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Witchcraft.

The power to bewitch, can be best discussed in contrast to magic and kabbala.

Witchcraft is the remainder of nomadic man's dealings with his environment while magic is the remainder of settled man's dealings with his environment. Kabbala is the remainder of the dealings of literate men with their environment.

The easiest thing for us, in retrospect, is the sorcery of kabbala since we all can read and write. In Kabbala, the script and its letters and signs supposedly influence the things signified by the signs. F.i. if you wish to kill nine enemies, you take the nine letters by which their names begin and destroy them. In kabbalistic practices, letters or numbers correspond to reality and by influencing the letters or numbers, we supposedly can inflict our will on the things signified.

In magic, the religiously settled community - and China, Mexico, India, Egypt, all offer parallels, computes the impact of sun moon and stars, of celestial and terrestrial events, on human affairs and what the letters are in Kabbala, these "signs" are in magic.

In witchcraft, these are neither signs nor letters, because no dividing line is yet drawn between heaven and earth as in magic or between writing and speaking as in Kabbala. The only line drawn is between speaking and mute, listening and deaf reality! The non-settled fugitive (~~Genesis III~~ Genesis III) thinks of himself as less alive amidst the truly living. Bush and mountains, springs and hills, deer and birds, all seem to him more alive and more eloquent than he himself. The tribal group of old was an attempt, to compete with 'nature', by singing, chanting, psalming, intoning in tune with this lording universe. Primitive man was overwhelmed by a universe which seemed infinitely more alive than he himself. A chorus of warriors, a dance of wooers, a chant of a medicine man were attempts to raise weak humanity to living nature's standards of aliveness! Worshipping moon or waterfall, they would try to impress on moon or waterfall their intense sympathy or antipathy, and to be accepted by the living beasts of creation as members of this perpetuum mobile which the tribesmen dreaded and needed, at the same time. In other words, nomadic man was not the exalted ruler of the living world, then but ~~he~~ felt exalted when he succeeded in getting into the swing of things.

The left-overs of this state of affairs today is called: witchcraft. W(itchcraft) therefore contains both elements of pre-scientific genuine knowledge and elements of folly. In as far as the higher life of any social group older than the existing society was organized in dances and solemn chantes, in its ritual and liturgy, we may find left-overs in modern practices of superstition. And they may contain both, nonsense and wisdom.

A zoologist penetrated into New Guinea in search of birds. He found 138 species of birds. In also examining the "natives" on their knowledge of birds, he was told by them that 137 species lived in their territory. So exact was their allegedly non-scientific knowledge that we have no right to declaim over their pseudoscience or their super-

stition. In this field of birds, they are as "scientific" as we whether we call them unscientific or not.

However, their scientific practices may appear to us superstitions because they are handed in the social garb in which they were initiated thousands of years ago. A witch doctor in an African leper country told a Swiss doctor that he used a certain herb on the patient and sang certain chants in order to impress the clan, the patient's relatives. Now it may be a passing fashion of our own medicine that it believes it can heal an individual without also treating its relatives. If, ten years from now, the parents of a sick child, also, will have to ~~go~~ undergo treatment, the African witchdoctor would not rate any longer as an insolent spellbinder but as a physician in advance of American medicine.

Prescientific traditions, then, are of too complicated nature as to be classified lock stock, and barrel, as superstitious or pseudo-scientific or even meaningless. But there is one huge class of witchcraft which clearly does fall under the heading of "superstition" and which has given rise to the notorious burning of witches.

The intercourse with a living world, in tribal days centered around a festive order of the calendar. This divided the year with help of the constellation of the Pleiades and was in effect over 2/3 of the globe. In the Spring the spirits were asked to move outdoors and in the fall they were invited into the houses. May 1 and November 2, as May Day and as All Souls, still remind us of these fixed invitations to the spirits. When these days lost their cult, in the higher religions, their memory was preserved, but the succession into the spells and songs used on these days, had to go underground. This changed the character of these practices. From honorable prayers and chants by the leaders of the community they now became secret knowledge of a few disgraced individuals. This change of hands transformed the meaning of all the rites handled. The blessing of the herd of cattle pronounced by the appointed medicineman of the tribe when now repeated out of context by some old women who cling to it, no longer seemed to invoke the spirits over the whole community. ~~Instead~~ Instead, it appeared now to be the private property of the wizard or witch, whose memory had retained it. If it was now his or her private property, he could intone the spell at random. He might be willing to sell it, for money. He might employ it as a private weapon of vengeance. And this is precisely what we can see happening among the American Indians or in Africa when they are invaded by modern ways of life.

We may be sure, that the problem of witchcraft in Europe and North-America has arisen from the same decay of a pre-Christian order. The chieftain of the Stockbridge Indians - now settled in Wisconsin - told me that his father had taken the whole tribe as one man into the Lutheran Church in 1908 and had become their first Christian pastor, himself! In this manner, he was able to preserve his moral leadership and to transform the whole tradition, prayers, dances, spells, into an evangelical possession. In many cases the chieftains and kings of Europe led the conversion and in such cases, we may assume, most of the older ritual was converted too. But often enough the pagan nobility and priesthood balked and in such case, a significant quantity of sacred lore lingered on.

In Western Europe, we can say that by 1250, by the tremendous process of urbanisation, all the pagan traditions had lost their justification because none continued within a meaningful social cadre. On the other hand, there now were still plenty of oral traditions of May Day and of All Souls Day, of the Witches Sabbath, that is, as it now was called, and as the spooks and ghosts of the Dead, on the cemetery, after Midnight.

The possessors of these oral traditions were males as well as females. But as it is with the heritage of centuries, and family lore in any society women are the more steady observants of their occurrence. Hence, we see the Church wage a furious battle against witchcraft since the 13th century. What had been the older religion between the baptism of emperor Constantine in 335 and the crusades, now ceased to be recognized as the previous religion of Roman, Greek, Egyptian, German texture. To the clergy after 1200, it now simply was instead of previous, the devil's world. Saint Thomas Aquinas still treated witchcraft with the indifference of superiority. Witchcraft was nothing else in the world except in men's mind who attributed natural effects whose causes are unknown, to witchcraft. (4 sent. 34,1. 3c)

A debate which began in this mild manner, became more shrieky and violent in the next two hundred years as the parties of a missionary clergy and recalcitrant parochialism became less and less distinguishable as social groups. By 1486, and by Papal decree recommending the naming of the witches or stranger the witches are chased in a frantic effort because - and that is a point mostly omitted in modern discussion of witchhunts - there are many people who believe to be well equipped with witchcraft. The persecutions of the witches till the last was burned as late as 1783 in Glarus, Switzerland, are the tragic foil to the boast of people that they themselves were capable of bewitching the neighbor's cow or of making a man fall madly in love with a girl who ordered a philtre from the sorcerer.

The witchhunt between 1450 and 1700 was joined by the old Faith and the Protestants alike. The great astronomer Kepler, one of the most religious Christians of any age, saw his own mother condemned for witchcraft. The protestant Jurist Benedict Carpzov in his long practise handed 20.000 witches to the pyre. His own given name, Benedict = "blessed be his name", seems only to have added to his hysteria in persecuting these pre-Christian blessings and curses.

It has to be said that the most sober and most conscientious clergyman - as a Cotton Mather * in New England at the Salem trials in Massachusetts - were firm believers in the existence of the black art which many (of) their victims themselves believed to possess.

One of the worst offenders was Jean Bodin, the humanist, so fully neutral in ecclesiastical matters but the great advocate of sovereignty, When Johannes Weyer in 1563 published *de praestigiis daemonum* in which the whole belief in witches was attacked, Bodin was outraged. In a special book he asked that Weyer should be burned at stake for this thesis! This was a clash between Bodin the enlightened humanist and the compassionate physician engaged to heal sickness. This clash underlines the real point of controversy which was the conviction of the witches themselves! Since the accused either believed to have acted as witches or at least were convinced that other were witches indeed and did act as witches, the starting point of any real victory over the persecutors was not natural science at first but psychiatry! Weyer found the witches to be possessed and to be in error! He found them deserving compassion and he invented the right name for the whole situation by calling in 1580 his last book on the subject *Pseudomonarchia ~~daemones~~ daemonum*, the fictitious dominion of the demons.

Love and witchcraft.

One aspect of witchcraft which always has attracted attention, is its relation to the sexual life of the community. It is not by accident that Venus the goddess of love, and venenum, poison, are of the same root. St. Augustin called the devil eloquently enough "venenator".

Since love defies the individual's conscious will, it is the first power over which man tries to gain domination. In the old tribal orders, engagement and marriage were means of mastering this demonic passion, by organizing its stages. In the spring, the 'yearlings' the boys and girls met on the dancing green. In the fall the houses opened for the brides and bridegrooms. As these passions were channelized into group customs, men tried to master them. This, of course, miscarried many a time. And in the legend of Medea, we already see the first witchcraft entering the scene. In Shakespeare, love certainly is treated as a demon to be exorcised and in his plays, we move on the borderline of charmed love. Summer-night's dream's philtre. But the one case where we are asked to believe in witchcraft, is not love but murder, in Macbeth. At the very moment when the crime of witchcraft is discussed as a superstition, Goethe in his Faust brings the witches kitchen on the stage. Stephen of Bourbon first tells us of the witches Sabbath.

A. Goetze, Des Teufels Groszmutter

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Ebensooft: des Teufels Mutter.

Auch Elder Mutter. Der Teufel sei an die Stelle Lokis getreten, und an die Stelle von Loki's Frau seine Groszmutter. Im Volksaberglauben (Grimm, Mythol. Sprichwörterlexikon 3 S. 960, bei Wander) ist es die Groszmutter, aber die Literatur bietet seit dem 13. Jhd. die Mutter.

Die Kabbala setzt Lilith gleich der ersten Frau Adams, daher Elder Mutter = Ahnherrin aller Teufel.

Hexensabbath.

Stephanus de Bourbon

St. Etienne de Bourbon

1877 printed by Lecory (?) de la Marche

Anecdotes Historiques.

'Une morale inactive.'

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