated in the use of instruments and machines.¹⁷¹ By the end of the century, this "mechanical objectivity was firmly installed as a guiding if not *the* guiding ideal of scientific representation across a wide range of disciplines."¹⁷² Since Hodgson was describing his own investigations, and positioning himself as an expert observer, erasing his presence was simply not possible. Instead, he tried to build scenarios out of the testimonies he collected to make claims about possibilities and physical reality. It was Hodgson's expert judgement that determined who was telling the

¹⁶⁸ Hodgson, 312.

¹⁶⁹ Hodgson, 210, 239, 242-243.

¹⁷⁰ Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 17.

¹⁷¹ Daston and Galison, 34-35, 124-125, 138-139.

¹⁷² Daston and Galison, 125. Emphasis in the original.

truth, but the resulting scenarios he reconstructed from that testimony demonstrate pretensions to objectivity. The committee's second conclusion shows the results of his efforts:

(2) That, in particular, the Shrine at Aydar, through which letters purporting to come from Mahatmas were received, was elaborately arranged with a view to the secret insertion of letters and other objects through a sliding panel at the back, and regularly used for this purpose by Madame Blavatsky or her agents.¹⁷³

This shrine had been disassembled by the time Hodgson arrived in India, but by sifting through various eyewitness descriptions, he was able to recreate a description of it.¹⁷⁴ He was also able to match this to his own examination of the renovated room where the shrine had once been located, and what pieces of the shrine were left. Unlike his recreations of dates and locations and telegraph messages in order to prove that certain telepathic messages Blavatsky received could have been perpetrated by fraud,¹⁷⁵ in this case Hodgson was examining material objects, and they were free to be inserted into the scenario he was building to show the possibility of fraud. In each scenario, whether he was reconstructing the shrine or some other phenomena, he analysed testimonies asserting the truth of supernatural events, and then found independent accounts to counter each and every claim made in support of an occult explanation. It was not that he was able to conclusively disprove each phenomenon, but that he was able to establish the possibility of one or more other scenarios that did not include the necessity of occult powers that led him to his ultimate conclusion. He was not looking for proof that supported the reality of Blavatsky's miracles, he was looking for enough proof against them, in whatever quarter he could find it in, and these claims were judged far more favourably than the claims of those who witnessed occult phenomena.

¹⁷³ "Statement and Conclusions," 204.

¹⁷⁴ Hodgson, 220-223.

¹⁷⁵ Hodgson, 211-217, 318-321.

Throughout his report, Hodgson portrayed himself as a passive, unbiased observer. His conclusions, "to which I was gradually *forced*, after what I believe to be a thorough survey of the evidence for Theosophical phenomena,"¹⁷⁶ were not made of his own free choice and inclination. Since he was originally eager to be favourable towards Theosophical claims, he

refrained as long as possible from pronouncing even to myself any definite conclusion on the subject, but after giving the fullest consideration ... I finally had no doubt whatever that the phenomena connected with the Theosophical society were part of a huge fraudulent system worked by Madame Blavatsky ... and that not a single genuine phenomenon could be found among them all.¹⁷⁷

Although he was explicitly giving an account of his own work and his conclusions regarding it, the actual scenarios he was trying to reconstruct had nothing to do with him. Though he does not make this explicit, Hodgson portrays himself following a two-step process. First, he determined which testimonies could be trusted, and which ones he discarded, based on his position as the expert observer. Then he used the viable testimony to create possible scenarios, and used them to judge, impartially and without prejudice, whether the reported phenomena were fraudulent or genuine. As these two positions are directly at odds with each other, there were some areas where they overlapped uncomfortably. In reproducing parts of the recorded testimony of the Theosophical Society's co-founder, Henry Steel Olcott, Hodgson included the questions Myers asked him.¹⁷⁸ But in the transcripts of informants questioned by Hodgson himself, he reprinted only answers that came "*in reply to my questions*," but not the questions themselves, or complete conversations.¹⁷⁹ Myers was a third party, so his dialogue could be reprinted,

¹⁷⁶ Hodgson, 209. Emphasis mine.

¹⁷⁷ Hodgson, 210.

¹⁷⁸ Hodgson, 231-233.

¹⁷⁹ Hodgson, 325-331. Emphasis in the original.

but Hodgson erased his involvement in the actual evidence as much as he could without negating his role as expert observer.

Hodgson's report had more in common with a legal trial than it did with a physics experiment. Still, it exhibited many of the attitudes of physical science, especially its narrowly materialistic focus. Hodgson was concerned with the mechanical workings of these astrally-transmitted messages, and his only concern was to eliminate the possibilities that conform to known physical laws and probabilities, in order to determine where some unknown force could be at work. By comparing the exact details of chronologies, testimonies, and the telegraph connections between locations, his conclusion on the communications between the Mahatmas and not just Blavatsky, but another Theosophist, Damodar K. Mavalankar, was that

there is nothing in the circumstances connected with Mr. Damodar's "astral" journeys which renders it difficult to suppose a pre-arrangement between him and Madame Blavatsky to make it appear that he took them; and even that some of the circumstances suggest a suspicion of such an arrangement.¹⁸⁰

Damodar, like Blavatsky, claimed to have met the Mahatmas in Tibet in person, not just through astral projection. Hodgson, however, considered that "the reality of these astral journeys of his [i.e. Damodar's] depends mainly on his own statements,"¹⁸¹ and was essentially uncorroborated. Since he felt that the psychokinetic effects connected to them, including the letters, as well as in some cases sightings of the Mahatmas, were fraudulent, he did not consider the actual experience Damodar might be having in those moments. In its own report on the report, the Society for Psychical Research's committee admitted that it could not separate the evidence for the actual astral journey itself from the evidence for

¹⁸⁰ Hodgson, 231.

¹⁸¹ Hodgson, 227.

the occult transmission of letters and the occasional manifestation of the Mahatmas.¹⁸² But Hodgson managed to separate the whole experiential nature of Blavatsky's and Damodar's experiences with astral projection from his report. He was entirely concerned with the physical mechanisms involved in Theosophy's occult phenomena. Even if the social aspects of Hodgson's situation influenced his judgement, only the material aspects influenced his portrayal of his evidence.

This attitude was not new to the Society for Psychical Research. The prevailing attitude of established scientists investigating the occult was materialistic. The most predominant example of this was the constant comparison of spirit mediumship and telepathy to a form of telegraphy. Indeed, the "tele-" in Myers' coining of the term "telepathy" to cover "all cases of impression received at a distance without the operation of the recognised sense organs"¹⁸³ ensured its connection with telegraphy. W. T. Stead, the man who changed the face of journalism in the 1880s, was a major proponent of using technological metaphors to explain telepathy, advocating the idea of the human body as a "bifurcated telephone" which had the potential to contact both the living and the dead.¹⁸⁴ Cromwell Fleetwood Varley (1828-1883), who investigated the occult alongside William Crookes, had particularly strong opinions about the links between spiritualism and telegraphy.¹⁸⁵ Varley was one of the most prominent telegraph engineers

¹⁸² "Statement and Conclusions," 202.

¹⁸³ "Report of the Literary Committee," *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 1 (1882-1883), 147.

¹⁸⁴ W. T. Stead, "How We Intend to Study Borderland," *Borderland* 1 (July 1893), 5, as quoted in Luckhurst, 127.

¹⁸⁵ See Richard J. Noakes, "Telegraphy is an Occult Art: Cromwell Fleetwood Varley and the Diffusion of Electricity to the Other World," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 32, no. 4 (1999): 421-459.

of the 1870s, having worked on trans-Atlantic telegraph cables the decade prior.¹⁸⁶ He had experienced the occult first hand by attending séances and trying mesmerism, and like Hodgson, personal experience had convinced him of the reality of the occult. He also believed that his expertise in communications technology made him the best candidate to investigate these phenomena.¹⁸⁷ He used his position of prominence in the telegraph industry to promote spiritualism, and in turn he used spiritualism, and the spiritualist periodicals which had become popular, to promote telegraphy.¹⁸⁸ In 1874, Varley tested the veracity of Florence Cook (c. 1856-1904), a spirit medium known for conjuring a materialized spirit by the name of Katie King. Varley used electrical wires and a galvanometer to prove that Cook and King were not one and the same.¹⁸⁹ In this experiment, "Miss Cook took the place of a telegraph cable, under electrical test,"¹⁹⁰ and provided the results Varley, and supporters of spiritualism, had hoped for. Early experiments like these only solidified the popular conception of spirit mediumship and telepathy as a form of telegraphy, and promoted technological means of perception over the human senses. If human perception alone could not provide enough proof of occult phenomena, it was up to scientists to provide the proper instruments.

Physicists took this nineteenth-century distrust of human eyewitness testimony as far as they could by developing new instruments with which to create representations of their material subjects and to conduct precision measurements of them. The normal human senses were simply not good enough to examine the forces and phenomena

¹⁸⁶ Richard Noakes, "Cromwell Varley FRS, Electrical Discharge and Victorian Spiritualism," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 61, no. 1 (2007), 8.

¹⁸⁷ Noakes, "Cromwell Varley FRS," 8-9.

¹⁸⁸ Noakes, "Telegraphy is an Occult Art," 423-424, 446-449.

¹⁸⁹ Noakes, "Telegraphy is an Occult Art," 450-458.

¹⁹⁰ Cromwell Varley, "Electrical Experiments with Miss Cook when Entranced," *Spiritualist* 4 (1874), 134-135, quoted in Noakes, "Telegraphy is an Occult Art," 455.

physicists were concerned with, nor were they good enough to manufacture the quality of products that new forms of industry demanded. In his experiments with electrical discharge tubes, for example, Varley used half-hour exposures to obtain a photographic record of what his eyes were unable to see, which were more successful than his attempts to photograph occult forces.¹⁹¹ The idea, especially with photography, was to "shift the burden of proof from potentially untrustworthy human observers to machines that could not be influenced by unconscious signals from experimenters," the way some claimed subjects of hypnotism could be.¹⁹² Since the 1840s, physiologists had been using graphical recording instruments to measure the biological functions of humans and animals.¹⁹³ In his studies of piddock molluscs during the 1880s, Raphaël Dubois used graphical recorders to show how light, sound, and odour were all transformed by a mollusc's one sensory organ, its siphon, into physical contractions.¹⁹⁴ In this way, subjective experience could be reduced to lines on paper, reminiscent of waves, reinforcing a materialistic sense of existence. Influenced by these wave forms, in 1876, the German naturalist Ernst Haeckel declared that the "soul is the sum of a number of special cellular activities, among which feeling and will, sensation and involuntary movement are the most important and the most generally distributed."¹⁹⁵ More precise measurements also created better machines. When Germany's Physikalisch-Technische Reichsanstalt was built in the 1880s, it was quickly put to use making better compasses

¹⁹¹ Noakes, "Cromwell Varley FRS," 11-14.

¹⁹² Noakes, "Cromwell Varley FRS," 14.

¹⁹³ Robert Michael Brain, "Protoplasmia: Huxley, Haeckel, and the Vibratory Organism in Late Nineteenth-Century Science and Art," in *The Art of Evolution: Darwin, Darwinisms, and Visual Culture*, ed. Barbara Larson and Fae Brauer, 96-123 (Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 2009), 96.

¹⁹⁴ Brain, 107-108.

¹⁹⁵ Ernst Haeckel, "Über die Wellenzeugung der Lebensteilchen oder die Perigenesis der Plastidule," in *Vorträge und Abhandlungen* (1876; reprint, Berlin: Henschel and Leipzig: Kröner, 1924), 238, as quoted in Brain, 101.

for the navy's ironclads, better thermometers which could be used to make better engines, and better electrical standards for telegraph operations.¹⁹⁶ Better measurement devices contributed to the reliability of scientific experiments, lending scientists an increased air of authority because of the tangible results they produced. They also contributed to a perspective of the universe that was built entirely out of physical matter and energy, with little room for subjective experience, and less for the occult and the divine.

Hodgson and the committee did not have the advantage of working with matter and energy, however. They had to work with human beings, but their third point shows how they combined the role of the expert observer and the desire for objectivity together in order to exert their authority over the other individuals involved in the Theosophical Society's displays of astral projection:

(3) That there is consequently a very strong general impression that all the marvellous narratives put forward as evidence of the existence and occult power of the Mahatmas are to be explained as due either (*a*) to the deliberate deception carried out by or at the instigation of Madame Blavatsky, or (*b*) to spontaneous illusion, or hallucination, or unconscious misrepresentation or invention on the part of witnesses.¹⁹⁷

By characterizing Blavatsky's occult phenomena in this way, the committee put supporters in the position of either being mentally sound and wilfully deceitful or honest but inferior, due to some altered and faulty mental state. This was one way to draw the boundaries of physical science, and push the jurisdiction of the investigation into the discipline of psychology. The investigation of occult phenomena, and especially mesmerism and hypnotism, would prove to be of serious concern to the new field of psychology, though only for a short time.

Psychology was the most likely discipline to overcome the materialism of the physical sciences and take up an interest in astral projection and ritual magic. There was

¹⁹⁶ Morus, 250.

¹⁹⁷ "Statement and Conclusions," 204-205.

one major obstacle, however—psychology's tendency to pathologize altered mental states. As Roger Luckhurst has noted, the new discipline of psychology "fell between medicine, alienism, neurology, and physiology but also extended into the moral sciences, reflecting an uncertainty as to whether psychology was an objective or subjective science."¹⁹⁸ With these origins, psychology and allied disciplines such as psychiatry and psychoanalysis were overwhelmingly concerned with correcting defective behaviour. The tendency was to categorize altered mental states as either pathological afflictions or as possible cures. For example, the split that occurred in French psychology during the 1880s aptly demonstrates this dichotomy. Hippolyte Bernheim promoted the curative potentials of hypnosis therapy, but the more common view of Jean-Martin Charcot aligned hypnosis with hysteria and classified them both as physiological maladies.¹⁹⁹ In Britain, Henry Maudsley and Ernest Hart likewise considered telepathy to be pseudo-science and trance states and hypnotism to be the result of physiological defects, neurosis, and too much imagination.²⁰⁰ Meanwhile, Frederic Myers managed to turn his psychical research into a career in the field of psychology over the course of the 1880s. Along with William James, he maintained an interest in psychical phenomena into the twentieth century.²⁰¹ In France, Pierre Janet directed research into hypnotism and spiritualism into theories about the subconscious and dissociative models of consciousness, and this work was taken up in Britain by Myers and in America by James and the other physicians known as the "Boston school of psychology." Morton Prince, James Jackson Putnam, and Boris Sidis in particular expanded on French ideas of

¹⁹⁸ Luckhurst, 92.

¹⁹⁹ Luckhurst, 101.

²⁰⁰ Luckhurst, 104-105.

²⁰¹ Luckhurst, 107-112.

multiple personalities.²⁰² Although Janet and Myers retained a positive attitude towards trance states, others, like Charcot and the British psychiatrist L. Forbes Winslow characterized spiritualism and trance as a contagion.²⁰³ The practice of spiritualism could even, in rare cases, be directly persecuted by medical professionals, as in 1871 when Maudsley had the medium Louisa Lowe incarcerated in his asylum.²⁰⁴ By 1910, theories of the subconscious were losing their popularity, and psychology began looking back to German laboratories for its influences.²⁰⁵ During the first half of the twentieth century, psychical research was abandoned by psychology and marginalized into parapsychology, a discipline practiced at Duke University, but few other places.²⁰⁶ Meanwhile, other sciences thrived, and they did not regret the loss.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, universities were considered places for teaching and learning, not for research. Their mission was the transfer of knowledge, not the production of knowledge, and consequently laboratories were privately funded affairs. By the end of the century, every major university worthy of the name had to have a laboratory for experimental physics.²⁰⁷ This was not a process that happened overnight, nor did it come cheaply. Physics was an expensive science, requiring vast amounts of materials and equipment. As Oliver Lodge remarked, "it was no joke having to start a laboratory from the beginnings and collect all the apparatus."²⁰⁸ When a Cambridge

²⁰² Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 253-255.

²⁰³ Luckhurst, 96.

²⁰⁴ Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Nineteenth Century England* (London: Virago Press, 1989), 168-201.

²⁰⁵ Taves, 259.

²⁰⁶ Luckhurst, 252-253. See also J. B. Rhine, *New Frontiers of the Mind: The Story of the Duke Experiments* (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rineheart, 1937).

²⁰⁷ Morus, 229-237, 281-282.

²⁰⁸ G. Gooday, "Precision Measurement and the Genesis of Physics Teaching Laboratories in Victorian Britain," 36, quoted in Morus, 233.

committee advocated for the creation of a laboratory for experimental physics in 1869, the university was slow to proceed, due to the immense cost. The Cavendish Laboratory, which would become one of the leading producers of trained physicists by the end of the century, finally opened in 1874 only because William Cavendish, the seventh duke of Devonshire in addition to being a prominent industrialist, paid for it.²⁰⁹ After James Clerk Maxwell, the laboratory's first professor, died in 1879, Lord Rayleigh took on the position primarily because an agricultural depression left him without the financial means to maintain his own private laboratory.²¹⁰ In 1884, Werner von Siemens, himself an industrialist and a major name in German telegraphy, paid for Germany's Physikalisch-Technische Reichsanstalt, an institute devoted solely to research.²¹¹ Without this initial outlay of capital, and the further support by universities, the physical sciences would have remained the province of wealthy amateurs pursuing natural philosophy, instead of becoming a professionalized scientific culture with strong ties to industry and the state.

As physics obtained patronage in order to fund its appetites, this nascent scientific culture also had to justify its expense. The Reichsanstalt in particular was focused on areas of interest to the Reich, including more accurate standards in measuring heat, light, and electricity, all of which required precision instruments and provided immediate industrial benefits.²¹² International rivalry in the arena of physics was a major part of international exhibitions from the 1850s onwards, where scientific discoveries were displayed side-by-side with technological innovations.²¹³ Dramatic displays helped garner public support, while physics' focus on precision helped propel progress in state-

²⁰⁹ Morus, 237-239, Luckhurst, 19.

²¹⁰ Morus, 241.

²¹¹ Morus, 247.

²¹² Morus, 249-250.

²¹³ Morus, 270-271.

supported industries, especially in the field of electricity. In 1876, just ten years after the first truly successful trans-Atlantic telegraph cable began operating, W. E. Gladstone could demand of the government what must have seemed like near-instant telegraphic communication with Constantinople about affairs in Bulgaria and feel justified in doing so.²¹⁴ In 1891, after ten years of struggling to create international electrical measurement standards, the British ohm, defined and enforced in Britain by the Board of Trade, was adopted by France, Germany, and the United States, acknowledging Britain as the leader in this area.²¹⁵ The drama of physics also included the discovery of new forces, such as electromagnetic waves, X-rays, and radiation. Investigations into the existence of ghosts and spirits, telepathy, and other supernatural phenomena were ultimately unsuccessful attempts to add new forces to this growing list of discoveries.²¹⁶ The failures of occult research, however, were far outweighed by the successes in other areas. Physics rose to prominence precisely because it was so expensive and required so much support. Results were expected, results were produced, new areas of research were discovered, and the culture of physical science was validated by establishing itself as the new mainstream.

Ritual magic, on the other hand, had no need to be discovered. Nor did the magicians of the Golden Dawn feel the need to promote themselves or receive any kind of outside validation. Astral projection was an experiential, non-demonstrative science. It could not be presented at national exhibitions and it was completely divorced from instruments, measurement, and the physical world. It was an activity that took plenty of time and effort, but very little money. Consequently, it asked for nothing from the outside

²¹⁴ W. E. Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* (London: John Murray, 1876), 20, 23-24, 26.

²¹⁵ Morus, 258-259, 271-273.

²¹⁶ See Chapter 6, "Mysterious Fluids and Forces," in Morus, 156-191.

world. Once the occult was revealed to be lacking in exactly those forces physicists were looking for—once they realized the mind could not be transformed into a telegraph machine—physical scientists lost interest. Electromagnetic forces paid dividends, occult forces did not, and if that was true for the occultists who promoted themselves, their spirits, and their secret masters, in public, investigators had no reason to pursue the occultists who kept themselves hidden. And so ritual magic remained, like natural philosophy had once been, the realm of the serious amateur. With few exceptions, members of the Golden Dawn had successful careers outside of occultism: William Wynn Westcott in the London coroner's office, Florence Farr on the stage, Percy Bullock and J. W. Brodie-Innes in law, and Edward Berridge and Henry Pullen Burry in medicine, to name but a few.²¹⁷ While some may have made a little money from the sale of occult books—Mathers' *The Kabbala Unveiled*, or Farr's *Egyptian Magic*, for instance—the practice of astral projection provided nothing in the way of income. Which is not to say that, as amateurs, they thought of magic and astral projection as a trivial matter. Not only could it be physically and mentally taxing, but it could be socially problematic as well. In 1897, when Westcott's superiors forced him to quit "foolishly posturing as one possessed of magical powers,"²¹⁸ he resigned from his official leadership role in the Golden Dawn, but did not stop practicing magic or associating with other magicians. Even after the Order broke up, George Bernard Shaw was continuously exasperated by the way Farr took the occult more seriously than acting. Regarding magic, he advised her "if you want to write mystic gospels, write them; but in the name of commonsense dont [sic] try to popularise your mysticism or to mystify your popular

²¹⁷ Howe, 45 n2, 51-52, 64-65, 67, 70 n2, 71, 199, A. E. Waite, *Shadows of Life and Thought: A Retrospective Review in the Form of Memoirs* (London: Selwyn and Blount, 1938), 124.

²¹⁸ William Wynn Westcott, letter to F. L. Gardner, 17 March 1897, as quoted in Howe, 165.

readers."²¹⁹ Regarding her acting, he lamented that "with your voice and looks and intelligence you would seldom be out of engagement if only you would work as Wynne Matheson works."²²⁰ As serious hobbies go, magic was no more trivial than mountain climbing, and the core magicians of the Golden Dawn were no less serious about their hobby than the many climbers who have never been recovered from Mt. Everest were about theirs.²²¹

These men and women practiced magic without either promoting their activities to the public or asking society to support them. But they did not need any outside validation, for astral projection was a self-validating experience. When the Golden Dawn began to break apart in the late 1890s, each splinter group had their own secret masters. These astral beings appeared to magicians in visions, providing spiritual advice, moral strength, and emotional confidence. Gerald Yorke, who learned magic from Aleister Crowley and later met some of the original members of the Golden Dawn, believed the Order split apart into various successor organizations simply because "it was founded on a fraud."²²² Westcott had created the Golden Dawn partly on the basis of letters he exchanged with a German occultist known only as "Fräulein Sprengel," who in turn put him into contact with three "Secret Chiefs."²²³ Also known as the Third Order, these Secret Chiefs were essentially the Golden Dawn's version of Helena Blavatsky's Mahatmas—spiritual teachers who communicated with students through astral projection

²¹⁹ George Bernard Shaw, letter to Florence Farr, 15 September 1903, in Clifford Bax, ed., *Florence Farr Bernard Shaw W. B. Yeats Letters* (London: Home & Van Thal, 1946), 18.

²²⁰ George Bernard Shaw, letter to Florence Farr, 4 April 1906, in Bax, 27.

²²¹ See Jon Krakauer, *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster* (Villard Books, 1997), and Anatoli Boukreev and Gary Weston DeWalt, *The Climb: Tragic Ambitions on Everest* (St Martin's Press, 1997) for examples of the dangers of mountain climbing as a hobby and how much effort went into it. Some magicians, including Aleister Crowley, were also avid mountaineers themselves.

²²² Gerald Yorke, foreword to *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order 1887-1923*, by Ellic Howe (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), xxi.

²²³ See Howe, chapter 3, 34-44.

or other occult means. Despite a declaration by Mathers in 1896 that he "believe[d] them to be human and living upon this earth," these three Secret Chiefs, along with most beings contacted by Golden Dawn magicians through astral projection, were thought to reside wholly on the astral planes.²²⁴ In 1900, when Mathers accused Westcott of forging his correspondence with Fräulein Sprengel, thus calling into question the very basis of the Order's authority, he maintained that he himself was in contact with the true Secret Chiefs.²²⁵ He used this link to justify his continued authority over the Golden Dawn, and so did every faction and splinter organization spawned by the Order.²²⁶

Between 1898 and 1901, Florence Farr organized a group of twelve magicians, including herself, in order to hold astral conversations with an Egyptian mummy she had contacted in 1896. Farr believed this astral Egyptian was of the same spiritual rank as Westcott's and Mathers' Secret Chiefs, and consequently in a position to dispense similar magical knowledge. Both Westcott and Mathers agreed with her, at least tentatively, and supported her attempts to continue her communications.²²⁷ Annie Horniman, on the other hand, objected quite fiercely to this special group. She believed that "evil forces were drawn into" this Egyptian astral being, which "was not in harmony with the Order and that any influence exercised by that astral [being] was hurtful to the Order." She, in turn, was opposed by Robert William Felkin (1853-1926), a doctor and missionary who had been part of Farr's group of twelve. Felkin assumed a position of leadership within the Golden Dawn after 1900 because he had found his own astral mentors, whom he called the Sun Masters. By his account, Horniman claimed leadership of the Order based on her

²²⁴ Howe, 129, 259.

²²⁵ In a letter to Florence Farr dated 16 February 1900, reprinted in Howe, 209-211.

²²⁶ See Yorke, xvii-xviii for a partial list, and Greer, 47-48, for several more examples.

²²⁷ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 129-130, Yorke, xxii, R. W. Felkin, "The Group as I Knew It, and Fortiter," as cited in Howe, 250-251.

own connection with an astral being of the Third Order, called the Purple Adept.²²⁸ The Sun Masters apparently disagreed with this Purple Adept and had informed Felkin that Horniman was "absolutely wrong about an original taint in the Order."²²⁹ But there were no further accusations of fraud within the Golden Dawn. The Egyptian mummy, the Sun Masters, and the Purple Adept were accepted without question as legitimate astral entities.

Neither the Hodgson Report nor Mathers' accusation of fraud against Westcott had the effect of casting doubt upon the existence of the Secret Chiefs, or discouraging other members of the Golden Dawn from contacting other astral beings. They were more concerned with the nature of the astral entities being contacted, than with whether they were real or not, which they already knew from experience. While Thomas Laqueur has argued that "repeated and endemic revelations of fraud had little impact because true believers delighted in the philosophical truth that certain things were beyond the power of scientific observation to deny,"²³⁰ his statement misses a crucial aspect of the Golden Dawn—all the core members who occupied or wanted to occupy positions of leadership practiced astral projection. When J. W. Brodie-Innes, who technically had seniority over Felkin, agreed to accept his authority on the basis of his communication with the Sun Masters, it was not simply because he wanted to believe in something beyond the realm of science.²³¹ Brodie-Innes had years of experience with visions of the astral planes. He could personally attest to their power—and had before, by contributing to the Flying

²²⁸ Howe, 240-241, 244-245, 250-251, 258-259.

²²⁹ R. W. Felkin, letter to J. W. Brodie-Innes, 6 May 1902, quoted in Howe, 244-245.

²³⁰ Thomas Laqueur, "Why the Margins Matter: Occultism and the Making of Modernity," *Modern Intellectual History* 3, no. 1 (2006), 133.

²³¹ Howe, 257.

Rolls that helped explain astral projection to Golden Dawn initiates.²³² The ability to perform astral projection and interact with denizens of the astral planes, on its own, was not enough to support a bid for leadership—prospective leaders had to be able to contribute to the Order's magical knowledge as well. Considering how much of the magical curriculum MacGregor Mathers claimed he had obtained from the Secret Chiefs and other astral beings,²³³ the Sun Masters seem rather slow. By 1907, they still had not given Felkin the rituals to make him equal in rank to Mathers.²³⁴ However, as Farr's communication with the Egyptian shows, although claims of authority in the Order were based on privileged contact with certain types of astral entities, this was not the only, or even the most important, reason for seeking them out.

Repeated contact with specific astral beings was more than just a political tool. It was also a profoundly affecting experience. These astral beings often imparted a sense of importance and of well-being, as Isis did for Florence Farr and Elaine Simpson,²³⁵ or conveyed to the magician a sense of being powerful in and of themselves—a sense that the magician was in the presence of something that demanded awe. Mathers described the Secret Chiefs, in his meetings with them, as being accompanied by "so terrible a force that I can only compare it to the *continued* effect of that usually experienced momentarily by a person *close* to whom a flash of lightning passes during a violent storm; coupled

²³² John William Brodie-Innes [Sub Spe], "Flying Roll No. XXV: Essay on Clairvoyance and Travelling in the Spirit Vision," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 85-89 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books), 1997.

²³³ "Almost the whole of the Second Order Knowledge has been obtained by me from them" can only be read as hyperbole in its original context. Samuel Lidell MacGregor Mathers, [Deo Duce Comite Ferro], "The Manifesto of G. H. Frater Deo Duce Comite Ferro," 29 October 1896, reprinted in Howe 130-131.

²³⁴ Howe, 259.

²³⁵ Farr and Simpson, 72-73.

with a difficulty in respiration similar to the half-strangling effect produced by ether."²³⁶

In 1897 and 1898, Farr was part of another small group that included W. B. Yeats and Maude Gonne (1866-1953), this time with the intention of exploring Celtic mythical symbolism on the astral plane.²³⁷ In a visionary dream, Gonne encountered Lugh the Celtic sun god and at his hands received a magical initiation:

He touched me on the chest with the spear & I fell down on the ground & the fountain of fire played over me. Then he held out the spear over me & I grasped it & was raised to my feet through the fountain. ... The spear and shield were put into my hands & a voice said "The spear is to fight the forces of Darkness, the spear is to fight the enemies of Eire, the shield is to protect from the attack of adversaries." Then all faded & grew dim & I fell sinking down, down to earth.²³⁸

According to Alex Owen, this was experienced as an affirmation of Yeats' and Gonne's attempts to tap into the "great mind," a form of ancestral or collective memory.²³⁹ Not only were visions like this evidence, for Yeats, of an external, divine imagination to which all minds were connected, but for an Irish nationalist like Gonne, the direct magical and moral support of a Celtic deity was undoubtedly a source of personal confidence.

The visionary experiences of Anna Kingsford were similarly self-affirming. Although she never practiced the same rituals as the Golden Dawn, she was a president of the British Theosophical Society and an early influence on Westcott and Mathers, both of whom joined her Hermetic Society before forming the Golden Dawn. Prone to experiencing vivid dreams and even waking visions, Kingsford shared Theosophy's and the Golden Dawn's distrust of passive mediumship. Her visions, however, included

²³⁶ Quoted in Yorke, xxi-xxii. Emphasis in the original.

²³⁷ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 168.

²³⁸ Anna MacBride White and A. Norman Jeffares, eds., *The Gonne-Yeats Letters 1893-1938: Always Your Friend* (London: Hutchinson, 1992), 99-100, as quoted in Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 169.

²³⁹ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 168-170.

conversations with an "angel-genius," a sort of spirit guide, who gave her advice and reassurance.²⁴⁰ Kingsford described him as looking "like Dante, and like him is always in red. And he has a cactus in his hand, which he says is my emblem."²⁴¹ In their extensive conversations, this angel-genius assured her that her visions had no external origins and that they, himself included, were divine revelations originating from within. Unlike spiritualist mediums, who channelled external spirits, Kingsford's experiences were parts of herself, revealed to her by God. This assured her of her importance and gave her inspiration.²⁴² It was exactly this kind of inspiration and spiritual confidence that members of the Golden Dawn were seeking, and finding, in their astral interactions with Secret Chiefs, Celtic deities, and other denizens of the astral planes. They found their magical rituals to be an intense and powerful strategy for producing the enchantment Weber later lamented the world was losing.

In spite of the Hodgson Report, the members of the Society for Psychical Research never even came close to examining the astral projection of the Golden Dawn. Even if they had, the two approaches were incompatible. The Order's magicians were already conducting their own investigations into the mind, and according to the standards of the late nineteenth century, astral projection was no science. It failed on four major criteria: a lack of objectivity, no clear position for the expert observer, it was not materialistic, and it valorized altered mental states instead of pathologizing them. Because astral visions could only be observed by those experiencing them, the objectivity of knowledge was spoiled. There was no way to separate knowledge gained through the

²⁴⁰ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 161-163.

²⁴¹ This was "spoken in trance," by Anna Kingsford in London, November 1880. Edward Maitland, *Clothed with the Sun: Being the Book of the Illuminations of Anna (Bonus) Kingsford* (New York: John W. Lovell Company, 1889), 55.

²⁴² Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 161-164.

experience from the observer and subject of the experience. Because others could not observe these visions without participating, there was no real expert observer. With so much training in magical rituals, the core members of the Golden Dawn could certainly be called experts, but they were expert practitioners, not observers. To play the practitioner role, they had to be able to produce knowledge that either conformed to a shared magical culture, or knowledge that could help others in their practice. For the expert practitioner, knowledge had to be demonstrated—something of a paradox for a non-demonstrative practice. None of Blavatsky's demonstrations of occult power, her Mahatma letters, precipitations, and appearances of the Mahatmas to outside observers, had any place in the Golden Dawn's practice of astral projection. They were interested in their own experiences, not in whether the public believed in them or not. Because even machines and instruments could not observe these visions, they were completely incompatible with the materialists. With no physical subject, there was rather little the physical scientists could have done. There was nothing to photograph, no invisible waves to measure, and no way to examine the astral planes except by astral projection, something only people could do, while machines could not. And finally, astral projection could not be accepted by other practitioners who pathologized altered mental states or concentrated on treating pathology and disorders. By championing the practice of astral visions amongst those who were already healthy, the Golden Dawn was not able to attract the attentions of the professional sciences, even psychology. By championing a practice that provided its own validation, it did not need to.

Conclusion

Now on the face of the matter it is very easy to see that a great part of Egyptian Magic lay in a species of Hypnotism, called by later magicians, Enchantment, Fascination, and so forth.²⁴³

– Florence Farr [Sapientia Sapienti Dono Data], 1896.

Among the various strategies that challenge the historical metanarrative of disenchantment, the astral visions of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn may not be the most popular, but they are most likely the strongest. Astral projection creates contradictions with every comparison to the disenchantment narrative. Influenced by early scientific inquiries, the Golden Dawn followed the tenets of seventeenth century empiricism. They gathered their knowledge through sensory observation, direct experience, and controlled experiments. Their magical philosophy and their self-experimentation made them unappealing to mainstream science, but the nature of astral projection as an experiential, non-demonstrative activity made the split irreconcilable. Professional science required outside validation, from instruments and from social elites. Scientists adopted the stance of the expert observer, but astral projection had the expert practitioner, whose knowledge was entirely practical. Because there could be no observers to astral projection, that meant objectivity and materialism were both impossible. These experiences could not be separated from the individual magician's subjectivity, nor could they sustain a strict focus on matter and energy. Instead, the Golden Dawn elevated the altered state of mind that produced astral visions, instead of pathologizing it. At the same time, astral projection provided enchantment in a secularized, compartmentalized world, giving its practitioners the confidence to deny and

²⁴³ Florence Farr [Sapientia Sapienti Dono Data], *Egyptian Magic* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1896), 11.

challenge bureaucratic power structures. In a world moving towards disenchantment, astral projection provided validation—but not the kind of enchantment that mass culture produces. It was not a fleeting, ephemeral sense of mystery and wonder. The anti-bureaucratic aspects of astral projection also affected a magician's relationship with organized capitalist structures, changing his or her position within the power relationship between producer and consumer—especially with regards to mass culture.

The differences between mass culture and astral projection can further be illustrated by reference to another version of the disenchantment metanarrative. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault, and Jean-François Lyotard, and focusing on the history of art, Daniel Mackay has argued that the compartmentalization of cultural imagination resulted in capitalist elites who promote science and reason in order "to socialize the citizenry, not serving any moral purpose nor aiming for any goal other than controlling the people so that those in power could remain there."²⁴⁴ Mackay's metanarrative is primarily one of secularization:

Beginning in the late Middle Ages, a rift slowly developed in the ideology, social structure, daily architecture, political infrastructure, and religious belief that structured Western Europeans as a people. This slow, accretive process of the individual's alienation from society, which included his alienation from the shared beliefs of his culture, began with the educated humanists and natural philosophers who developed the nascent scientific method, applying it to a variety of scientific disciplines, and replaced the holistic and authoritative cultural unity of the church with the largely abstracted realm of disunity extrapolated from empirical data and observations.²⁴⁵

The medieval church provided a unified cultural imagination, but increasingly from the Renaissance onwards, this unity fractured, allowing individuals to "give free reign to their own imaginative life rather than to subordinate themselves to the imaginative life

²⁴⁴ Daniel Mackay, *The Fantasy Role-Playing Game: A New Performing Art* (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, 2001), 138.

²⁴⁵ Mackay, 136-137.

offered by the church."²⁴⁶ Art forms ceased to present themselves as part of a seamless cultural fabric, instead becoming secularized, concerned with personal expression and formal innovation. Painting, theatre, and music all separated themselves from religion.²⁴⁷ Works of art became temporary and compartmentalized expressions of the artist's own world of imagination, not the larger culture's.

The shift has been from a universal cultural identity ... to an individuated cultural identity ... that is fleeting and evanescent but structured by unchanging structures of power (i.e., the capitalist market, the huge machinery and apparatus of contemporary politics, the believed performances of the scientists in the subterranean corridors of subatomic accelerators and in the vaulted watchtowers of observatories, planetariums, and meteorological stations). These structures of power all operate according to the irresistible, unchanging logic of capitalism and the scientific method.²⁴⁸

And so Western culture changed from a state of belief to one in which "the natural state is disbelief," or rather, one in which it is normal to "believe in disbelief,"²⁴⁹ similar to the "ironic distance" Saler identifies in consumers of mass culture.²⁵⁰

This is the story of disenchantment for Mackay, the compartmentalization of cultures of imagination into individuated, secular realms, which can then be used by capitalist elites. Instead of seeing strategies for enchantment, as Saler does, he sees strategies for elites to retain their power. Mackay's modern world is one in which

citizens of a machine state flock to movie houses, book dealers, theaters, and concerts to try to fulfill a largely unidentified, vague, but compelling, sense of incompleteness. The "opiate of the masses" that Karl Marx identified as a religion in the nineteenth century, after the general societal divorce between society's architecture of life and beliefs, has become the entertainment industry, which projects its fantasy productions from the screens and speakers that fill contemporary domestic spaces.²⁵¹

Gone are the "ancient models of how life should be lived." Now there are lifestyles, a multiplicity of "models of how life should look," archived and waiting to be matched to

²⁴⁶ Mackay, 140.

²⁴⁷ Mackay 145-146.

²⁴⁸ Mackay, 142.

²⁴⁹ Mackay, 149.

²⁵⁰ Saler, "Modernity and Enchantment," 714.

²⁵¹ Mackay, 148.

the individual. "Commercial forces use this archive in the cultural sphere to typecast the person and insert them into a prefabricated marketing niche."²⁵² As market economics replaced patronage systems, art and lifestyle marketing became increasingly intertwined. Art became entertainment, only "what can entrance through appeal to the eye or ear," and what was previously "representational of another, believed world, has become appreciated solely for how it appears rather than for any possible mythical or spiritual referent."²⁵³ Mass culture fills the need for meaning, but it does so temporarily, so that producers can perpetuate their power, until the consumer finds their own source of meaning. This is not a model that casts Michael Saler's mass culture strategies for producing enchantment in a positive light, nor is it one that allows mass culture enchantment to be much more than predatory.

It is only when Saler writes about Sherlock Holmes clubs that he presents a strategy for producing enchantment that is similar to astral projection. While in the 1890s there were people who genuinely believed that Sherlock Holmes was a real person, there also appeared "the 'ironic believer,' who pretended that Holmes was real—but for whom this pretence was so earnest that the uninitiated might not recognize it as pretence."²⁵⁴ These ironic believers, from writers to businessmen, quickly went from writing satirical material to serious studies pretending Holmes was real and Arthur Conan Doyle was not.²⁵⁵ Then they went about forming clubs, like the Baker Street Irregulars, where they could share this enthusiasm with each other.²⁵⁶ These clubs, along with the maps and

²⁵² Mackay, 142.

²⁵³ Mackay, 144.

²⁵⁴ Michael Saler, "Clap if You Believe in Sherlock Homes': Mass Culture and the Re-Enchantment of Modernity, c. 1890-c. 1940," *The Historical Journal* 46, no. 3 (2003), 613.

²⁵⁵ Saler, "Clap if You Believe," 613-614.

²⁵⁶ Saler, "Clap if You Believe," 617.

photographs that the New Romance authors of the 1880s and 1890s like Doyle, Robert Louis Stevenson and H. Rider Haggard included with their books allowed for a "willing suspension of disbelief: they allowed rational readers to become immersed in these fantastic worlds, while at the same time maintaining an ironic distance—to remain rational and enchanted at the same time."²⁵⁷ Clubs like the Baker Street Irregulars, even when based on a mass media creation like Sherlock Holmes, allow participants to use their own imagination to give new meanings to the world, instead of waiting for the next P. T. Barnum-style sales tactic. Once a club is formed, the producer of the original fiction or imaginary world is no longer needed—Doyle's son Denis was enraged that the Irregulars referred to his father as Dr. Watson's literary agent, when they were not ignoring his existence completely.²⁵⁸ With astral projection, however, this self-reflexive irony was not necessary—astral visions were full sensory experiences, complete with foreign landscapes and spiritual teachers. By entering the astral planes, a magician became both the producer and the consumer of experiences that inflamed the imagination and created fundamental meaning. These were visions the magician could believe in.

²⁵⁷ Saler, "Clap if You Believe," 618.

²⁵⁸ Saler, "Clap if You Believe," 617.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Bax, Clifford, ed. *Florence Farr Bernard Shaw W. B. Yeats Letters*. London: Home & Van Thal, 1946.
- Berridge, Edward [Resurgam]. "Flying Roll No. V: Some Thoughts on the Imagination." In *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, edited by Francis King, 47-51. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.
- Blavatsky, Helena. *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy*. London: Theosophical Publishing Company, 1888.
- Bullock, Percy W. [Levavi Oculos]. "Flying Roll No. II, Part II: Remarks upon Subject for Contemplation." In *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, edited by Francis King, 57-58. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.
- Brodie-Innes, John William [Sub Spe]. "Flying Roll No. XXV: Essay on Clairvoyance and Travelling in the Spirit Vision." In *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, edited by Francis King, 85-89, Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.
- "Ceremony of the 5°=6° Grade of Adeptus Minor." In *The Golden Dawn*, by Israel Regardie, 221-247. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn, 1989.
- Crookes, William. "Some Possibilities of Electricity." *Fortnightly Review* 302 (1892): 173-181.
- Farr, Florence [Sapientia Sapienti Dono Data]. *Egyptian Magic*. London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1896.
- . "Flying Roll No. II, Part III: Three Suggestions on Will Power." In *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, edited by Francis King. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.
- Farr, Florence [Sapientia Sapienti Dono Data], and Elaine Simpson [Fidelis]. "Flying Roll No. IV: an Example of Mode of Attaining to Spirit Vision and What was Seen by Two Adepts." In *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 71-73. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.
- "Flying Roll No. XXXIII: Visions of Squares upon the Enochian Tablets." In *Ritual Magic of the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, edited by Francis King, 95-101. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.

- Gladstone, W. E. *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*. London: John Murray, 1876.
- Hodgson, Richard. "Account of Personal Investigations in India, and Discussion of the Authorship of the 'Koot Hoomi' Letters." *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 3 (1885): 207-380.
- Howe, Ellic. *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order, 1887-1923*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.
- James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. London and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902.
- King, Francis. Prefatory note (to Astral Projection) in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, edited by Francis King, 65-69. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.
- , ed. *Ritual Magic of the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 95-101 (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997), 98-99.
- Mathers, Moina [Vestigia Nulla Retrorsum]. "Of Skrying and Travelling in the Spirit-Vision." In *The Golden Dawn*, 6th ed., by Israel Regardie, 467-478. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn, 1989.
- Mathers, Samuel Liddell MacGregor [Deo Duce Comite Ferro]. "Flying Roll No. XI: Clairvoyance," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, ed. Francis King, 75-83 (Rochester, Ver.: Destiny Books, 1997)
- . "Flying Roll No. XXIX," in *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, edited by Francis King, 281-282. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.
- . "Flying Roll No. XXX: Tattva Cards and Tattvic Clairvoyance and Hierophant Rising 0° = 0° Signs." In *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, edited by Francis King, 91-92. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.
- Lodge, Oliver. *Modern Views of Electricity*. London and New York: Macmillan and Co., 1889.
- Moffat, Kate R. [Servio Liberaliter]. "Astral Travelling No. 2: The Sword." In *The Golden Dawn: Twilight of the Magicians*, by R. A. Gilbert, 132-134. Northamptonshire, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983.

- "Objectives of the Society." *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 1 (1882-1883): 3-6.
- Regardie, Israel. *The Golden Dawn*. 6th ed. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1989.
- . *What You Should Know About the Golden Dawn*. 3rd ed. 1936. Reprint, Phoenix: Falcon Press, 1983.
- "Report of the Literary Committee." *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 1 (1882-1883): 116-155.
- Sinnett, A. P. *The Occult World* (London: Trubner & Co., 1881), 12.
- "Statement and Conclusions of the Committee." *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 3 (1885): 201-207.
- Waite, A. E. *Shadows of Life and Thought: A Retrospective Review in the Form of Memoirs*. London: Selwyn and Blount, 1938.
- Weber, Max. "Bureaucracy." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, by Max Weber, ed. trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Wills, 196-244. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- . *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Edited and translated by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Wills. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- . "Science as a Vocation." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, by Max Weber, ed. trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Wills, 129-156. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- . *The Vocational Lectures*. Edited by David Owen and Tracy B. Strong. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2004.
- Westcott, William Wynn [Non Omnis Moriar]. "Flying Roll No. I, Part II: A Subject for Contemplation." In *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, edited by Francis King, 53. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.
- . "Flying Roll No. II, Part I: A Subject for Contemplation." In *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, edited by Francis King, 55. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.
- . "Supplementary Remarks" (to Flying Roll No. V). In *Ritual Magic and the Golden Dawn: Works by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others*, edited by Francis King, 51-52. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1997.

Secondary Sources

- Bolles, Robert C. *The Story of Psychology: A Thematic History*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1993.
- Boukreev, Anatoli, and Gary Weston DeWalt. *The Climb: Tragic Ambitions on Everest*. St Martin's Press, 1997.
- Brain, Robert Michael. "Protoplasmia: Huxley, Haeckel, and the Vibratory Organism in Late Nineteenth-Century Science and Art." In *The Art of Evolution: Darwin, Darwinisms, and Visual Culture*, ed. Barbara Larson and Fae Brauer, 92-123. Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 2009.
- Carlin, Laurence. *The Empiricists: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London and New York: Continuum, 2009.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Clucas, Stephen. "Introduction: Intellectual History and the Identity of John Dee." In *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, edited by Stephen Clucas, 1-22. Dordrecht: Springer, 2006.
- , ed. *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2006.
- Clulee, Nicholas H. "John Dee's Natural Philosophy Revisited." In *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, edited by Stephen Clucas, 23-37. Dordrecht: Springer, 2006.
- Coudet, Allison P. "Newton and the Rosicrucian Enlightenment." In *Newton and Religion: Context, Nature, and Influence*, edited by James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin, 17-43. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic, 1999.
- Daston, Lorraine, and Peter Galison. *Objectivity*. New York: Zone Books, 2007.
- Davies, Owen. *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Dixon, Joy. *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Drury, Nevill. *Stealing Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Modern Western Magic*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

- Force, James E., and Richard H. Popkin. *Newton and Religion; Context, Nature, and Influence*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic, 1999.
- Gilbert, R. A. *The Golden Dawn: Twilight of the Magicians*. Northamptonshire, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983.
- . *The Golden Dawn Companion: A Guide to the History, Structure, and Workings of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn*. Northamptonshire, UK: Aquarian Press, 1986.
- . Introduction to *John Dee: 1527-1608*, by Charlotte Fell Smith, xvii-xxv. 1909. Reprint Berwick, ME: Ibis Press, 2004.
- Godwin, Joscelyn, Christian Chanel, and John P. Deveney. *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor: Initiatic and Historical Documents of an Order of Practical Occultism*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1995.
- Greer, Mary K. *Women of the Golden Dawn: Rebels and Priestesses*. Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 1995.
- Håkansson, Håkan. *Seeing the Word: John Dee and Renaissance Occultism*. Lund: Lunds Universitet, 2001.
- Hankins, James, and Ada Palmer. *The Recovery of Ancient Philosophy in the Renaissance: A Brief Guide*. Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 2008.
- Harkness, Deborah E. "Alchemy and Eschatology: Exploring the Connection Between John Dee and Isaac Newton." In *Newton and Religion: Context, Nature, and Influence*, edited by James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin, 1-15. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999.
- . *John Dee's Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Harper, George Mills. *Yeats's Golden Dawn*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1974.
- Higgit, Rebekah. *Recreating Newton: Newtonian Biography and the Making of Nineteenth-Century History of Science*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007.
- Hynes, Samuel. *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*. Princeton: Princeton University, 1968.
- Imanse, Geurt. "Occult Literature in France." In *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*, edited by Maurice Tuchman and Judi Freeman, 355-360. Los Angeles and New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Abbeville Press, 1986.

- Krakauer, Jon. *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster*. Villard Books, 1997.
- Lamont, Peter. "Spiritualism and a Mid-Victorian Crisis of Evidence," *The Historical Journal* 74, no. 4 (2004): 897-920. JSTOR (18 February 2012).
- Laqueur, Thomas. "Why the Margins Matter: Occultism and the Making of Modernity." *Modern Intellectual History* 3, no. 1 (2006): 111-135.
- Larson, Barbara, and Fae Brauer, eds. *The Art of Evolution: Darwin, Darwinisms, and Visual Culture*. Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 2009.
- Luckhurst, Roger. *The Invention of Telepathy*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Mackay, Daniel. *The Fantasy Role-Playing Game: A New Performing Art*. Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, 2001.
- Maitland, Edward. *Clothed with the Sun: Being the Book of the Illuminations of Anna (Bonus) Kingsford*. New York: John W. Lovell Company, 1889.
- McIntosh, Christopher. *Eliphas Levi and the French Occult Revival*. 1972. Reprint, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2011.
- Monroe, John Warne. *Laboratories of Faith: Mesmerism, Spiritism, and Occultism in Modern France*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Morrisson, Mark S. *Modern Alchemy: The Occult and the Emergence of Atomic Theory*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- . "The Periodical Culture of the Occult Revival: Esoteric Wisdom, Modernity and Counter-Public Spheres." *Journal of Modern Literature* 31, no. 2 (2008): 1-22. JSTOR (18 February 2012).
- Morus, Iwan Rhys. *When Physics Became King*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Murrin, Michael. "Newton's Apocalypse." In *Newton and Religion; Context, Nature, and Influence*, edited by James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin, 203-220. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic, 1999.
- Noakes, Richard. "Cromwell Varley FRS, Electrical Discharge and Victorian Spiritualism." *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 61, no. 1 (2007): 5-21. JSTOR (1 March 2012).

- Noakes, Richard J. "Telegraphy is an Occult Art: Cromwell Fleetwood Varley and the Diffusion of Electricity to the Other World." *The British Journal for the History of Science* 32, no. 4 (1999): 421-459. JSTOR (18 February 2012).
- Oppenheim, Janet. *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Owen, Alex. *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Nineteenth Century England*. London: Virago Press, 1989.
- Owen, Alex. *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Pert, Alan. *Red Cactus: The Life of Anna Kingsford*. Watsons Bay, Australia: Books & Writers, 2006.
- Ramaswamy, Sumathi. *The Lost Land of Lemuria: Fabulous Geographies, Catastrophic Histories*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004.
- Rhine, J. B. *New Frontiers of the Mind: The Story of the Duke Experiments*. New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rineheart, 1937.
- Root, John D. "Science, Religion, and Psychical Research: The Monastic Thought of Sir Oliver Lodge." *Harvard Theological Review* 71, no. 3/4 (1978): 245-263. JSTOR (18 February 2012).
- Saler, Michael. "'Clap if You Believe in Sherlock Homes': Mass Culture and the Re-Enchantment of Modernity, c. 1890-c. 1940." *The Historical Journal* 46, no. 3 (2003): 599-622. JSTOR (
- Saler, Michael. "Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (2006): 692-716. JSTOR (15 February 2012).
- Schaffer, Simon. "Self Evidence." *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 2 (1992): 327-362. JSTOR (19 January 2012).
- Scott, J. Barton. "Miracle Publics: Theosophy, Christianity, and the Coulomb Affair." *History of Religions* 49, no. 2 (2009): 172-196. JSTOR (4 April 2012).
- Shumaker, Wayne. *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972.
- Smith, Charlotte Fell. *John Dee: 1527-1608*. 1909. Reprint, Berwick, ME: Ibis Press, 2004.

- Strickland, Stuart Walker. "The Ideology of Self-Knowledge and the Practice of Self-Experimentation." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31, no. 4 (1998), 453-471,
- Taves, Ann. *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. London: Penguin Books, 1973.
- Thurschwell, Pamela. *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Treitl, Corrina. *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.
- Tuchman, Maurice, and Judi Freeman, eds. *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*. Los Angeles and New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Abbeville Press, 1986.
- Vickers, Brian. "Analogy Versus Identity: The Rejection of Occult Symbolism, 1580-1680," in *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, edited by Brian Vickers, 95-103. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- . *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Viswanathan, Gauri. "The Ordinary Business of Occultism," *Critical Inquiry* 27 (2000): 1-20. JSTOR (15 February 2012).
- Webb, James. *The Occult Establishment*. La Salle, IL: Library Press, 1976.
- . *The Occult Underground*. La Salle, IL: Library Press, 1974.
- White, Michael. *Isaac Newton: The Last Sorcerer*. London: Fourth Estate, 1997.
- Yorke, Gerald. Foreward to *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order 1887-1923*, by Ellic Howe, x-xix. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.